

THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES CALLED.

GENESIS.

GENESIS 3: 14 – 24

¹⁴ And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

¹⁶ Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

¹⁷ And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

¹⁸ Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

¹⁹ In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

²⁰ And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

²¹ Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

²² And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

²³ Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

²⁴ So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Verse 14... *"cursed above all cattle."* God's curse fell first on the serpent, representing man's great enemy, the devil, as a perpetual reminder to man of his fall. All other animals were also placed under the curse, as part of man's dominion but, the serpent was cursed above all others, becoming a universal object of dread and loathing. Whatever may have been its original posture, it would henceforth glide on its belly, eating its prey directly off the ground, and covered with the dust of the earth.

Verse 15... *"enmity between thee."* **This verse is famous as the Protevangel.** ("first gospel" "protos" meaning "first" and "evangelion" meaning "good news" or "gospel") The curse was directed immediately towards the serpent but, its real thrust was against the evil spirit possessing its body, *"that old serpent, called the Devil."* (**Revelation 12:9**) Satan may have assumed that he had now won the allegiance of the woman and all her descendants but, God told him that there would be enmity (**Deep rooted hatred, hostile, opposition**) between him and the woman.

Verse 15... *"her seed."* The *"seed of the woman"* can only be an allusion to a future descendant of Eve who would have no human father. Biologically, a woman produces no seed, and except in this case biblical usage always speaks only of the seed of men. This promised Seed would, therefore, have to be miraculously implanted in the womb. In this way, He would not inherit the sin nature which would disqualify every son of Adam from becoming a Savior from sin. This prophecy thus clearly anticipates the future virgin birth of Christ.

Verse 15... *"bruise thy head."* Satan will inflict a painful wound on the woman's Seed but, Christ in turn will inflict a mortal wound on the serpent, crushing his head. This prophecy was fulfilled in the first instance at the cross but, will culminate when the triumphant Christ casts Satan into the Lake of Fire. (**Revelation 20:10**)

Verse 15... *"bruise his heel."* This historical prophecy made such a profound impression on Adam's descendants that it was incorporated with varying degrees of distortion and embellishment, in all legends, mythologies, and astrology's of the ancients. Filled as they are with tales of mighty heroes engaged in life-and-death struggles with dragons and other monsters. Mankind, from the earliest ages, has

recorded its hope that someday a Savior would come who would destroy the devil and reconcile man to God.

Verse 16... *"multiply thy sorrow."* Had Eve not sinned, the experience of childbirth would have been easy and pleasant, like every other experience in the perfect world God had made. The curse, however, fell in a peculiar way on Eve and her daughters, and the pain and sorrow of birth would be greatly multiplied.

Nevertheless, the bearing of children, especially by a woman who loves God and seeks to obey Him, is a time of blessing and rejoicing even though accompanied by a time of suffering. (**John 16:21**) In the experience of giving birth, every woman experiences, by proxy as it were, the privilege granted to Mary when she became the mother of the promised Seed. Furthermore, she even becomes a type of Christ, who *"shall see His seed...He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."* (**Isaiah 53:10-11**) The suffering is forgotten in the rejoicing, and this in itself goes far toward easing the physical pain. (**1 Timothy 2:15**)

Verse 16... *"rule over thee."* She who had acted independently of her husband in her desire for the forbidden fruit must henceforth exercise her desire through her husband, and he would be ruler in the family. This prophecy has been fulfilled throughout history, in every time and nation.

To the woman who knows God, however, especially in the light of Christianity, her role of submission to God and to her husband becomes her means of greatest fulfillment and happiness. The *"rule"* of a true Christian husband is not one of harshness and subjugation but, one of loving companionship and caring responsibility. (**Ephesians 5:22-33, Colossians 3:18-21, 1 Peter 3:1-7**)

Verse 17... *"unto Adam."* The full force of the curse fell on Adam, as the responsible head of the human race, and on all his dominion. Instead of believing God's Word, Adam had *"hearkened to the voice of his wife,"* and she had been beguiled by the voice of the serpent. It is always a fatal mistake to allow words of any creature to take precedence over the Word of God.

Verse 17... *"cursed be the ground"* The *"ground"* is the same word as *"earth."* The very elements of matter, out of which all things had been made, were included in the curse, so that the *"whole creation"* (**Romans 8:22**) was brought under bondage to a universal principle of *"corruption."* (*literally "decay"*—**Romans 8:21**) That is, all things had been built up by God from the basic elements of matter, (*"the dust of the earth"*) but now they would all begin to decay back to the

dust again. The curse evidently applies to the entire physical cosmos, as well as to the planet Earth, though it is possible that the decay principle operating in the stars and the other planets may relate to the prior sin of the angelic *“host of heaven.”*

Verse 17...“for thy sake.” The curse was not the only punishment for man’s disobedience but also a provision for man’s good, forcing him to recognize the seriousness of his sin. And to realize the folly of trusting anyone but his Creator, and his inability to save himself from destruction. This would encourage him to a state of true repentance towards God and to trust in God to save him. The Second Law of Thermodynamics, which is the modern scientific statement of this decay principle points towards an ultimate death of the universe. And at the same time points back to a historical creation, and therefore compels men to look toward the Creator as its only possible Savior.

Verse 18...“thistles.” Whether God allowed these to develop over time or to immediately arise, we know that the once *“very good”* earth was now deteriorating in varying degrees, some even becoming harmful to man and to each other. There now exists a host of systems in nature (*disease, bacteria, viruses, parasites, fangs, and claws, weeds and poisons, etc.*) which reflect a state of conflict and struggle for existence in the plant and animal kingdoms. As well as in human life, which seems, at first, inconsistent with the concept of an ideal creation.

In the physical world there are storms and earthquakes, extremes of hot and cold, weathering and disintegration, and many other unpleasant phenomena. These systems and processes now maintain a balance of nature and so are indirectly beneficial in maintaining life on a cursed earth, even though individual organisms all eventually die. Had the fall and the curse never happened, then God would have continued His personal presence among man and the earth. With His presence now withdrawn, God maintains order on the planet by these indirect constraints associated with the curse, adding further to the testimony that the world is now in pain, awaiting its coming Redeemer.

Verse 19...“sweat of thy face.” The curse on Adam had four main aspects: (1) *sorrow*, because of the futility of endless struggle against a hostile environment. (2) *pain*, signified by the thorns. (3) *sweat, or tears*, the *“strong crying”* occasioned by the labor necessary to maintain life and hope. (4) *death*, the eventual physical death in spite of all his efforts, returning back to the dust. This death also includes man’s separation from God spiritually.

But Christ, as the second Adam, has borne the curse for us, (*Galatians 3:13*) as the “*man of sorrows,*” (*Isaiah 53:3*) wearing the “*thorns*” and suffering the greatest “*pain,*” (*Mark 15:17*) acquired by “*strong crying*” (*Hebrews 5:7*) to “*sweat*” as it were drops of blood before finally brought into the “*dust of the death.*” (*Psalms 22:15*) And because He so suffered for us, once again someday God will dwell with men, and “*there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.*” (*Revelation 21:4*) Indeed there shall be “*no more curse.*” (*Revelation 22:3*)

Verse 19...“dust thou art.” The curse applies to man and woman, to the animals and to the physical elements, God’s whole creation. It is so universal as to have been discovered and recognized empirically as a general scientific law, the law of increasing entropy. (*in-turning*) This famous Second Law of Thermodynamics is sometimes also called the law of morpholysis. (*loss of structure*) It expresses the universal tendency for systems to decay and become disordered, for energy to be converted into forms unavailable for further work. For information to become confused. For the new to become worn, for the young to become old, for the living to die and even for whole species to become extinct. One of the most amazing anomalies of human thought is the concept of evolution, which has never been observed in action scientifically and is exactly the opposite of the universally proved scientific principle of increasing entropy. The theory is nevertheless believed to be the most fundamental principle of nature by almost the entire intellectual scientific establishment!

Verse 20...Eve. Eve means “*life,*” and her name indicates Adam’s faith in God’s promise that the “*woman*” would bear a Seed. Even though he realized that he was going to die, Adam still believed that God would provide life. Adam had disobeyed God’s Word by partaking of his wife’s forbidden fruit, now he believed God’s Word concerning his wife’s fruitfulness. Since true faith is always accompanied by repentance, it is evident that Adam had turned away from Satan and back to God. No doubt Eve had done the same, desiring now to follow her husband instead of leading him.

Verse 20...“all living.” There were no children at this time, so this statement is apparently editorial insertion by Moses, testifying that all mankind had descended from Adam and Eve. There were no “*pre-Adamite men,*” (*1 Corinthians 15:45, speaking of “the first man Adam*) nor were there any pre-fall children, since “*in Adam all die.*” (*1 Corinthians 15:22*)

Verse 21... "coats of skins." This action is very instructive in several ways. (1) God considers clothing so vital in this present world that He Himself provided it for our first parents. (2) The aprons fashioned by Adam and Eve were inadequate, testifying in effect that man-made efforts to prepare for God's presence will be rejected. (3) The clothing provided by God required shedding the blood of two animals, probably two sheep, who were thus the first creatures actually to suffer death after Adam's sin thus illustrating the basic Biblical principle of substitutionary atonement, (or "**covering**") requiring the shedding of innocent blood as a condition of forgiveness for the sinner.

Verse 22... "as one of us." Once again there is a divine council of the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, this time to decree man's expulsion from the garden. Man's ultimate restoration requires his full instruction to the effects of sin and separation from God.

Verse 22... "tree of life." One must wonder about this tree. God said they could freely eat of any tree in the garden except the one in the midst of the garden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It would seem the delicious fruit of the Tree of Life would be freely available to Adam and Eve but, it was not necessary for their survival. It was only eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil that would result in death. (**Genesis 2:17**) The same will apply when the Tree of Life is planted again in the new earth. Its fruits and leaves will be freely available for food, (**Revelation 22:2**) but, it will not be necessary for survival since there will be no more death there. (**Revelation 21:4**) However, it did contain such wonderful health-giving ingredients that it would have enabled people to survive to tremendous ages even after sin and death entered the world, and this would have undermined God's intended purpose for death. The words "**for ever**" in this verse are from the **Hebrew "olam,"** which can also legitimately be translated a "**long time,**" depending on the context. (**Isaiah 42:14**) It is also used for the "**lasting hills.**" (**Deuteronomy 33:15**)

Verse 22... "live for ever." The fruit of the Tree of Life will be freely available to all in the new earth. (**Revelation 2:7, 22:1-2**)

Verse 23... "sent him forth" Evidently Adam and Eve were reluctant to leave their beautiful garden home and God's personal fellowship but, it was for their own good, and God finally "**drove out**" those whom He loved. (**Genesis 3:24**)

Verse 24... "Cherubims." The Cherubim are apparently the highest beings in the hierarchy of angels, always associated with the immediate presence of God.

(Psalms 18:10, 80:1, 99:1, Ezekiel 1:4-28, 10:1-22, Revelation 4:6-8) Satan himself had once been the “*anointed cherub*” on God’s holy mountain. (*Ezekiel 28:14*) The appointment of the cherubim to keep (*or “guard”*) the way to the Tree of Life, with sword-like tongues of flame flashing around them, suggest that God’s personal presence continued to be associated with the garden and the tree. The representations of the cherubim in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle, (*Exodus 25:17-22, Hebrews 9: 3-5*) suggest that God may have continued to meet at stipulated intervals with His people at the entrance to the garden. (*See Genesis 4:3-5*)