

The Rise and Fall of Sin

Genesis 3:15-16; 4:7

Introduction

1. There is much to be gained by continuing to plumb the depths of God's wisdom in His revelation of redemption in the Scriptures.
 2. The Old Testament makes us wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ – **2 Timothy 3:15**
 3. We can learn more about the victory Jesus gained in His redemptive efforts by looking to the beginning of our need for them.
- I. A Striking Parallel
- A. ***"To the woman He said:... Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." (Genesis 3:16)***
 - B. ***"So the LORD said to Cain,... sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." (Genesis 4:7)***
 - C. These parallel phrases, as well as their respective contexts, aid us in understanding each other.
 - a. Various interpretations to the first – sexual desire, desire to dominate, etc.
 - b. These fail in consideration of the immediate context of the circumstances and remote context of scripture.
 - D. These phrases, when viewed in respect to the nature of the continuing story of humanity before God, and in the wake of sins consequence, form a pattern that extends throughout history. This leads also to the redemptive work of Christ at the cross.
- II. The First Sin
- A. The Entrance of Sin
 - a. **Romans 5:12** – through one man – *Anthropos* – "a human being, whether male or female" (THAYER); "a generic term" (ALGNT)
 - i. **Genesis 3:6** – Eve ate first.
 - ii. Context of **Romans 5** – more than simply following custom of speaking of the man rather than the woman, but using Adam as the progenitor of the human race, the head, and Christ as the antitype – **Romans 5:14**
 - iii. I.e. Eve is not left out or forgotten, but the scope of the problem is being emphasized beyond merely the individual level.
 1. Paul notes Eve's role elsewhere – **1 Timothy 2:14**
 - b. Adam is the representative of humanity created in God's image.

- i. Humanity includes male and female – **Genesis 1:26-28**
- B. In God's Image – Male and Female
 - a. While Adam is emphasized as the representative of humanity, the composition of humanity involving male and female aids our understanding of part of the process whereby sin gained entrance.
 - b. **"in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (Genesis 1:27)**
 - i. I.e. it is not simply man, but mankind created in His image.
 - ii. Mankind is male and female – individually, but also together, they are God's image bearers.
 - c. Together – **Genesis 2:24** – one flesh.
 - i. Mankind is male AND female, and together they are one.
 - d. Created purpose and roles – **Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18, 23-24**
 - i. **Genesis 1:26-28** – In Our image – designates them as unique in creation.
 - 1. Connected to their stewardship – the creation is placed under their stewardship for the purpose of bringing God glory.
 - 2. **Romans 3:23** – failure to fulfil their vocation as image bearers.
 - 3. **1 John 3:4** – sin is lawlessness, God's revelation at any time directs us in how to fulfill our role as image bearers of His.
 - ii. **Genesis 2:18, 23-24** – Our image = male and female – together they form a united role.
 - 1. He is to steward God's creation. She is to aid him in this. Together they are God's image bearers.
 - 2. Helpmeet – denotes a submissive role – **1 Corinthians 11:8-12** – not inferior.
 - e. The purpose of man to bring God glory as His image bearer is fulfilled with God's revealed will – His pattern and order. (**cf. Ecclesiastes 12:13**)
 - f. Before the first sin was committed, there was a lapse, or breakdown of God's created order of roles which proved to be catastrophic:
 - i. **Genesis 3:16-17** – the pain of childbirth is in consequence of sin, but the rule of the husband is not.
 - 1. Adam was always to be the head, and Eve was always to be the helpmeet.

2. (v. 17) – manifests the failure of Adam in conjunction with the failure of Eve – She stepped out of her role, and he abdicated his.
3. (v. 16c) – a formal reassertion of God’s created order of roles which must be respected – learning from the catastrophic breakdown.
- ii. **Genesis 2:6** – Eve had a desire, and instead of deferring to her husband’s leadership, she went ahead and ate.
 1. Adam, instead of taking the leadership role, **“heeded the voice of [his] wife, and [ate] from the tree of which [God] commanded [him], saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’” (Genesis 3:17).**
- g. Adam and Eve together form the cautionary tale of what results in sin for any human being – the failure to adhere to God’s created order.
 - i. This would include each individual’s created order of being the created rather than the Creator.
 - ii. **Jeremiah 17:7-9** – man was created, not as an independent decision maker, but as one dependent on God’s direction.
 1. Breaking free from God’s rule is catastrophic – **cf. Romans 1**
 - iii. This entrance of sin into the world is a pervasive problem which always manifests in a breakdown of God’s created order. This is seen with the parallel of Cain’s sin to that of Eve and Adam’s.

III. The First Murder

- A. The connection between **Genesis 3:16** and **Genesis 4:7** can be understood by considering **Romans 5:12**
 - a. The spread of death to all men was because all sinned.
 - b. I.e. Adam, as the representative of the race, provided the first occasion for sin, and therefore something which all can follow him in – and all have.
 - c. The parallel of God’s implication of the breakdown of created roles in **Genesis 3:16-17** resurfaces in the offspring of Adam and Eve.
- B. Cain’s Desire
 - a. **Genesis 4:1-5** – God did not respect Cain’s offering and **“his countenance fell.”**
 - i. **“This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected.” (v. 5, NLT)**
 - b. This would lead to the murder of Abel, but John explains why – **1 John 3:12** – the implication is bitterness, envy, and pride.

- i. **1 John 2:16** – pride of life – Cain’s perspective, approval from God as a shiny badge that elevates himself.
 - ii. Abel’s perspective – **“We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.” (Luke 17:10)**
 - c. **Genesis 4:7** – the desire is described as belonging to sin, but such is personification.
 - i. **Romans 7:8, 11** – sin produced desire in Cain, but with intent to harm him.
 - ii. Was the desire to kill? – Perhaps, but more fundamentally it was to have what Cain perceived Abel to have, and the bitterness of not having it drove him to kill.
- C. Cain’s Role Failure
- a. Sin personified, Cain portrayed as being in the role of decision maker – **Genesis 4:7**
 - i. **Sin lies at the door** – for sin to have its way the door must be opened.
 - ii. **Its desire is for you** – **“toward”** – parallel with **Genesis 3:16**, the point is not simply that sin longs to consume Cain, but sin is depicted as doing what Eve failed to do.
 - 1. Sin does not act independent of the sinner – SIN IS A CHOICE THAT PRESENTS ITSELF TO EACH INDIVIDUAL FOR APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL.
 - 2. I.e. sin’s desire (personified), the desire being produced in Cain by sin, remains in a position of subjection to Cain.
 - iii. **But you should rule over it** – i.e. it isn’t up to sin, but to you.
 - 1. Sinning is an abdication of our created role as stewards of God’s creation.
 - 2. Sin is the choice, ultimately, to serve the creature rather than the creator – **Romans 1:24-25**
 - b. Cain allowed sin to be the decision maker and abdicated his role – **Genesis 4:8; 1 John 3:12; James 3:14-16; 4:1**
 - i. His prideful passions were given reign and led to murder.
 - ii. Cain was to be in control but instead relinquished his created role and allowed sinful desire to dictate his actions.
 - c. The parallel:
 - i. Eve’s created role as an image bearer is to heed God’s authority and therefore act in ways which bring Him glory.

1. For Eve, this included filling her submissive role as helpmeet to Adam.
2. She was to respond to her initial desire by deferring to the leadership of her husband, and in doing so, ultimately to God.
- ii. Cain's created role as an image bearer is to heed God's authority and act in ways which bring Him glory.
 1. This included his need to deal with the pull of pride and envy by bringing it under his rule.
 2. His rule in his life was created to be in submission to the rule of God in His revealed will.
- iii. Both failed due to their decision to leave the roles God created them to fill.
- iv. God would deal with this sin problem by sending His Son – **Romans 8:3** – in likeness of sinful flesh, in the role as one in God's image, and condemned sin in the flesh.

IV. The Last Adam

A. Jesus Came as the Last Adam

- a. Jesus is the antitype of Adam – **Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 15:45**
 - i. Not everything in the type/antitype relationship is 1:1.
 - ii. However, there are striking antithetical parallels.
- b. Mankind in the image of God is flesh – **Genesis 1:27; 2:23**
 - i. God became flesh – **Genesis 3:15; John 1:14**
- c. Mankind as God's image bearer brings Him glory through carrying out His will in the world – **Ecclesiastes 12:13**
 - i. Christ came to bring God glory through carrying out His will – **John 8:29; 9:4-5; Hebrews 10:5-7**
- d. Mankind neglected their submissive role before God and failed to bring Him glory as His image bearers – **Romans 3:23** (cf. **Genesis 3:16; 4:7** – did not yield their desire to the rule of God in their submission, but yielded to sin in rebellion)
 - i. Christ brought glory to God in carrying out His will – **John 12:27-28, 31-33; 17:4** (cf. **Matthew 26:39** – He yielded His desire to the rule of God in submission to His will)

B. The Man Christ Jesus Reconciles Mankind to God

- a. Jesus is the mediator that bridges the gap between God and man – **1 Timothy 2:5-6** – could only be accomplished in joining mankind.

- b. Jesus restores us to our created purpose through His redemptive work on the cross – **Revelation 5:8-10** – redeemed us to God, to reign – dominion as those created in God's image.

Conclusion

1. The record of Adam and Eve's first sin is preserved to impress us with the need for our Savior, but also to show us where and how everything went wrong. We can learn how to live by understanding their mistakes.
2. Christ came to show us what Adam and Eve failed to show us – how to live as an image bearer of God. Through His fulfilment of God's will and redemptive purposes on the cross we can be restored to our purpose in Him.