

Sin's Consequences

(Genesis 3:7-4:7)

The first recorded consequence of Adam and Eve's sin was an awareness of their nakedness, but that was only the first consequence of many to follow. Eating the forbidden fruit was a transgression of God's law for them. Genesis 3:7 reads, "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." This awareness of nakedness resulted in an attempt to solve the problem that their disobedience (sin) created. "And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths" (Gen 3:7). Their action symbolically represents the good works people do to bring themselves into a "right relationship" with God.

The next consequence we see in the narrative is separation from God. They hid among the trees from the presence of God (Gen 3:8). After a short time of interaction between God and man, angels escorted Adam and Eve out of the garden of God (Eze 28:13). They could never return (Gen 3:23-24). Angels were posted as sentinels outside the entrance to ensure that Adam and Eve did not eat of the Tree of Life. Evidently, and we can't be sure, eating from the Tree of Life would have meant the two lived forever in a fallen world.

After calling for and confronting the transgressors, Yahweh God pronounces a series of curses in Genesis 3:14-19. But the most significant consequence had already been communicated to Adam in chapter 2 – death. Yahweh God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Gen 2:16-17). But they didn't die. Or did they? Man is both a physical and spiritual being; Adam and Eve died spiritually that day and needed a Savior. They required the Savior that God promised in Genesis 3:15, namely, the one who would crush the head of the serpent. (See the Proto-Evangelium article.)

In Romans 5:12, Paul explains this reality. "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned." Paul teaches us that man is born dead. Neither Adam nor Eve were dead when God created them. Their death resulted from sinning against God's single prohibition to them. Subsequently, all other humans, including the first human born, Cain, are born dead. Ephesians 2:1 describes man as "dead in trespasses and sins." When God saves a person, He doesn't keep them from the grave's physical death. Instead, through Christ Jesus, God saves man from spiritual death and the second death. Paul describes this in Colossians 2:13: "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, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross." Notice they were spiritually dead and now are spiritually alive.

Not only does Christ Jesus save man spiritually, but the Bible describes a second death after the physical death. In Revelation chapters 20 and 21, the apostle John communicates that the eternal lake of fire is the destiny of the unsaved. John writes, "Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire." (Rev 20:14). But as for those whom Christ has saved, the second death has no power over them (Rev 20:6). The believer in Christ is saved spiritually while on this earth and has two resurrections to anticipate. The first resurrection occurs when the body dies; the LORD doesn't leave man's spirit in the grave. He brings it to himself in heaven. In heaven, the believer waits for the second resurrection from the grave, where God unites their spirit/soul with their resurrected body. Then believers live forever with God in spiritually glorified bodies (1Co 15, Rev 20:5-6). Will you live forever with God?

The chart below outlines the other consequences of the fall of man and the sin in the garden:

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Serpent Gen 3:14-15a | The serpent will now crawl on the ground, and there will be permanent hostility between the serpent (the Adversary) and the woman's offspring. |
| Woman Gen 3:16 | The woman receives pain in childbirth and conflict in the marital relationship. Man will rule (dominate) in the marriage, but often not in a good way. Yet her desire will be to be married. |
| Adam Gen 3:17 | Man will now have to work a cursed ground to remain alive. He will live by the sweat of his brow. Man will contend with natural disasters, extreme weather, pestilence, wild beasts and dinosaurs, poisonous plants and animals, and bacteria and viruses. All that is miserable can be traced to the fall of man. |