

OpenTheo

Genesis 3:16 - 3:24



Genesis - Steve Gregg

In this exposition, Steve Gregg discusses the biblical narrative from Genesis 3:16 to 3:24, emphasizing the devastation that sin has brought upon humanity and the importance of understanding biblical principles for family life. He argues that embracing sacrificial love and submission as a team, rather than a power struggle, is the key to avoiding oppression and abuse in relationships. Additionally, he highlights the significance of Christ's sacrifice in providing a means for believers to have access to the tree of life and ultimately obtain eternal life. Overall, his exposition encourages adherence to biblical teachings for true happiness and freedom from sin.

Transcript

We kind of broke off at an inopportune spot just because we ran over time, so I want to go back to Genesis 3 and verse 16, where we have God telling the woman and then the man what their lot in life is going to be like since they have disobeyed and they've been God. Sin on the part of the man is what brings all this on. Now, of course, Eve had her role in it and she was guilty too, but the New Testament actually never makes Eve responsible for what we call the fall.

In the New Testament, it's always Adam, and that's because he was the responsible, he was the leader. He is the one who instructed Eve, no doubt. She came along later after God had given him instructions.

She probably depended on Adam for what she knew. He was the one in charge. He was the one responsible.

And so even though Eve sinned before he did, his sin is that which brought about the devastation that has come upon the earth and nature ever since. But Eve, of course, was not innocent herself, and she has her price to pay for what she has done. And we saw, we read it, but we'll read it again.

In verse 16, God said to the woman, I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception. In pain you should bring forth children. Your desire should be for your husband and he shall rule over you.

Now the first part of that has to do with conception and bearing forth children. It was pointed out during the break by Jonathan that it doesn't say I will increase your sorrow in conception, but I will increase your sorrow and conception. It could be referring to some other kind of sorrow.

And yet the next line in the poetry, it's set up in sort of a Hebrew poem. Hebrew poetry is such that lines kind of repeat the same thought as each other in different words. The next line says, in pain you should bring forth children.

So I think it's probably safe to say that this entire first part of the curse has to do with the difficulties that women would then experience in the process of childbearing. And then he says, your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you. Now your desire should be for your husband.

What does that mean? I mean it sounds like it means that she will desire her husband. But is that really a curse? And is it really true? Is it really true? Do women desire their husbands more than husbands desire their wives? I suppose in some couples that would be found to be true. In my marriages I found the opposite to be true.

So I don't really know that this could be seen as a universal difference between men and women. But the phrase, your desire should be for your husband, is apparently a Hebraism that has a specific meaning as a phrase, as an idiom, that is not confined to the exact etymology of its words, because we find the same idiom exactly in chapter 4. And there Cain is starting to go the wrong direction and God brings him up short and says, listen, you need to do better than this. And God says to him in verse 7 of chapter 4, if you do well, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do well, sin lies at the door.

And then we have this idiom, and its desire is for you, but you should rule over it. See, you've got party A and party B. Party A's desire is for party B, but party B must rule over party A. Right? That's the construction of both statements. Now, it's a little clearer for us to understand what it means when it's spoken to Cain, because it's obvious that Cain must rule over sin.

But he's saying sin is like a crouching predator ready to attack you. Its desire is to what? Apparently to master him. There's going to be a competition here between what Cain ought to do and what sin is trying to get Cain to do.

And its desire is for you appears to have some meaning similar to sin wants to rule you, but you must rule it. And we have the same idiom in verse 16 of chapter 3. It says, your desire is to rule over the woman's desire is to be for her husband. If this means what it means in the next chapter in the same idiom as youth, it would suggest that the woman would have an innate wish to rule the family.

But it says, but your husband will rule over you. So it sounds like it's talking about a

power struggle in the family. It certainly is what appears to be going on in the statement to Cain.

You've got conflicts between Cain's better choices and sin's interests. And there's this power struggle between sin and Cain. And Cain must defeat sin.

Cain must rule over sin. But sin doesn't want that. Sin desires to apparently control or rule over Cain.

Now, some people think we should not import that thought into this use of the same idiom in chapter 3. But in doing so, we certainly do not force Genesis 3.16 into any meaning that's contrary to the rest of scripture. As a matter of fact, it becomes kind of a basis for what a lot of the rest of scripture seems to say. Namely, that there is indeed now, after sin, a power struggle between men and women.

It has become especially evident in modern society, but it's always been there. And the reason is probably this. The woman was made originally to be cherished and nourished and protected by the man, who was no doubt, the original man was probably the epitome of maleness, the epitome of strength and goodness and so forth that an unfallen man would be.

The woman was no doubt the epitome of all the beauty and femininity and so forth that is characteristic of the best of womankind. And as such, she was a helper to him in the task that he was assigned. What was that? Principally, to have dominion over the earth and to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

She would have particularly an important role in being fruitful and multiply in part because he couldn't do it without her. And that's why it was not good for man to be alone, because he had to be fruitful and multiply and a man can't do that alone. So God made a helper comparable that would help him do that.

And so she, no doubt, was in a recognized helping assistant role to Adam and together, as a human race, they were to have dominion over the animals and so forth. And no doubt they saw themselves as partners, compatriots. Probably the partnership was delightful.

But now, because of sin, we've seen that sin alienates people from each other as well as from God. Their desire to cover themselves in each other's presence with fig leaves shows that they were not as comfortable with each other after they sinned as they had been before. And part of that discomfort is that they were now sinners and what sinners want is their own way.

That's what sinners want. If you could define a sinner's motivations, it's quite simple. What a sinner wants is his or her own way.

Now, that's not a problem if you have an egalitarian relationship and no one is responsible to obey anyone else. But when you've got a hierarchical situation where one person is the helper of the other person, one person was made to assist, then if both people want their own way, it's going to be particularly troublesome and irksome to the person who is in a position of submission because the man wants his way, the woman wants her way. The trouble is the woman is bumping up against this authority thing.

And so she's bummed about it more and uncomfortable in the situation and understandably so. I mean, why shouldn't a woman want her own way as much as a man wants his own way? Now, we see in the New Testament and even, frankly, throughout the Old Testament that neither man nor woman should be seeking their own way, that they are both on assignment from God. And it's God's will that they should wish.

Our prayers are that God's will will be done, not ours. And Jesus, the epitome of the unfallen man, when he prays, says, not my will, but yours be done. The sinner wants his own way and her own way.

The godly person wants God's way. The godly person has denied themselves, taken up a cross, like Jesus, who did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped but humbled himself, emptied himself, took on himself the form of a servant. That's what men and women who are godly do.

But Adam and Eve were now not godly. And most men and women in history have not been godly. And the one thing that ungodly people all have been told is they all want their own way.

Now, it's true some people learn how to manipulate by being submissive, and they get their own way that way. And others are manipulated by threats and overbearingness and so forth. And there's a lot of different strategies that people come up with to get their own way.

But still, what a sinner wants is his own way. Now, this is why there would now be conflict in a home if there is anything like an authority structure there. You've got the man who has been given the charge.

It says he shall rule over you. That doesn't mean he shall be dominating. It just means that he's the leader.

But the woman's not going to sit easily with that. Because nobody, no sinner, wants someone else to rule over them. Even God.

That is, they don't want God to rule over them. But when we become Christians, we submit to God, and we submit to whatever God appoints. Now, some people feel that when it says that the husband will rule over the wife, that this is not something that God is saying must be.

That he's just saying that's the way things will be, just like there will be pain in childbirth. Not that God's saying we must aim at that as a goal. But rather, that's just the way things are going to be now, just as in the world.

We don't aim at a woman having pain in childbirth. And they say we don't aim at a husband being the leader of the home, either. But rather, that what God is simply doing is predicting.

This is predictive, they say, that women will have pain in childbirth. Of course, we don't object to giving a woman some kind of painkillers or something to make it easier. And we don't think we're sinning if we make childbirth as easy as possible.

And they say also, just as we would wish for a woman not to have exceptional pain in childbirth, we don't want her to be oppressed by men, either. That the rule of the husband over the wife, they see that as an oppressive situation that's being predicted. Because of sin, men, because they can, because they are bigger, will oppress women.

And that has, of course, been true in many situations. But it's not true in godly homes, even though in godly homes, apparently, as Paul described them, the man is the head of the wife, but he loves his wife. He gives himself for her.

He lays down his life for her. He's like Christ, the head, who became the servant. Jesus said, you must be like me.

I'm your Lord, but I become your servant. And whoever wants to be chief must be the servant of all, even as I, the son of man, did not come to be served, but to serve. So, leadership, the leadership of the man, is not something that is somehow an evil, but the leadership of a sinful man becomes an evil and oppressive thing.

Not only over his wife, but over his children, and if he has any position of authority and society, even over other men. Oppression is an evil, but authority structures are not in themselves evil. God is one who ordained governments, but it becomes evil when the man in government position is selfish and sinful and oppresses people.

I remember reading in a newspaper article a few years ago about a conference that was held among Christians in Chicago, and two different Christian groups that are interested in the man and the male-female issue in the church met together to try to find some harmony in their views. One group was egalitarian, they called themselves Evangelical Feminists, and they believed that, you know, patriarchy, as they call it, where the man is the head of the home and so forth, that that is something that God abolishes in Christ. And the other group was a group of Christians that believe that there is what they call complementarian teaching in the New Testament, that there are different roles for men and women.

They complement each other, they're not identical to each other, they complement each

other, they're both needed, and they're both important. And I remember reading the article about this, they quoted in, you know, sometimes they put in very large print some quote that's embedded in the article, and they had it like in headline size, a quotation from some woman who was an elder in a Mennonite church, actually, it was said, I don't know where she was from, but she made this statement, which I thought was tremendously irresponsible. She said, until patriarchy is abolished, we will never be rid of the social problems of child abuse and wife abuse.

Now this is the way that we've been taught to think. I kind of think that most people who read that quote said, yeah, that makes sense. I mean, wives are often abused by their husbands, and children are often abused, and probably more often by their fathers than by their mothers.

The problem is the guy is in charge. When we get rid of that system, and we redefine marriage, and the man is no longer the head of the home, then, and only then, can we get rid of wife abuse and child abuse. But you see, the error in this thinking should be obvious to anyone who thinks for themselves, instead of just going with what the media says.

You see, the reason there's wife abuse is not because the Bible says the man is the head. The man who abuses his wife doesn't care what the Bible says. The man who abuses his children doesn't care what the Bible says.

He's not doing it because the Bible gives him authority over his wife, or over his children. He does it because he's an abuser. He does it because he's a sinner.

He does it because he's evil. And you know what? Society could rewrite the Bible and say, the children are the head of the home, or the wife is the head, or we can make any other thing you want, and you know what? The men would still abuse the women and the children. Why? Because they can.

That's why. Because they're sinners, and sinners do what they can. And men are bigger than women for the most part, and they're almost always bigger than their children.

And therefore, regardless of what the Bible would say about who's supposed to be in charge, you're going to have exactly the same amount of abuse going on, as long as you have sinners acting out their sinfulness. But the presence of the biblical norm of the husband is the head of the wife, as Paul put it, has never in itself prescribed any kind of abuse. As a matter of fact, if you read the passage where Paul says it, he says it prescribes sacrificial husbands laying down their lives for their wives, and wives submitting happily to their husbands.

Now, when both sides are doing that, then this problem that Genesis describes is minimized, if not eliminated. Where you have people who are saying, okay, not what do I

want for my life, but what does God want for my life? Okay, if I'm a wife, if I'm a husband, there's a job description here for wives and for husbands. If I do my part, and she does her part, it's a happy situation.

How do I know that? Because I know marriages like that. I grew up in a home that had a marriage like that. Happiest home I know.

There's probably others just as happy, but they're usually happy because biblical principles are followed. There's no one on a power trip, there's not a power struggle going on, because both parties are submitted to Christ, and they say, it's not about me. It's not about what I want.

It's about what God wants. And this is what we have to understand, that there is a power struggle in a society where people are sinning and wanting their own way. In the Christian community, it's supposed to be comprised of people who have become disciples of Jesus.

They're no longer interested in their own way. The husband's not interested in defending his authority against his wife's rebellion, and she's not interested in rebelling against that. They see themselves as a team.

And the irony of this whole thing is that the same wives who say, I'm not going to submit to that man in my home, they'll go to work and submit to a man, and he doesn't even love her. She has a man at home who's laying down his life for her every day, and she says, I'm not going to submit to that guy. He's a man.

She'll go to work, she'll submit to a male boss, and he doesn't lay his life down for her at all. He doesn't even care about her. She's just an employee in the company.

It's a demonic blindness. I personally believe that the devil is trying to undermine the foundations of society, and Christians who have the scriptures should be able to be immune to that. But, you know, we have a biblically illiterate church.

The churches aren't really talking about the Bible like they used to. I'm sure that back when biblical norms were kind of standard for our society, there was still oppression. There was probably still abuse.

And that's because Christians are sinners too. And sinners sin. But anyone who would think that the biblical standards for family life are the cause of oppression has simply not watched a family operate where both parties want to do what the Bible says.

Yeah, I mean, every couple's going to have their difference of opinion because everybody's in the flesh sometimes. The question is, you know, do we redefine the biblical norms because someone wants that to happen? I think that the more we redefine the biblical norms, the more trouble our society gets into. Thirty years ago, there's not

any person I could even imagine meeting who would suggest that same-sex couples ought to be solemnized as married couples.

But thirty years ago, there was easy divorce, which is almost as bad. Both of them equally are a renunciation of biblical concepts of marriage. But, you know, if you... and lots of times the homosexual advocacy groups, they point this out, and you cannot argue against this.

They say, why do Christians want to keep homosexuals from marrying when they don't even keep their families together? They don't even stand against divorce. That is an excellent question. The Church has lost its moral authority to speak against any kind of marriage, no matter how perverted, until the Church actually starts supporting biblical marriage again.

If the Church doesn't support biblical marriage, then there's no foundations to criticize any other kind of marriage. It's either biblical marriage is right, or else whatever society wants it to be is right. Those are the only two options.

It's either God-ordained or it's man-ordained. If it's man-ordained, man can change it. If it's God-ordained, man can't change it.

But the... we've been monkeying with it for a long time. Just a little here, a little there. Let's redefine the roles of husbands and wives.

Now let's move in the direction of allowing divorce when somebody doesn't want to stay in a marriage. Now, well, we've lost all the ground rules now, because we've moved totally away from what the Bible dictates on the subject. Now it's just a power struggle between the sentiments of religious Christian people and the sentiments of unreligious pagans.

There's no authority that anyone's standing on, because the biblical authority was abandoned at least 30 years ago, if not longer, by the Christian Church in America. So, I mean, I think we really need to realize that marriage, we don't have to get our opinions about marriage from the world. And one of the opinions the world has given us is that if you have the man as the head of the home, then you've got an oppressive situation.

And unfortunately, I'm afraid that's true in many churches, because many of the people in churches, you know, where there aren't Christians, there's oppression, there's evil, there's abuse, there's sin. And there's even that where there are Christians, but Christians don't approve of it. And Christians strive against it.

And therefore, the best hope that any of us have for happy marriage is to embrace what God said, because God had people's happiness in mind. God made people to be happy, not just to be happy. That's to be a byproduct of being obedient.

But he did intend for people to be happy. Sin came in, and now there's this power struggle. There's this, the woman's desire for her husband, he's got to rule over her, and there's all this power struggle that wasn't there before.

And what Adam ends up with, nature and the production of food and all that that God had set up was very congenial to man, previous to this. He just went around picking the food and eating it. Now he's going to have to fight for it.

He's going to have to fight against the thorns and the thistles, fight against the earth. The earth is against him. The earth is cursed because of him.

And so in the sweat of his face, he's going to have to eat his bread until he returns to the dust. For he says, for dust you are, and to the dust you shall return. So man, made from the dust, goes back to the dust.

This is the law, the second law of thermodynamics in action. Nothing stays the same. It all decays.

Even our bodies go back to the dust as they were. Remember the story, some of us heard the story when we were younger about a little girl who at bedtime, her parents were reading her Bible stories, and one night they read about how God made man from the dust of the earth and read this story about how because of sin, you're going to have to go back to the dust. And the mother left the room and came back in later, and the little girl was kind of leaning over, looking under the bed.

The mother said, what are you looking at down there? She said, well, there's someone under my bed, but I can't tell if they're coming or going. Dusty. We come from the dust and we go to the dust.

And that is, of course, the prediction of human death, which was already predicted before man sinned. The day you eat of it, you die. And Adam called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all living.

Now, it was suggested by somebody to me, does this mean maybe that she had already had children before the fall? After all, why would Adam at this point call her the mother of all living if there weren't any other living? But I think that, I think this is more or less, Adam knew that she was going to become the mother of all living and that that name would be appropriate for her rather than that she already had children. Because had they had any children before the fall, we would have to say that those children would have been born unfallen. Those children would have been born sinless.

The problem with that is presumably they'd still be around because they wouldn't have to die. Sinless people don't have to die. And therefore, where are they? You know, I mean, they would still be living now 6,000 years later because only those who sin have to die.

And if they were sinless people, then they would be still around. I think that the Bible's fairly emphatic that all people sinned in Adam. And that means that all people were in Adam at the time that he sinned.

That is, the race fell together. And everybody who's been born afterward is born in the condition that theologians call fallen. I say theologians call it because actually that term's not found in the Bible.

The term the fall or fallen, which we use all the time when we're talking about this story and the effects of this story, those actual words are not in the Bible. And some of the things that we think about the fall are not specifically stated in the Bible either. Some of them are simply observations that we make.

For example, it is generally said that as a result of the fall, man is born in a state of original sin. I believe Augustine was perhaps the first to actually state it that way. But the point is, there is observational evidence that there is something broken about men from birth, people from birth.

And the doctrine of original sin is frankly, it's not really laid out in Scripture anywhere, but it is something that's awfully hard to refute because everybody obviously sins. We've never met a person yet who doesn't sin since Adam. Now, there is one place where the Bible is taught to teach on this subject.

It's in Romans chapter 5, and it does talk about what Adam's sin, how it affected the human race. Romans 5.12 says, Therefore, just as through one man, and this means Adam, sin entered the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. For until the law, sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed where there is no law.

Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of him who is to come. Now, I might just say that this discussion goes on to the end of the chapter. And if Paul has not lost your train of thought in those verses, trust me, he will if you read further.

This is considered to be one of the most confusing passages in Paul's writings. In fact, some scholars have said it's perhaps the most obscure and difficult passage in the entire New Testament. Because Paul is making an interesting argument.

It's not entirely clear all the things he's really trying to say. He says that Adam and Christ stand in some kind of correspondence with each other. In fact, he says that Adam is a type of Christ.

The word typos, type, is used here. And actually Adam is the only person that the New Testament says is a type of Christ. We know of others but the New Testament only uses

this word with reference to Adam being a type of Christ.

But of course the type is somewhat of a contrasting sort. Usually we think of a type in the Old Testament as resembling something in Christ or in the New Testament. And there is something about Adam that resembles Christ.

But it's more of a contrast than it is a likeness. What they have in common is this, that both Adam and Christ founded a new humanity. Or what Paul elsewhere calls a man.

The word anthropos in the Greek is the word man. But it also means humanity. Just like our English word man does.

If you find a book that's called The History of Man, you don't assume it's talking about an individual man. You know the word man means mankind. And so does anthropos.

Anthropos means mankind or an individual man. Now Adam and Christ, Paul takes that fact and makes both of them out to be not only individual men but corporate beings. Christ is a body with many members and we are the members.

The society that is in Christ is Christ. Collectively says Paul. Not here but elsewhere.

For example in Ephesians and in 1 Corinthians. For example in 1 Corinthians 12 Paul says, For as a human body is one body that has many members, but all the members being many are yet one body, so also is Christ. Paul says.

1 Corinthians 12, I think it's verse 12 or 13. And so he says that a human body is like Christ. What? It's a head and many members.

Christ is a head and many members and we're the members. We are members of Christ, Paul says elsewhere. Or as he says in the last verse of Ephesians 1, that the church is Christ's body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Paul sees the church as not just the club of the group of people who admire Christ. We are in Christ like the organs of your body are in you. Collectively the church and the head are Christ, at least in some ways that Paul speaks.

But what is not spoken of so clearly but is still there is Paul sees Adam the same way. Adam is the head of a body too. And all people are either in Adam or they are in Christ.

They are either part of the corporate body of Adam, which is humanity unredeemed and sinful. Or they are part of the corporate body of Christ, the corporate Christ. Now, this comes out later in Paul's writings, beyond Romans 5, where Paul uses the term the old man and the new man.

And while I didn't intend to go this deep theologically with you, but this is perhaps something that people do need to observe. There are translations that confuse this,

translations in English. Paul on, in four different occasions used the term either the new man or the old man or both in a passage.

And unfortunately many translations, I think the NIV among them and others, translate the old man as the old self and the new man as the new self. So when Paul talks, he makes this contrast between the old man and the new man, these modern translations stress that the old self and the new self. And of course that, that's misleading because really that's suggesting that when Paul's talking about this contrast, he's contrasting two different me's.

Me and my old self and me and my new self. It's all me. But Paul when he talks about the old man and the new man is talking about the corporate man.

The new man is Christ. And we are in the new man. The new man isn't in me, I'm in the new man.

Christ. And the old man is Adam. The old man isn't in me, I'm in the old man if I'm not in Christ.

I'm in one or the other. The old man is Adam, the new man is Christ. We see this, for example, the first time Paul uses this kind of language where he only speaks about the old man in Romans chapter 6, verse 6. But in Romans 6, 6 Paul says, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

This too is a difficult verse in many ways because there's certain terms here that Paul doesn't use anywhere else. For example, the term the body of sin. It's not found anywhere else in his writing and it's not entirely obvious what it refers to.

It's interesting, but we have to wait until we study Romans to really delve into it. But what is here is our old man. Now sadly some translations say our old self, but they're missing Paul's point.

He could have said our old self if he wanted to. There are Greek words for that concept. He used the Greek words our old man, our old anthropos.

But he does not explain what it means. Or does he? Does chapter 5 explain what he means? One man, Adam, one man, Christ. One of them is older than the other in the sense that he was here first.

Adam came here first, then Christ second. The old man is Adam. Through one man, death came.

Through one man, sin came. Through another man, life and justification. And later in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul says, and resurrection from the dead came through one man.

But the point here is the older man is Adam. And let me show you the other places where Paul talks in this language so you'll see that this is the correct understanding. If you turn to Ephesians 2, Paul is talking about how God has taken the Jewish believers as a class, and the Gentile believers as a class, has removed the basis of animosity that had existed between Jews and Gentiles, and joined them together in Christ.

That is in the church. But notice what he says in verse 14. For he himself is our peace, who has made both, Jew and Gentile, one, and has broken down the middle wall of division between us, having abolished in his flesh, that is in the body of Christ, the enmity, that is the law of the commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in himself, that is in Christ, he has created one, what? New man.

The body of Christ is the new man, from the two, thus making peace. Now, this is the closest Paul comes to ever telling us what the new man is. He says, well, it's when God took Jews and Gentiles, and joined them together in one, that in Christ, they are a new man.

But then he uses the term again in chapter 4, and he contrasts it with the old man. In Ephesians 4, in verse 22, Paul says that you must put off concerning your former conduct, the old man, which grows corrupt according to deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and true holiness. The body of Christ is the new man, Paul has told us that already in Ephesians 2.14 and 15.

But the old man, who is that? Well, that is our old man, Adam, the old man. Sometimes people speak of their father as their old man. Well, Adam was our old man.

Our former dad, our former identity, the former solidarity that defined who we were. But now we're in a different solidarity, a different oneness, a one man, a new man, who is in Christ. And we must put on the new man, put off the old man.

Now elsewhere, Paul says you must put on the Lord Jesus Christ. In Romans 13, he says, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, to make no provision for the flesh. We put on the new man.

But notice, the imagery is of clothing. When you put on clothing, you are in the clothing. The clothing is not in you.

The new man is not something in you. The new man is something bigger than you. You come into it like you would come into a garment.

And when you wear that, when you wear Christ, when you come into his body and become part of him, and you are in him, then that body is created by God in righteousness and true holiness. And that's where your behavior comes to be defined, by the behavior of Christ, not of Adam. And in Colossians chapter 2, we have the only remaining place where Paul uses this kind of language, excuse me, chapter 3, Colossians

3. In verse 9, Colossians 3, 9, Paul says, do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.

You've kind of shed that garment of being in Adam, and the deeds associated with Adam. And you have put on the new man. Again, the imagery of putting on clothing.

Who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of him who created him. Where, notice verse 11, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but where Christ is all in all. Where is that? Where is there no Jew or Gentile? Where is there no barbarian, Scythian, bond of free? Where? But in the body of Christ.

Paul says that's in the new man. In the new man, there's no Jew or Gentile. Because the new man is the body of Christ.

And Paul speaks that way on all the occasions when he uses that language. So, the point here is that Adam isn't just the guy, Adam. He is the head of a body, and we were born into that body.

Now, Adam, after he sinned, was a changed man. Not for the better. He was a sinful man.

He was a man where sin had gotten a hook in him. And therefore, he no doubt found it easier to sin in the future. This is what we sometimes refer to as the sin nature.

Although that too is a term the Bible never uses. The Bible never talks about the sin nature. It's a theological term, but the idea is that people are born with an inclination of their nature to sin.

So, we have the idea of original sin. We have the idea of a sin nature and so forth that theologians talk about. All associated with the fall here.

There's even that Calvinistic concept of the total depravity that they say occurred at the fall. Interestingly, the Bible doesn't say that these things happened at the fall. We don't read about them in Genesis 3. We don't actually read about total depravity.

Even in Romans 5 or 1 Corinthians 15, the two New Testament passages that talk about the fall. But the point is, there are observational truths we see, and certainly the Bible says all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, so we're all sinners. But exactly how that has come to be, I assume that's for me, that's what theologians try to patch together.

I will say this, that the orthodox view of original sin contains two elements. One of them I think is indisputably true. The other one is disputable.

The two elements in the orthodox doctrine of original sin, which Augustine formulated in

the 4th century, are that people are born with two negative effects of sin on them. One, we are born already guilty because of what Adam did, and therefore already condemned by God before we even take our first breath. We have imputed sin to us.

Adam's sin is imputed to us, they say. And therefore, even a baby is born damned. Now this is why churches, at least some churches, the Roman Catholic Church at least, began to practice infant baptism.

Because they say babies are born with original sin, they're born damned. But infant baptism cleanses, they say, original sin. That's what the Catholic Church teaches.

And therefore, you can get your baby saved, at least provisionally, until later. Later you'll have it confirmed once it gets old enough to be confirmed. But get your baby baptized right away, that'll wash away the original sin.

That way if your baby happens to die, in infancy, it'll go to heaven. The implication is if a baby of a non-Christian dies, it doesn't go to heaven because it's damned, it didn't get baptized. This doctrine, to my mind, has very little in common with anything the Bible says.

I don't find that the Bible does say that babies are born guilty. If it does, it's in Romans 5.12, which we looked at. And I'll tell you where they get that.

There's only one verse in the whole Bible that has ever been quote, well there's another one that's much more ambiguous, and that's in Psalm 51. But in Romans 5, verse 12, where Paul said, Therefore just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because all sinned. This last line, because all sinned, some commentators say this means all sinned when Adam sinned.

Because of the solidarity of the body of Adam, we're all part of it. And therefore, individually, we become personally guilty of Adam's sin. All of us sinned when Adam sinned, is what they understand it to be.

However, there is obviously another way to see this. It says death spread to all men because all sinned. Could easily mean, well, because I sinned, personally, I will die.

Certainly it says in Ezekiel, the soul that sins, it will die. In fact, in the same passage in Ezekiel 18, it says the soul that sins, it will die. It says a son will not be held responsible for his father's sins, and a father will not be held responsible for his son's sins.

If that is indeed the way God judges, then it's hard to see how a doctrine could be true that a child is born guilty, and therefore go to hell for those sins. Now, there's another part, though, of the doctrine, and that is, and I think is true, and that is that people are born with an inclination to sin. People are born with a nature that is flawed by sin from the beginning, but by being part of a flawed human family, we have a sinful nature,

which means it's more natural for us to do the wrong thing than the right thing.

It's easier for us to do the selfish thing than to do the godly thing. And that sin nature is our enemy, and it's with us from birth. And you can see it.

You can see it in children at very early ages. It has to be dealt with. It says in Proverbs, foolishness, now by the way, Proverbs foolishness is a moral defect, not just a mental defect.

In Proverbs it says foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod will drive it from it. So there is in the child at birth this moral foolishness, but it can be helped. It can be trained out of them.

Now, I say there was one other verse that is sometimes used about original sin that is considered to be, maybe a proof that children are born guilty of sin, and that's in Psalm 51. I don't find that this verse says it all that plainly, and it does, it certainly can be understood differently. But David of course when he wrote Psalm 51 was repenting for his sin that he committed with Bathsheba.

And in verse 4 and 5 it says, Against you, you only have I sinned and done this evil in your sight, that you may be found just when you speak and blameless when you judge. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, you desire truth in the inward parts.

Now, he says, I was brought forth, he means into the world, in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. This verse, seen through the grid of the Augustinian doctrine, would say, he's saying I was born guilty of sin. I was conceived guilty of sin.

I was in sin when my mother conceived me. Though it would seem, you know, equally possible for it to mean I was born under the effects of sin. To be under the effect of sin doesn't mean to be under the guilt of sin.

A child can be under the effects of a disease without having any moral responsibility for having acquired that disease. A child can be born a cracked baby, addicted to crack cocaine because the mother was addicted to crack cocaine. We could say the baby was born an addict, but that doesn't mean the baby was born with the responsibility that comes of an addict.

The mother is the one who used the crack cocaine. The Jews had a saying among themselves which the prophets rebuked them for. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel rebuked them for the saying, the fathers have eaten wild grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge.

It was a Jewish proverb. What's it mean? Well, usually if you eat something sour, you grimace. You know, you eat a sour wild grape and your teeth are set on edge, you

grimace from the response to eating it.

And the Jews were saying, our fathers ate sour grapes and we're the ones who have to grimace. In other words, we're suffering because our fathers did something. And both the prophet Ezekiel and Jeremiah said, that is not the way it is.

You ate the sour grapes and that's why your teeth are set on edge. Don't say your fathers ate the sour grapes and your teeth are set on edge. You're guilty.

The soul that sins will die. That's what he said in that context. But it is sometimes true that the mother or the father takes the drugs, becomes the addict and the child is born addicted.

That's true. The child may be born addicted but not guilty. The mother committed a crime, the child is not going to be punishable.

It's not responsible for what the mother did. But it is handicapped. It is afflicted.

It does have something that controls it that is not good. And sin is a little bit like that, I think. That we are born and conceived under the influence of this sin in our nature.

But I don't see any clear teaching of scripture that says we're born already guilty so that the baby who dies goes to hell, unless it's baptized by God. I actually believe that Jesus said that babies belong to God. Remember when they brought children to Jesus in Mark it specifically says they were infants but other passages say children.

But Jesus said do not forbid the little children's country because of such is the kingdom of God. Of what? Of such as them. He seemed to certainly be saying that these are the folks and the type of folks that belong to God.

These children. Jesus spoke of children as being models for us. You must humble yourself like a child.

Children are sinful but God seemed to think children are innocent until a certain point. In Isaiah chapter 7 it talks about the birth of a child and it says before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good. The land which you dread shall be abandoned by both of her kings.

Basically it's talking about a child being born and reaching an age where it knows to choose good and refuse evil. That is an age apparently of accountability. Adam and Eve became guilty when they obtained the knowledge of good and evil from eating that tree.

And so as I understand it what Adam's sin did to us was bring us into bondage to sin. And only Christ can free us from that bondage. We're born in that bondage.

But in terms of personal responsibility and eternal destiny I don't personally see that the

Bible says that Adam's sin is sending me to hell. I can't blame Adam any more than Adam could really blame Eve. When I sin it's my fault.

True I was born handicapped. But you know what if you're born with a handicap that just defines what your challenge is doesn't it? I mean a handicapped person, there are many people who have had childhood diseases and crippling diseases or have lost limbs in accidents and so forth and they just decide that's not going to stop them. They go become athletes, champion athletes.

You hear some of their stories. You may know there's a young man giving his testimony at churches around, I forget what his name is, sorry. He's got a ministry called I think Life Without Limbs.

He was born without limbs. He's just a torso and a head. And yet he walks, he does things.

You know he doesn't walk like we walk. But we can't just say I was born handicapped so poor me. Well we are all born handicapped.

We are born with a burden on our back. We are born with an addiction to sin. But that simply defines where the challenge is for us to overcome.

We must turn to God. We must have God's assistance. We must have the grace of God given to cover our failures and to assist us and to be a help in time of need.

We do have this lasting effect on the human race from the first sin of our parents. The last few verses of chapter 3 we'll just run through. Verse 21, Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin and clothing.

We actually talked about that earlier. Then the Lord God said, Behold the man has become like one of us to know good and evil. And now lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever.

God doesn't even finish the sentence. It's too awful to think of the consequences. I won't even speak of it.

He says, Therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So he drove out the man and he placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden and a flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. So God says now that man is in this condition he cannot live forever in this condition.

For one thing there's a punishment due. For another thing it would be a disaster to have a selfish sinful person never reach an end to his career. If the most sinful people in history were never going to die we would still have Hitler to contend with.

We'd still have Nero to contend with. We'd still have, well the world would have me to contend with forever. But the thing is we are sinners and fortunately we don't stay sinners forever because we don't live as sinners forever.

We die. And then of course we can live again. If we find grace we can live again.

Now the way to the tree of life which clearly was the means of immortality. Lest he eat of the fruit and live forever. Eating of that fruit would confer immortality.

Living forever. That way was now blocked. Adam and Eve could have eaten it prior to this as often as they wished and lived forever.

But now no longer. They're cut off from that source. Is that because God doesn't want people to live forever? No he does want people to live forever but not in the fallen condition that they're in.

He wants a redeemed humanity to live forever. But in order to make a path to that tree of life again there's a sword to contend with. A flaming sword.

A cherub or cherubim plural and a sword. And it's as if to say if you want to have eternal life you're going to have to get past this sword. But you know Jesus obtained eternal life for us by getting past that sword.

It says in Zechariah chapter 13. Awake O sword against my shepherd. Smite the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.

Jesus quoted that verse about himself. The latter part of it. Awake O sword against my shepherd.

The sword stabbed Jesus. Now what's interesting is that Jesus didn't literally die by a sword. He died by crucifixion and that was confirmed by a spear being poked into his side.

But why does the scripture say awake O sword against my shepherd. Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. I don't know but perhaps it looks back at this sword.

That the sword that blocks the way to man's access to eternal life has got to be sheathed in Christ. By him taking the sword. The shepherd being smitten instead of the sheep.

So that the sheep ultimately can have access to the tree of life. And you do find in the book of Revelation in the New Jerusalem the tree of life is there. Bearing twelve manna fruits twelve times a year.

And those who are redeemed have free access to it. Because of what Christ has done. Not because of anything they have done.

It's because Christ has taken on that sword upon himself and has made access to the tree of life for us. Well why don't we stop there and take a fika break and we'll have our last segment when we come back.