

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: December 7, 2008

Title: The Storyline of the Bible - Now What? - The Presence of Evil

Text: Genesis 3:1-19

Theme: Sin sets the stage for the power, the justice and grace of God.

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

The Storyline of the Bible

Date: Dec. 7, 2008
 Title: "Now What?" - The Presence of Evil
 Text: Genesis 3:1-19

Theme: Sin sets the stage for the power, the justice and grace of God.

Introduction:

Why sin? Sin, is perhaps, the hardest truth for mortal man to accept. Sin is problematic not only because of its hideousness, but because of its application. Sin is a very real part of our present condition. We cannot fully appreciate the scope of sin's permeation into our makeup, nor can we fully comprehend what life will be like without it. Yet, why would a good God permit the entrance of sin into a perfect universe? This question has puzzled thoughtful people for centuries. There is no truly adequate answer. Man does not have the capability of answering the question because of his finiteness and sin. Furthermore, the Bible is silent.

"One of the most influential and powerful 'proofs' that there is no God proceeds from 'The Problem of Evil.' This argument claims that the following three statements cannot *all* be true: (a) evil exists; (b) God is omnipotent; and (c) God is all-loving. The argument is as follows. If God can prevent evil, but *doesn't*, then He isn't all-loving. If God intends to prevent evil, but *cannot*, then He isn't omnipotent. If God *both* intends to prevent evil and is capable of doing so, then how can evil exist?" (*The New York Public Library Desk Reference*, 1993, 266).

There are several assumptions in their argumentation. **The first assumption** is that an all-loving God would never permit evil to take place. Yet, love is not the absence of evil. God's love for His son was enormous, though it did not prevent Him from sending Him to die for humanity's sins. **The second assumption** is that omnipotence would stop evil. Though omnipotence could stop evil should it so choose, it does not demand that evil be stopped. Since omnipotence can control evil, it can use evil for its own end. **The third assumption** is that evil serves no purpose. Evil, pain, sorrow, tragedy all have their place. Fatalism denies their purpose, yet Christianity acknowledges the value of such tools when placed in the Master's hand. **God is all-wise. God uses the best means to accomplish the highest good for His ultimate glory and man's benefit.** As a sovereign ruler he may do as He wills (Rom 9:18-23).

It is obvious (a) that God has permitted sin, and (b) hence it was right for Him to do so. But why it was right must ever remain a mystery demanding submission and defying solution. As we consider this idea concerning sin's presence, there are many different angles from which we can approach this topic. I will attempt to look at it textually. Even though I would love to explore the idea of sin's origin, I also feel compelled to stick to what we do know, and what we do know is that sin exists and it is a part of the story. While no one applauds the villain in the plot, he often plays a key role in making the story move forward and he provides the necessary contrast with good. The villain heightens the hero.

"In fiction, villains commonly function in **the dual role of adversary and foil to the story's heroes**. In their role as adversary, the villain serves as an obstacle the hero must struggle to overcome. In their role as foil, the villain exemplifies characteristics that are diametrically opposed to those of the hero, creating a contrast distinguishing heroic traits from villainous ones." <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villain>

In the story of God, the villain is sin and the devil. God wrote the villain into His story. Although we cannot know exhaustively as to why He wrote the villain into the story, we do know the villain will show the power, justice, and grace of God.

THE BIG PICTURE

Nov. 30	The Person and Purpose of God
Dec. 7	<u>"Now What?" - The Presence of Evil</u>
Dec. 14	"Your Days Are Numbered" - The Promise of a Savior
Dec. 21	"What Child Is This?" - The Seed of the Woman - Part 1
Dec. 24	"What Child Is This?" - The Seed of the Woman - Part 2
Dec. 28	"Hallelujah, What a Savior" - The Victory of God
Jan. 4	"Where Do We Go From Here?" - The Mission of God in the Mission of the Church - Part 1
Jan. 11	"Where Do We Go From Here?" - The Mission of God in the Mission of the Church - Part 2

Its Eternal Value:

Remember the following four "chapters" within the story of God?

- Creation is for His Glory - The Power of God
Creation is from Him, through Him, and for Him.
- Transgression is for His Glory - The Mystery of God
As transgression is a part of the larger picture, God is glorified.
- Condemnation is for His Glory - The Justice of God
In God's judgment against transgression, God is glorified.
- Redemption is for His Glory - The Grace of God
Because some are saved and not all damned, God is glorified.

Today we will focus on the introducing of sin into the story.

It is necessary for us to interpret each episode as a part of the ongoing story and not in isolation from each other. If we fail to see the big picture and make the necessary connections, it will have profound consequences for us in our understanding of Genesis' view of sin.

"Genesis 1-11 **presents a kaleidoscope of events rather than a connected history**; the earliest stories are concerned to expound the origin of sin and its consequences, the relationship of man and woman, and above all the relationship of God and man."

http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/genesisone_payne.pdf "Genesis One Reconsidered," D.F. Payne, M.A., page 19. This booklet was originally published by the Tyndale Press in 1964 and is reproduced here by permission of the author.

The Storyline:

Sin is introduced as the villain to the story. With sin God shows His power, His justice, and His grace.

The Problem:

Our desire is to begin seeing how total our depravity truly is. The rift between God and man is so vast as to disqualify humanity from ever hoping to achieve resolution apart from the divine initiative.

Questions:

1. Were Adam and Eve perfectly righteous before God in their pre-Fall state?
2. Has Christ restored man to his pre-Fall state or to something more?
3. Describe the condition of Adam and Eve after sin.
4. Is sin an intentional part of the story?
5. Is this part of the story continuing today?
6. Can anyone say they sin to the glory of God?
7. Does all sin have an inherent demerit?
8. Does any sin go unpunished?

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know that God is over sin.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose God instead of sin.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of choosing God instead of sin.

Introduction:

The narrative in Genesis 2-3 is not interested in describing the situation before the fall, but in explaining man's present plight. Why he suffers from frustration, toil, pain and death. The manifold, profound troubles in human life have their root in the *one* trouble of man's relationship to God. Expressed more concisely, Genesis 3 asserts that all sorrow comes from sin. Man was surrounded completely by God's providential goodness. Paradise is irreparably lost; what is left for man is a life of trouble in the shadow of a crushing riddle, a life entangled in an unbounded and completely hopeless struggle with the power of evil and in the end unavoidably subject to the majesty of death. ("Original Sin in Genesis 1-11," Churchman 104/4 1990, Gordon Wenham quoting G. Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* [London: S.C.M. Press, 1972]. Second Edition, 101, 102)

"Whatever the apparent inconsistencies, and whatever the explanation of them, it is at any rate clear that Genesis 1-3 forms a clear unity. Neither Genesis 1 nor Genesis 2 stands alone. The two chapters have their individual teaching, but they are integral to the Book of Genesis and indeed to the whole Pentateuch. So the second chapter 'forms an organic transition to the story of the Fall' in the following chapter."
http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/genesisone_payne.pdf "Genesis One Reconsidered," D.F. Payne,

M.A., page 28. This booklet was originally published by the Tyndale Press in 1964 and is reproduced here by permission of the author.

Outline:

I. Sin is a part of the Story

Genesis 1 and 2 presuppose Genesis 3. The picture inside of 1 and 2 is “heavenly.” God saw everything He made and it was very good. Chapters 1 and 2 are setting us up for Genesis 3 through Revelation 22. There are four thoughts inside of Genesis 1, 2 and 3 that prove this idea.

A. This can be seen in Adam and Eve’s enjoyment of God’s presence (Gen. 1:26, 27).

God immediately paints a picture of intimate communion. Genesis lays down the idea of covenant and relationship from the start. He created mankind in order that they might enjoy His presence. God placed man in the Garden in order that man might worship and obey Him. Mankind served as a vice-regent for God. It is hard for us to fully process the interchange between God and man prior to sin, but Adam and Eve would fellowship with God in the cool of the day. This paradise was not because of the absence of pain and suffering or the presence of every notable pleasure, but rather the very presence of God and the enjoyment of such by Adam and Eve. This is what sin will destroy.

B. This can be seen in a singular prohibition (Gen. 2:16, 17).

“Genesis 2:15, 16 imply that God led Adam to the garden personally, and this is in keeping with the unspoiled, intimate relationship between Adam and his Creator.” (John J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975], 83).

God places in the Garden of Eden a test for Adam and Eve. God could have absent such a thing if He so willed. Adam and Eve made thousands of choices every day and everyone was completely moral. There was only one choice that would introduce death into the world and it was to violate this singular prohibition. The test was to see whether or not they would obey God or their desires.

“Adam and Eve were free both to sin and not to sin, and, urged by the tempter, they exercised the freedom to sin. The seemingly insignificant act of eating fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil had the drastic repercussions of plunging the whole human race into sin.” (Herbert Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch* [Chicago: Moody, 1991], 32).

“The inference of God’s commands in vv. 16-17 is that God alone knows what is good for man and that God alone knows what is not good for him. To enjoy the ‘good’ man must trust God and obey him. If man disobeys, he will have to decide for himself what is good and what is not good. While to modern man such a prospect may seem

desirable, to the author of Genesis it is the worst fate that could have befallen him. Only God knows what is good for man. Only God can know what is good." ("Genesis," John H. Sailhamer, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, 2:45).

Before sin happened God was already speaking of "death." When we read the statement in Genesis 2:17 it presupposes we know what death is or that Adam and Eve had an idea as to what this entailed.

C. This can be seen in having no shame (Gen. 2:25).

Neither Adam nor Eve had any shame. There was no guilt between them. This is what sin will destroy. It is important to read 2:25 with 3:1. We are being set up by the author of the book for the events that are about to transpire.

D. This can be seen in the presence of a tempting serpent (Gen. 3:1).

Although our immediate text does not tell us how the serpent became the tempter, he is brought into the story with relative ease. We go from the "very good" of Genesis 1:31 to "Now the serpent was more crafty" (Gen. 3:1). Nothing up to this point is surprising. The story is building up to an initial climax whereby the first test will be played out. Satan through the serpent tempts Adam and Eve in the one area where the prohibition exists. He continues to tempt us in those three areas. Everything is perfect and now something dark enters the story. The serpent immediately attacks God's integrity and position as Creator.

Sin is rejecting God's will and accepting self-will. This is sin at its essence. When we read the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6:9, 10 these two elements are present. Whose honor do we desire, whose kingdom do we want, whose will do we seek: God or ours? In the garden, Adam and Eve sought their glory, their kingdom, and their will. In all temptation we are confronted with the accepting of God's will or the rejecting of the same. What we find in Genesis 3 is the relationship of temptation to the Word of God and to the Will of man. But the issue is still whose will are you going to obey?

"Man's disobedience is not so much depicted as an act of great wickedness or a great transgression as much as it is an act of great folly. He had all the 'good' he would have needed, but he wanted more - he wanted to be like God." ("Genesis," John H. Sailhamer, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, 2:50).

1. The Word of God and Temptation.

Temptation focuses on the Word of God because it is through His Word we come to understand His will. The devil questions God's motive. He makes what is positive into a negative.

- a. The devil raised a doubt concerning the Word from God.

“The sense would be, ‘is it really true that . . . ?’ It suggests that perhaps God was not being completely fair with Adam and Eve, despite the fact that He had granted them access to all other trees. The question, designed to elicit a response, attacks the sanctity and appropriateness of God’s word. (John J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975], 88).

- b. Eve distorted the Word from God by adding to it.

“God promised that death **would** follow disobedience; Eve implied only that death **might** follow.” ([emphasis his] John J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975], 88).

- c. The devil denied what God said was true.

“The Hebrew construction is extremely emphatic, just as emphatic as that of God’s promise to punish disobedience.” (John J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975], 89).

2. The Will of Man and Temptation

“Satan's temptation may be summed up as appealing to man in this way: It made him desire to have what God had forbidden, to know what God had not revealed, and to be what God had not intended him to be.” (Theissen, *Systematic Theology*, 254)

In all three areas you will decide who will rule your life: God or you? Eve believes she knows what is best for her and Adam against that which God declares to be good.

- a. The lust of the eyes (“The woman saw” [1 John 2:16])
- b. The lust of the flesh (“It was a delight to the eyes” [1 John 2:16])
- c. The pride of life (“The tree was desirable to make one wise”)
 - aa. Achan and Jericho (Joshua 7:21).
 - bb. David and Bethsheba (2 Sam. 11:2-4).

That which God permits is for our pleasure, and that which God prohibits is for our protection. Anytime you disobey God’s declared will you will forfeit peace.

II. Sin brings death into the story.

“Genesis 3 does not describe the origin of sin, but it does describe the entrance of sin into the realm of humanity. Genesis 3 describes a historical event; Adam and Eve were historical people who sinned against God in time and space.” (Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* [Chicago: Moody, 1989], 307).

“Genesis 3 explains the human dilemma. All the problems in the universe have their origin in the events of this historic account. Say that again: All the problems in the universe -- physical problems, spiritual problems, moral problems, social problems, economic problems, and political problems -- all the problems in the universe have their origin in the events of this historic account. This Chapter then is the foundation of any true and accurate world view. And without this foundation, every and any world view is utterly wrong.”

<http://www.biblebb.com/files/MAC/90-233.htm> The following message was delivered at Grace Community Church in Panorama City, California, by John MacArthur Jr. It was transcribed from the tape, GC 90-233, titled "What is Sin?" (Genesis 3:1-7).

God tells Adam and Eve that in the day they disobey they will die. Based on what we have already seen, we can begin to understand what is meant by “death.” There are six statements helping us comprehend what this “death” entails.

A. This can be seen in Adam and Eve rejecting God’s will (Gen. 3:1-7).

Death is living under self-will. This is the essence of sin and it is the face of death. Adam and Eve determine that they know better than God as to what is best for them. This continues to be the essence of our fallen condition.

B. This can be seen in their attempt to cover their nakedness (Gen. 3:7).

Death is living with shame and guilt. Humanity is fully aware of this shame and guilt and have determined and attempted to do whatever is necessary to cover it. But all of their determinations and attempts have failed. This is the rise of world religions where the true God and His purpose have been rejected.

C. This can be seen in them hiding from God (Gen. 3:8-10).

Death is living with fear. “The Lord had evidently visited the garden and communed with Adam and Eve on many occasions prior to the fall. This time, however, the sound of God walking in the garden aroused fear rather than joyful anticipation.” (John J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975], 92).

Ever since this moment in time, “The natural inclination of the heart is not to seek God but to hide from Him” (Rom. 3:11).

- D. This can be seen in their refusal to accept responsibility for their sin (Gen. 3:11-13).

Death is living with self-deception. Sin refuses to accept responsibility for its choices. Self-will is self-rule. In self-will you are the ultimate authority and no one can hold you responsible. You are the law.

“When the Lord inquired who had told them they were naked, and when He further inquired if they had eaten the forbidden fruit, Adam blamed Eve for giving him the fruit and Eve blamed the serpent for beguiling her. God was silent. Adam and Eve knew they were fully responsible for what they had done; sin always blurs a man’s perspective and prevents him from candidly assessing his guilt.” (John J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975], 92).

- E. This can be seen in the pronouncement of sentence against them by God (Gen. 3:14-19).

Death is living with suffering and misery.

1. The serpent will “eat dust” and take the position of defeat.
2. Eve’s relationship to child bearing and to her husband (“others”) will now become problematic.
3. Adam would now engage in toilsome labor to secure a living.
4. The world becomes dark.

- F. This can be seen in their expulsion from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:23, 24).

Death is living with separation. This is what was lost with sin, and this is what God will restore in salvation. Mankind’s quest to be “like God” removed him from being “with God.”

“The expulsion was not merely geographical; it was spiritual. Fellowship between man and God was broken.” (John J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975], 95).

“In this subtle verbal interchange, the author has shown that man’s happiness does not consist of his being ‘like God’ so much as it does his being ‘with God,’ enjoying the blessing of His presence.” (“Genesis,” John H. Sailhamer, in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, 2:59).

Lest we think what we have here is an ancient tale that has no bearing on who we are and where we currently exist, let us finish the story.

III. Sin is still a part of the Story

It is quite elemental, but for anyone outlining the first eleven chapters of Genesis the first four words are: creation, fall, flood, Babel. Every one of these events highlights the continued downward spiral of humanity and the overarching spread of sin.

Commenting on the Cain and Abel story von Rad says: The narrator shows what happened to mankind when once it had fallen from obedience to God. This is actually the first picture of man after he was expelled from Paradise and the picture is a terrible one. **Sin has grown like an avalanche.** It has taken total possession of the man who associated with it, for this man outside of Paradise is a fratricide [“the killing of one’s brother or sister”] from the beginning. The story expresses something of the essential element of all mankind by condensing it into a picture of quite elemental power (page 108). Von Rad describes the plot of Genesis 2-11 more than once as **the progressive power of sin engulfing humanity in an ‘avalanche** (pages 117, 152). Further steps in man’s downward path are noted in Lamech (4:23-24) and in the Sons of God episode (6:1-8). From Adam and Eve to the Tower of Babel, **Genesis portrays sin as laying waste ever larger areas of human activity. This succession of narratives, therefore, points out a continually widening chasm between man and God.** But God reacts to these outbreaks of sin with severe judgments. The punishment of Adam and Eve was severe; severer still was Cain’s. Then followed the Flood and the final judgment was the Dispersion, the dissolution of mankind’s unity (page 152). (“Original Sin in Genesis 1-11,” Churchman 104/4 1990, Gordon Wenham quoting G. Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* [London: S.C.M. Press, 1972]. Second Edition)

Genesis 6:5 must count among the most devastating analyses of the human condition in all Scripture. It may be translated: ‘the LORD saw that the evil of man was great in the earth and that every idea of the plans of his mind was nothing but evil all the time.’ The phrase ‘the LORD saw’ recalls the refrain of Genesis 1 ‘God saw that it was good’ and its climax ‘God saw all that he had made that it was very good.’ The contrast could hardly be more total. Note in 6:5 the twice repeated ‘every/all’ and ‘evil’ (contrasting with ‘good’). **Genesis 1-11 presents a very gloomy picture of the human situation without the grace of God. A perfect creation is spoiled by human sin, sin which eventually reaches such a pitch that the old world must be destroyed and a new world created. But this world is not sinless. From his youth, post-diluvian man shows his depravity, and his mistakes mar his descendants’ future.** (“Original Sin in Genesis 1-11,” Churchman 104/4 1990, Gordon Wenham, 13)

There are two primary ideas I wish to leave us with concerning our present condition.

A. All of us are sinners by identification (Romans 5:12-21).

“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned –” (Rom. 5:12).

The Bible knows of only two types of people: those in Adam and those in Christ.

“We inherit it from our parents as they did from theirs, and so on back to the first parents, Adam and Eve. After they sinned they could only propagate after their kind; that is, their children were sinners by birth (Gen. 4:1; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12).” (Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 219)

B. All of us are sinners by participation (Romans 3:9-23).

⁹“What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; ¹⁰ as it is written, ‘THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; ¹¹ THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ¹² ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.’” (Rom. 3:9-12).

Although we might argue that it is unfair to be blamed for something we did not do, the Bible makes it equally clear that we are active participants in an open rebellion against the rule of God in and over our lives.

We struggle in understanding how sin can be a part of the story, yet our ability to comprehend the grace of God is significantly stunted until we see sin as a part of the story.

SHEPHERDING THE PEOPLE: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

It is always difficult to end the story here without telling you the rest of the story. I will leave this study by simply noting how from the very beginning God planned a Deliverer and deliverance. Two passages will simply be noted. First, God provides for a future Deliverer (Gen. 3:15). Second, God provides immediate deliverance (Gen. 3:7, 21). Let us take hope knowing that God is coming with a deliverer and deliverance.

1. Do you know that you are a sinner?
2. Do you feel your separation from God?
3. There is hope and it is found only in God making a way.