

LESSONS ON PREDESTINATION #35
"God Announces the Articles of War"
(Scriptures from NKJV)

So the Lord God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; For dust you are, and to dust you shall return."

And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them. 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"— 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." (Genesis 3:14-24)

INTRODUCTION: In the last lesson, we looked at the subject of God's preview of angelic and human history, especially in light of their fall into sin.

(1) We looked at the eternal wisdom of God and learned that God is the only Being in the universe who knows the end from the beginning, or the outcome before it ever starts. Thus, in any course of action upon which God embarks, He shall be successful in its completion, and nothing shall take Him by surprise along the way.

(2) Therefore, the sin of the angels and man was not an oversight on God's part, but was included in the outworking strategy of His eternal plan to glorify His Son. Hence, the announcement of His redemptive program for man was not to be viewed as an ambulance sent to the scene of an accident. Jesus was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. In Revelation 13:8 we read, ***"All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."***

(3) We looked at the various options which God could have chosen in reference to the sins of angels and men. The scope of His choice is known and expressed in the Bible as the election of God. The Bible reveals that God chose to bypass the fallen angels and spare

none of them so that they all became objects of His wrath and justice. In reference to man, the Bible reveals that God chose to save some of the fallen race so that they would become objects of His grace and mercy, and to reprobate or pass over the rest of the fallen race and make them the objects of His wrath and justice.

(4) We saw that God chose to execute His justice on the non-elect angels and men, not in the form of annihilation, but in the form of an eternal imprisonment in a cell of torment called by various names such as, Hell or Hades, or the second death, known also as the lake of fire.

(5) He would redeem and save His elect from mankind by the means of grace in the Person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ.

(6) This would be accomplished during a period of time in history, of which length He has kept hidden from the knowledge of all creatures.

(7) During this period of time, God would be allowing the non-elect angels and men an opportunity to attempt to achieve peace and happiness through the means of power and dominion over others. At the end of history, it will become obvious to all that peace is impossible to achieve apart from the will of God.

(8) When the last of the elect humanity has been saved, and the last vain imagination of the creature has been crushed, the end of time will come and God's final judgment will be executed in its eternal form.

Today we will observe God as He announces the rules or articles of war wherein He will allow sin to be conducted during the period of time in which He is calling out a people for His name's sake.

A. GOD ANNOUNCES FRUSTRATION AND DEFEAT FOR SATAN - Genesis 3:14-15.

So the Lord God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

1. This was because of his action taken in destroying man, ***"Because you have done this."*** v. 14a

2. Satan was demoted from the greatest of God's creatures to the lowest of God's

creatures. **"You are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field."** v. 14b. Compare this with Ezekiel 28:16, **"And you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God."**

3. Satan would be humiliated in the eyes of the moral universe. **"Upon your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life."** v. 14c. Compare Ezekiel 28:17-18. **"Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you. You defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading; therefore I brought fire from your midst; it devoured you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you."**

a. Dust is a symbol of humiliation - Psalm 7:5 illustrates this. **"Let the enemy pursue me and overtake me; yes, let him trample my life to the earth, and lay my honor in the dust. Selah"** Psalm 72:9 illustrates the defeat of God's enemies. **"Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, and His enemies will lick the dust."** Micah 7:17 uses the same figurative language to describe the defeat and humiliation of God's enemies. **"They shall lick the dust like a serpent; they shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth. They shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of You."** In the old western movies here in America, when a rider was shot off his horse, the term was used that he "bit the dust."

b. NOTE: While God is giving Satan an extended period of time to fight his warfare against God and man, he is informed that his defeat is sure.

4. This humiliation would spread like an internal fire and increase all the days of his existence. This will be due to his continued failures to expand his kingdom, while seeking to prevent God's plan to exalt His Son to the place of the supreme governor of the universe. - v. 15a **"I will put enmity between you and the woman."** Compare the statement in Ezekiel 28:18, **"You defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading; therefore I brought fire from your midst; it devoured you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you."**

NOTE: Internal frustration produces tension, rage, and malice.

5. Satan would experience a hateful opposition toward mankind making it impossible for him to love and serve humanity, especially the Messiah to come and His people. v. 15b **"between your seed and her Seed, He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise His heel."** While Satan's rage and warfare is against all mankind, his deepest

hatred is focused against God's decree of electing grace bestowed upon a remnant of Adam's race, **"enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed."**

B. GOD ANNOUNCES THE ARTICLES OR RULES OF WAR.

1. The creatures have declared war on God. Now God announces the rules or boundaries under which the war shall operate.

2. The warfare shall be fought with moral rules in place of swords and shields. For every rule broken, there shall be a painful moral consequence created by God. These rules are also known as laws of ethical conduct.

a. There is an informative statement describing these rules given in Isaiah 45:7 which reads, **"I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the Lord, do all these things."** The Hebrew word translated "calamity" is "ra". In the KJV it is translated "evil." There we read **"I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil."** It is also translated "wickedness, sorrow, wretchedness, adversity, and affliction."

There have been those who have attempted to protect God's holiness from implications which they make from this verse, which are not really there at all. They do not want to translate it as "evil" lest it imply that God creates sin. But this is unnecessary for the word "ra" is the common word for moral evil, but sometimes it is used in contrast to peace or good as it is in this text. Thus, God does cause the sorrow and calamity which follows sin and disobedience.

The statement in Isaiah 45:7 is a statement of the articles of the Divine warfare. God creates all the rules under which the rebellions of Satan and Adam shall be carried out. He will keep the combat within the bounds appointed, and the enemy shall not be permitted to pass over the limits set by the Divine wisdom of God.

b. Donald Barnhouse again gives us an illustration which helps to explain the relationship between what happens when the creature sins and the built-in punishments or consequences which occur after the sin. He says,

But suppose that the single manifestation of dependence upon God, instead of being a prohibition against eating a certain fruit, should have been a prohibition against stepping on a certain cornice stone of a high building. Man is in total ignorance of any of the consequences of stepping on the stone.

He does not know that the stone will rotate beneath him and precipitate him into a void beneath. He is ignorant of all that will succeed in definite order. He knows nothing of the law of gravity, of the law of increasing momentum, of the law of physical impact, of the law of the tensile weakness of human bones and of all the other laws involved in such a step. He finally decides that he is not going to be restricted by an order which tells him that he may walk freely over the whole edifice but that he may not step upon the cornice stone. He is impatient at what he regards as an infringement of his rights of personality, and he steps firmly upon the stone of disobedience. The force of gravity immediately draws his body toward the earth, the crushing impact breaks his bones in many places, and the man is instantly killed.

When Lucifer stepped out of the will of God and when Adam stepped out of the will of God, they stepped into a set of moral and spiritual laws created by God which instantly and inevitably operated. Some of those laws included even the nature of evil.

Several years ago two couples sat in our study while we tried to salvage the two homes from the wreckage caused by the adultery of the man from one home and the woman from the other. In the course of the conversation, the guilty woman burst out with this cry: "But tell me how it is possible for something that seemed so beautiful, so noble, so real at the beginning to have degenerated into something that is so degrading and hateful?" We explained that this was the nature of the rules that God had made for sinning. We read the passage in II Samuel where Amnon committed his great crime against Tamar. At the point in the story where the sin had been committed, there is a profoundly significant verse: ***"Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her"*** (II Samuel 13:15).

When we understand this principle, we can understand the state of mankind, the reasons for the perversions of the vicious, and the hypocrisies of what men call their human virtues. God made all things perfect: His was perfect wisdom, perfect justice, perfect righteousness. But a second will – not God's and therefore not perfect – was flaunted against His, and then multitudes of human wills. In order that it might be demonstrated forever that there is no good apart from His will, God in His love and grace created the nature of the whole horrible pattern of consequences which must follow the choice of any other will than His. If this truth could become established as a definite part of our thinking and be held constantly before our minds, perhaps we would not depart from the will of God so often. If man would say to himself that it is *impossible* to win, he might not try so often. Any thought of victory over God is an illusion.

c. NOTE: Thus, the creatures are to understand that all sin committed against the moral laws of God shall have built in consequences which shall cause frustration and unhappiness. When Adam stepped out of the will of God, he stepped into the laws which govern his warfare against God. Man may now run from God, but he will be pursued by the wages of sin: fears, sorrows, grief, guilt, frustrations, stress, anger, loneliness, etc.

C. GOD ANNOUNCES SORROW AND TRIBULATION FOR ADAM'S RACE - verses 16-19.

1. First, unto the woman - verse 16, ***"I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."***

a. Sorrow in child bearing - ***"multiply your sorrow and your conception, in pain you shall bring forth children."***

(1) These words have produced several varying interpretations which time will not allow us to cover. Some translations use "pain" instead of "sorrow" in the first part of the sentence. The question surfaces as to whether God is referring to the physical pain occurring in the process of childbirth, or if He is referring to the emotional pain which children can cause their parents.

(2) The second question is whether there are two statements which are separate in meaning or whether the second statement is but restating the first statement in different words. This is known as parallelism. I believe it is the latter.

(3) The next question is whether the "pain" involved is physical or emotional. I believe it is emotional pain that is being referred to. What leads me to believe this is the use of the word "multiply" or "increase." Are we to believe that Eve would have physical pain in childbirth before the fall and now it would only be increased or multiplied? Is this what God is telling us? I think not. Is it not rather that the "pain" associated with bearing children would continue in other ways throughout the mother's and father's life as those who are born in sin dishonor their parents and suffer in their own lives the consequences of their own disobedience? If this is the meaning, then the reference is to the lifelong pain children cause their parents. Look at how this was fulfilled in Eve's life with the event of Cain killing his brother, Abel!

b. Stress in marriage - ***"your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."***

There are three views as to the meaning of this expression. Time will only permit me to give what I think is the correct view. These words mark the beginning of the battle of the sexes. As a result of the fall, sin has corrupted both the willing submission of the wife to the husband, and the loving headship of the husband for the wife. The woman's desire is now to control her husband (to usurp his God-appointed headship), and he must

try to control her if he can. So the rule of love founded in paradise is now replaced by struggle and domination.

2. Unto Adam - verses 17-19.

a. He is sent forth into a hostile and adverse environment. Verses 17-18, ***"Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field.*** The judgment or curse on Adam has three parts.

(1) First: The ground is cursed because of him. Before his sin, it had produced fruit and plants in abundance. While it will still bring about good produce, thorns and thistles will grow faster, and growing food will become a chore. Anyone who has tried to grow a garden knows that weeds grow faster than vegetables.

(2) Second: His work will be accompanied by weariness and frustration. Before the fall Adam's work gave him pure pleasure. Now his work becomes hard and often unfulfilling.

(3) Third: He is facing an impending mortality. His life will end in death and all his accumulations will be given to others. He shall learn that "you can't take it with you!"

b. NOTE: We need to realize that life is filled with countless unpleasantries. We try to deny them and blot out their pain, and hope they will soon go away, and that things will get better. But we all live under a curse imposed on the earth because of Adam's sin.

c. Augustine, in his marvelous book, *"The City of God"* has given us an optimistic view of how history will end. But before it does end, he speaks of the miseries and ills to which the human race is exposed through the sin of Adam. He writes,

Who can describe, who can conceive the number and severity of the punishments which afflict the human race—pains which are not only the accompaniment of the wickedness of godless men, but are a part of the human condition and the common misery—what fear and what grief are caused by bereavement and mourning, by losses and condemnations, by

fraud and falsehood, by false suspicions, and all the crimes and wicked deeds of other men? For at their hands we suffer robbery, captivity, chains, imprisonment, exile, torture, mutilation, loss of sight, the violation of chastity to satisfy the lust of the oppressor, and many other dreadful evils. What numberless casualties threaten our bodies from without—extremes of heat and cold, storms, floods, inundations, lightning, thunder, hail, earthquakes, houses falling; or from the stumbling, or shying, or vice of horses; from countless poisons in fruits, water, air, animals; from the painful or even deadly bites of wild animals, from the madness which a mad dog communicates, so that even the animal which of all others is most gentle and friendly to its own master, becomes an object of intenser fear than a lion or dragon, and the man whom it has by chance infected with this pestilential contagion becomes so rabid, that his parents, wife, children, dread him more than any wild beast! What disasters are suffered by those who travel by land or sea! What man can go out of his own house without being exposed on all hands to unforeseen accidents? Returning home sound in limb, he slips on his own doorstep, breaks his leg, and never recovers. What can seem safer than a man sitting in his chair? Eli the priest fell from his, and broke his neck. (Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, book 22, vol. 2 of *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 500)

As time expands, so does human population. The more people there are, the more sins that will be committed. The more sins committed, the more pains and sorrows will occur. Contrary to humanistic optimism, the moral life of humanity is devolving into chaos rather than evolving into a paradise on earth. The world is passing away and waxing worse and worse and will continue to do so until Jesus sets up His eternal kingdom in the paradise on the new heaven and earth. All of this can be traced back to its origin in Adam's sin in the garden.

D. GOD ANNOUNCES HOPE FOR THE COMING FUTURE - 3:20-24.

1. Eve shall be a mother - verse 20: **"And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living."**

In Genesis 2:23 Adam declared that his wife would **"be called woman"** for she was taken from man. But up to now, she has never been called Eve. Eve means "life-giver" or "producer." After hearing the judgment of God pronounced, Adam believed in the decrees of God that a future had yet been predetermined by God for mankind. Eve would

bear children and one day one member of her offspring will conquer sin and the Evil One.

2. A substitutionary atonement would be grounds upon which God could cover the shame of man's sin - verse 21: **"Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them."** Man's nakedness had caused him shame and forced him to seek to cover his shame by his own efforts. God rejected man's efforts, and prepared clothing for them, but at the expense of an innocent life. Here is the beginning of the sacrificial system which requires that the just shall pay the price for the unjust. Here is grace flowing to the guilty at the expense of justice first being satisfied at the expense of the innocent. NOTE: The first thing that died was a sacrifice!

3. The garden paradise is now over and lost so that it can not be recovered by man. Verses 22-24: **"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'— 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."**

a. Adam is driven out of the garden and not permitted to re-enter. What a loss Adam and Eve must have experienced as they watched their beautiful home demolished. The wrecking crew of sin will not repair the well-manicured garden, and will instead allow it to be over-run with weeds and under-growth like the rest of the created order. Man's sin has produced conditions of alienation from the Creator God, from fellow human beings, and from the created world in general.

b. But God spared man from a perpetual, confirmed state of immortal sinning with no hope of recovery. Man is prevented from re-entering the garden and eating of the tree of life and living forever in a state of confirmed sinning. He must not look back to his past for his hope of happiness. He must now, by faith, put his trust in God's promise to send forth His Son who shall restore man in a new and better paradise on a new heaven and earth. There is a promise of hope in II Peter 3:10-13 - **"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which**

righteousness dwells.” This promise of hope which Peter gives to his readers is the same promise of hope given to Adam and Eve in the garden in seed form which would expand and grow throughout the Old Testament era and be fulfilled in New Testament revelation.

c. What happened to the tree of life in the garden? We are not told. It disappeared much like the ark of the covenant did during the days of Israel’s history in the Old Testament. In the New Paradise described in Revelation 21 and 22, the tree makes its reappearance. Whether this be symbolic or literal, time will not permit us to discuss.