

The Glory of Judgement

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Date: 21 September 2025

Preacher: Gordon McBirnie

[0 : 0 0] Let's share in our prayer together. Heavenly Father, we humbly bow in your presence. May your word be our rule, your spirit our! and your great glory our supreme concern through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

! We saw last week that the whole of chapter 3 is concerned with what we know as the fall. Adam and Eve chose to disobey God and then face the consequences of that decision. In fact not only them but everyone who was born after them, also suffered the consequences of that choice. The immediate consequence for Adam and Eve was judgment and expulsion from the paradise of the Garden of Eden. We can only imagine how devastating this would have been for them. We don't know how long they were in the Garden of Eden before they were sent away or really where they went afterwards. But as they received God's judgment and as the serpent received its judgment we begin to see a golden thread running through that helps us understand something. And that is that God's judgment tended towards grace. And there are three examples of grace that we will see this morning. Firstly comes the announcement from God of his judgment to the serpent which was not only a judgment but a curse. Then the judgment of Adam and then to Eve.

Or then Eve then Adam. The announcement of God's judgment takes up the majority of the passage we've read this going right from verses 14 to 19. And the serpent receives the first judgment and curse.

It's cursed above all livestock and must go on its belly among the dust for all its days. Now whether it always went on its belly or if it had legs before is a matter of speculation and really a lot of speculation if you start looking at it. But this is judgment on the devil and the guise of the serpent was a judgment of humiliation and defeat. We saw last week when looking at the first half of chapter 3 that God chose the way of risk by creating us with the ability to know him and hear him but also to reject him.

God's love allowed Adam and Eve to make the choice to obey him or not and to hear the temptation by the devil to stray off the path that God had set out for them. But by no means did that mean the devil had any power or authority over creation or of Adam and Eve. God showed his ultimate authority in carrying out his judgment and the consequences of anyone's actions. This is where we see the first glimmer of the golden thread of grace that we mentioned earlier. At the Baptist School with God service a few weeks ago you might remember that a few of us talked about what we had been doing in camps and festivals and so on over the summer. We heard a little bit about SU camps and the magnitude festival and I mentioned speaking to campers at Teen Ranch and what they call part of the program they call time out which is time out from the day to think about God and what a privilege and enjoyable time that is for me. Now one of the series of talks I do over the course of the week you speak 10 times to the kids and so one of the series of talks I prepared for that is inspired by the Bible course which many of you have done here. We've done this a couple of times in the church and hopefully we'll be doing that again sometime in the future and this is really a fantastic course anyone who's done it always says the same thing. It's very interesting and opens up the great story of God's word and the coming of Jesus as our Messiah and Savior which we're about to see

[4 : 0 1] Genesis 3 plays an important part. The way Andrew Allerton the guy who prepared the course brings everything together and helps us make sense of that story God tells in his word it's really great and just as an aside we just published another book Andrew Allerton about difficult questions raised from the Bible so I'm looking forward to having a look at that and what we see all the way through the Old Testament that Jesus is expected and that his coming is signposted. So in my talks to the campers I point these signposts out as we work through the story of God's people leading up to the coming of Jesus and everything that comes after that. For example God tells

Abraham that through his family the whole earth will be blessed and then he tells David that one of his ancestors will always sit on the throne and so on and so on lots of different examples but the first of these examples is right here in the passage you read this morning. Verse 15 says I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring. He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. Now this is a special verse so much so that it's even got a name. Not too many verses have got names but this one does. It's called the Proto-Evangelium.

I did a lot of practicing of that word so I hope I don't have to say it again. Proto means original, probably know this. Evangelium means gospel or good news. So this is the first telling of the gospel and the news that a saviour will come and that saviour is going to overcome the fall into sin and separation from God that were the result of Adam and Eve's disobedience. Again as we saw last week the actions of Adam and Eve have embedded sin within all humans and Jesus victory over the power of death is always assured. Sin can't hold him and death couldn't hold him either. Now for us looking at this story from where we are we can see that God was preparing his rescue plan even here in the garden as he pronounces his judgment on the serpent. And that's why I really enjoy sharing these glimpses with the young people at Teen Ranch and why we can be excited to see God's unfolding plan of redemption which is seeded all the way through the Old Testament. And we see this in a really wonderful way in our Nine Lessons service which is coming up a lot sooner than you think probably. Where the choir leads us in songs that bring these truths to mind and the Bible passages that we read one after the other point to this unfolding plan of salvation. And that's why that's a really great service to invite people to so if you're thinking about that give that that some thought that service and we'll soon be letting everyone know what the dates of those services are. A wonderful service to invite friends to to hear that story of God's unfolding plan of salvation all the way through the Bible. Now what Adam and Eve made of the curse pronounced to the serpent we can know but for us it's the beginning of the reason that we are all sitting here today. God said someone was coming. We know who that someone was because he's the one that we believe in and through whose death and resurrection we know God and have the assurance of forgiveness and eternal life. The wonderful opening verse of Mark's Gospel in Mark chapter 1 verse 1 the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the

Son of God. The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ the Son of God. That's Mark's beginning but this verse is the real beginning of God's promise of hope. The next part of God's judgment is not a curse though not a curse was to Eve and we read in verse 16 that her pain and childbearing will be increased and her husband will rule over her. It seems that relationship between Adam and Eve will now no longer be what it was or could have become and that bearing children would be different from what it was designed to be. The consequences of the fall changed your lives forever and the lives of all of us who follow. Eve was going to bear children. Eve was always going to bear children that seems clear but now it would come with more pain and the verse that says pain here there's not only refer to physical pain there's a meaning in the word which also relates to anxiety which is that the woman would worry all through her pregnancy and birth of her child. The relationship between Eve and Adam would be changed and that would not always be as God first intended it to be. Now I've been in quite a few question panels for young people when they are invited to come along and ask any questions they have about the Bible or the Christian faith and we've had and you might remember us talking about a couple we've had up at

Fir Hill recently Easter and Christmas in the last year where Gordon has been up there helping his answer questions and also Andrew Kennedy as well that's been the really great times kind of scary sometimes but more than once though we've been asked the question what would have happened in the Garden of Eden if Adam and Eve had not disobeyed God you might have heard that question yourself maybe what would their lives be like what would the world be like it's an interesting speculation but sadly that's all it can be because the Bible doesn't tell us but we get a bit of a clue here because God is making changes childbirth will be different relationships will be different and when we come in a moment to what God said to Adam we'll see that providing for his family was going to be different as well but where's the thread of grace that we said weaves its way through this whole story in this judgment of the serpent God said that the offspring of the woman would bruise its head in other words from Eve ultimately would come the one who will conquer the curse of death and separation from God that the temptation and their sin brought about a minute ago we called that God's promise of hope and here God is saying it again yes you sinned yes you'll have to bear the consequences but you'll also bear the one who will bring God and humans back into the

right relationship that they as image bearers were made to be the promise comes with pain for the one who will come Jesus conquered death but he suffered and suffered the agonies of the cross to bring that victory about the third judgment was of Adam which we find in verses 17 to 19 for Adam the work of growing food was going to become much more difficult thorns and thistle will be brought forth and only by the sweat of his face with the ground produce crops which could be made into bread and this is going to be his lot till his death although we'll see this when we get to Genesis chapter 5 in a few weeks

Adam's death was 930 years in the future I don't know about you but I like gardening and growing veggies but I don't know if I'm up to 900 years of it but Adam was born of the earth and to the earth he would return and although Adam like Eve is not cursed another curse is pronounced on the ground and the word used here is the opposite of the word bless to bless someone is to put them under God's protection and join God's favour therefore to curse is to be removed from God's protection and favour and for Adam and Eve that meant leaving the garden and being deprived of God's presence in the way they had experienced it up till then one of my favourite verses in this chapter in which we talked a little bit about last week as well is from chapter 3 verse 8 when they said and they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day and this takes place after they've eaten the fruit they're told not to eat and in this part of the story they were foolishly trying to hide from God who had from the God who had just created them but I love the idea that they would walk with God in the cool of the day it sounds like quite a nice thing to do and it conjures up a vision of closeness and fellowship between them and God that they would no longer experience but even in this sad judgment we see the thread of grace even though the ground is cursed God still allows Adam and Eve to eat from it humanity will struggle but God still provides the means for them to live and remember that this judgment is part of the judgment to Eve where we see the promised offspring who will defeat the devil so even though his life will be more difficult there's also a purpose in his future as you move on through this passage we can see other examples of God's grace and add to

[13:08] Adam and Eve and what happens next God continues to extend his grace in verse 20 and 21 the man called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all living and the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them and the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments out of skins and clothed them I see the same line twice there sorry about that now Eve didn't get to choose her own name Adam did that for her but he did choose a good name with her even better meaning Eve means life indicating that she was going to be the mother of all humanity the name's an act of faith on Adam's part because he already sees that although this judgment has come down on them they were going to live and be fruitful albeit differently from what might have been God also provides them with the clothing that they had fashioned they had fashioned some kind of covering using fig leaves but that would hardly be a long-term solution for their clothing we were thinking last week about how only dealing with symptoms who were ill would not help cure the underlying problem we had and this is a good example of Adam and Eve treating the symptom of their disobedience the fact that they were naked and ashamed and not the reason for their shame and though God could have left them in their leaves to solve this problem by themselves he does the highly significant act of providing them with garments made from skins and it's highly significant for two reasons firstly to provide skins for clothing an animal or animals had to die whether death was already present in the garden before this we don't know but another cause for Adam and Eve's disobedience is revealed the second reason is what this death of an animal looks forward to

Adam and Eve could not live outside the garden wearing fig leaves their lives depended on being clothed and protected from the elements the life of an animal was sacrificed and its blood was shed to cover their sin and shame the promised one Jesus was going to come and sacrifice not only so the shame of only two people could be covered but so that the shame and the sin and the separation of everyone could be covered the the writer to hebrew says this in chapter 10 verse 10 and by that will and by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all Jesus sacrificed sanctified us sanctified means to be set apart or made holy Jesus death on the cross made us one with a holy god who could not have had anything to do with us while we were still sinners but his love for those he had created in his own image meant the shedding of Jesus blood to cover all our wrongdoings but his love for those he had created oh sorry and through his death and glorious resurrection we were made right with god the separation that

resulted in the disobedience in the garden was reversed and we can come into god's holy presence as people saved by the lord jesus god covered the shame of adam and eve through the death of one animal jesus covered the shame of everyone through the death of jesus on the cross paul puts this well in 2 corinthians 5 21 for god made christ who had never sinned to be the offering for our sin so that we could be made right with god through christ so when god looks at us he doesn't see our sin but he sees jesus and his loving sacrifice and there's so much more of god's grace in this passage but we're just going to look quickly at one more example from verse 22 and 23 these verses say that in these verses god says adam and eve must leave the garden so that they may not also eat of the tree of life and live forever adam and eve are prevented from eating from the tree of life lest they live in a permanent state of banishment from god this makes room for god's plan to restore us to him through jesus whose sacrifice as we've said makes it possible for an offer of for an offer of eternal life and a restored relationship with god the word judgments come up in this passage again and again and there's a passage about god the judge responding to human disobedience but it's also a passage about god the loving creator responding according to his holy nature but seeing seeding everything he says with grace and hope and promise we have seen i hope that we can trust in the judgment of god to be just and loving but more than that i hope we can see that these truths need a response for some of us it will be prayers of thankfulness for all that god did and for all that the lord jesus did on the cross but also prayers of acceptance to recognize that through the disobedience of adam and eve you are separated from god but that in god's wonderful plan jesus has made a way back for you and all of us to him and he holds out his hand offering that new life to you in new life in him to you and i pray that each one of us will consider and accept that wonderful offer of love and acceptance that jesus made possible through his death on the cross let's pray together thank you lord that we can see your grace all through this passage and all through your word thank you for the grace we experience in our lives through jesus sacrifice and thank you that you are a god in whom we can place our trust and that in you we live in the promise of your love in jesus name amen