

The Judgments

Something's Strange

There was another whole world for me to play in while growing up. It was a drainage ditch right next to our home. Roaming the short cut grass in our part of the "ditch" or wondering past our property into a world of tall weeds and sunflowers to hide and play all kinds of games. Of course, years later it was just a ditch that had to be mowed, but for a while it was a world away from the world.

When eight years old one day my heart just wanted my feet to shuffle around letting me enjoy the summer morning, and letting my mind wonder along with my feet. During that time the realization came to me that something was really wrong with the world.

It was like a top that spun around at an angle instead of standing straight up; like music being played off key a bit so that once and a while it hurt to listen. I remember thinking that "People talk about the world being one way when really it's not that way at all". Perhaps it was all of the idealistic '50's shows on TV more than it was the sermons by the minister at church on Sunday, and "life's lessons" from my dad at the dinner table on the weekends.

This was not the realization that bad things happened. That was a well learned lesson by that time in my life. What had dawned on me that summer morning was a much deeper awareness of the reality of the state of the world; it was fundamentally messed up. It took five or ten minutes of my time that morning to consider this truth and then I was off into another adventure, but it is something that was never forgotten and still crosses my mind on occasion.

The effects of the power of Sin are real, and we cannot escape them. They are always present and they are always doing the same thing, over and over again. Sin is always seeking to separate us from God, and acting in an oppressive manner to deny us and others the blessings of God, both directly and indirectly.

Nothing has changed about the strategy or characteristics of Satan and thus the power of Sin since the Garden of Eden. It is important to understand how Sin works to disrupt and destroy us.

Notice what Adam says to God in response to the question, "Where are you?" Adam starts to explain. He doesn't say, "Over here in the trees!" Here we are seeing the results of sin coming into the world and dominating mankind. Sin always focuses our mind toward the "mine", "me" or "I" concept of existence.

⁸They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." ¹¹And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹²The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (Genesis 3:8-13)

Adam starts to explain. He does not humble himself before God, admit his wrongful act and seek reconciliation. Instead he begins to detail the logical reasons that he is hiding.

There are so many other things that he could have said that might display repentance but he does not. At least he is not as bad as the four-year-old standing in front of a wall with fresh crayon marks, a crayon of the same color in his hand saying, "No", to the question of whether or not he did this disturbing deed.

He is not far from that, however, because as soon as he gives his logic for hiding he seeks to put the blame on Eve. This is the classic "blame game" and note very carefully that the blame is not associated with the woman alone; it is placed first on God. He essentially says, "Hey, You're the one who gave me this woman, and look at what she's done, she talked me into eating this forbidden fruit!" From Adam's perspective it is everyone's fault but his.

So, see, the four-year-old is really innocent. Mom, "You're the one who gave him the crayons, put him in a room with walls, failed to give him bigger pieces of paper, and left him in a creative state of mind; see it's really your fault."

This is, of course, even more interesting when we have two or more children, and so it is with Adam and Eve. The man blames it on God and the woman, and Eve blames it on the serpent. This same song and dance routine about blame has been repeated over and over again. It continues today in our hearts, homes, workplaces, governments, and with global issues. It is pervasive, but it is still just evidence of a root cause; the power of Sin in the world.

I Want To Be Me

Why do we keep repeating this process? Break the rules and then blame everything and everyone else but ourselves. It is because we want control and we don't like the rules. So we seek to shape the thinking of others in a manner that would avoid the consequences of our actions.

We have this thing going: "It's all about 'me' and what 'I' want. That's the power to do what I want and rule over the results." That's the bill-of-goods that Satan sold to Eve and Adam in the garden, it is the perspective formed by the power of Sin that is pervasive within all of creation: be in control and do what we want.

We make the decisions about what is “good” and rule over the results. We get to be a god unto ourselves.

Here we see the desire to dominate others and their perception of the circumstances. Some may say that it’s all about how we spin it, how we cause others to view the facts. Regardless of what we call this behavior it is still a part of the desire to control. Adam is out to protect himself, and “self” has become the god that both he and Eve worships.

Before Adam’s rebellion against God his concept of self was derived from his unity with God, Eve and creation in general. Now his concept of self is individual and distinct from God, Eve and all of creation.

His new perspective on life demands that he takes care of himself because no one else will. It requires him to try to maintain his desired position as ruler of his own life. It also inclines him toward maneuvering with the goal of controlling the perception of the circumstances by others and the events that unfold around him, which is ultimately a form of the domination of others.

All of these are now strongly felt needs within Adam’s being. They are a part of who he is and he cannot change or escape this; he can only try to control his behavior. Many of us reading this may try to avoid any identification with these traits, and mentally make excuses for Adam and Eve. Another option is to simply deny the existence of such tendencies even when we find them present in their lives, no matter how subtle in nature and influence.

It is for us the natural thing to do as humanity finds ways of justifying commonly held desires. Selfishness exists when we place meeting our needs above that of all others or other living things. Otherwise our behavior is only a part of our natural need to satisfy “self”. Long gone is the recognition that the concept of self apart from God is the direct result of a Sin filled world.

It’s Doesn’t Work

This truly is a world-gone-mad because it simply does not work for everyone to have this attitude, and we all do from the time of our birth. It just varies by degree of outward expression.

We look at a baby who only seeks to have its needs met and interpret it as the basic instincts for survival. What we have forgotten is that before Sin entered the world there was no need for survival related concerns because surviving was never in question; it was a fact by virtue of existing through a relationship with God.

The fact is there was no death, and maintaining life was the natural course for all of creation. “How are you doing today?” is not a question that could even exist. The reason is because of the perfection that God sustained within all that existed; everyone and everything was “doing” wonderfully.

We may consider that and say “What a loss; not to know what is less than perfection diminishes our ability to enjoy what is perfect.” Sounds logical, right? Only because we have never experienced perfection, and have been sold the bill-of-goods that we must know evil as well as good. There is nothing more fulfilling than the perfection of God.

Our concepts of self and all of creation, our relationships, our speech, and our thoughts have as their foundation the results of Sin entering the world and we accept this as the natural way of living. From this foundation we seek to live together, struggling to find that which has been taken from us; true life.

If we continue to exist without true life; thus without God's Life we remain walking-dead eternally-existing persons. As a part of this we remain bound to the consequences of our Death in Sin.

This is the reality of the life shared by Adam and Eve in the trees hiding from God, and the reality of every person today that exists separate from God. After Adam and Eve's excuses God begins to explain the results of their sins. Here, at the beginning, we find that rebellious acts against God always bring destructive consequences.

Let's look at what God says:

¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent,
"Because you have done this,
Cursed are you more than all cattle,
And more than every beast of the field;
On your belly you will go,
And dust you will eat
All the days of your life;
¹⁵ And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel."
¹⁶ To the woman He said,
"I will greatly multiply
Your pain in childbirth,
In pain you will bring forth children;
Yet your desire will be for your husband,
And he will rule over you."

¹⁷Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it';
Cursed is the ground because of you;
In toil you will eat of it
All the days of your life.
¹⁸ "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;
And you will eat the plants of the field;
¹⁹ By the sweat of your face
You will eat bread,
Till you return to the ground,
Because from it you were taken;
For you are dust,
And to dust you shall return."

(Genesis 3:14-19)

Here is where we begin to learn about the extended results of Adam and Eve's behavior. In verses fourteen through nineteen God finds them guilty of sinning against Him and bringing Sin and Death into the world by making it possible for Satan to have dominion within the world. Here He is essentially telling the results of their actions to the serpent, Eve, and Adam by stating the facts of the reality that now exists because of Sin and Death.

In verse fifteen God says, "I will put enmity between you and the woman,...", and in verse sixteen He says "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth...". So clearly the results of their sin are real. The serious nature of the consequences of their actions clearly represents a cursed existence that is all the more chilling because God is speaking these words, so there is no chance that it will not happen just as He states.

The only tricky part is the use of the original language when this text was written, the layered implications of "who" is being addressed, and the fact that we know what happened throughout the Old and New Testament that relates back to these words.

Obviously the serpent is told that it will crawl on its belly, and anyone who has seen a simple garden snake knows this remains true today. Then God pronounces that there would be enmity between the serpent and the woman, between the serpent's seed and the woman's seed.

The woman's "seed" will bruise the serpent on the head and the serpent's "seed" will bruise the woman's seed on the heel. The way that it is stated, however, opens the meaning to move from the plural or descendants of both, to a singular meaning as well.

Implied is the enmity that will exist between the serpent and mankind, Satan and mankind, and that ultimately Satan will be defeated. Satan was the power behind the serpent and the true instigator of the subjection of all of creation to the power of Sin.

The consequences do not stop with the serpent, but clearly extend to Satan as well. While enmity does exist between mankind and Satan we also know that Satan is not defeated through the endeavors of mankind. No, this is a spiritual battle that requires the power of God in Christ to defeat Satan, thus this passage does not simply address the serpent and Eve.

Also implied is the ultimate defeat of Satan by Jesus Christ the Son of God. We know this to be true because we know the truth of the New Testament about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It is interesting to me, however, that this is the only passage in the Bible that refers to the seed of a woman.

Eve was the "mother of all the living" and this passage directly references all people that did and would exist, but it is understood to also imply a reference to Christ. In all other passages of the Bible the seed or descendants of the male is the focus of emphasis.

For me this is clearly a reference to the virgin birth of Jesus, because unlike all other people in the world following Adam and Eve only Jesus did not have an earthly father. He was not born of the seed of man. Also we know that while Satan instigated the death of Jesus on the cross, Jesus defeated Satan, Sin and Death through His resurrection, and will ultimately prove Satan's defeat eternally.

In addition to this enmity involving the woman and her “seed”, we see that the joy of bringing a new life into the world is now to be overshadowed by pain that is multiplied in its severity. What was once a part of new life brought forth into a perfect world, which happened without risk to mother or child, now becomes a pain filled and risky process.

Sin oppresses even the cocreative process of new people being given the opportunity to experience a relationship with the One, True, Almighty Living and Loving God. Truly all people who would ever exist would do so by inheriting this condemnation of Sin and Death as a part of their physical birth.

Then God states a kind of circular entrapment. Even though childbirth will be painful and threatening it is generally inevitable because the woman will be drawn to the man, and as a result of that relationship will have children. This does not mean that a man will not be drawn to a woman, nor does it intend to diminish women in any way.

Now God states more about the results of the curse of Sin, “And he will rule over you”, meaning that the man would rule over the woman. Before any short-sighted men allow their male ego to come rushing forward, remember this is God pronouncing what the results of Sin in the world will be. Specifically, this is the impact on the key participants in this act of sinning, as well as all of their descendants.

The fact that the male will now seek to dominate the female is being stated as a new fact of life on this earth as a result of Sin. This is not what God wants to have happen to His creation; it is what they have brought upon themselves as a result of their actions. It is not a good result; it is a bad result as are all results of Sin in the world.

Essentially God is saying, “Since you’ve done this I am now going to tell you the results. From now on this is the way you and your descendants will suffer due to your mistakes.” God is stating the truth about what their existence is going to be like since they sinned, and the world is now subjected to the power of Sin.

The curse of Sin and Death had been brought upon all of creation as the result of their sins, and God is telling them what the resulting circumstances will be for them and all people who will ever exist. It is a tragedy that we don’t fully understand, because we haven’t existed with God in a perfect world.

While the pronouncements of God are harsh the effects of Sin within all of creation are disastrous. Taken within the context of what Adam and Eve had actually done the results of their suffering are minor; they got off easy. Still we see here what it is like to stand before Almighty God, and the perspective that we hold concerning these events is important.

The question of how we interpret the scriptures is the point here. If a person is afraid of God that perspective will remain an essential element of their relationship with God and they will have difficulty trusting Him. Fear rather than love can easily dominate a relationship and to allow fear to dominate our relationship with God would be a major mistake.

God judged people in the Old Testament, and one day will judge all people, but how we view the foundation of that judgment is important. Does God judge simply because He can, because He is all powerful and all knowing? Does He judge because we are so bad and deserve judgment?

My belief is that God judges out of Love. This does not deny the power or results of that judgment, but it sets my perspective and understanding of God on a different foundation than it would otherwise exist. If

my belief was that anything else besides His Love was the foundation of God's judgment and justice then confusion would reign.

To ignore Sin, is to enable Sin and the person committing the sins. It essentially says, "Sin is OK." God knows that Sin ultimately destroys, and that the power of Sin is the root of all sins. God does not simply know the truth, He is the Truth, thus for Him there can be no denial of Truth.

If we love someone we want the best for them. As people we rationalize all types of behavior, ours or someone else's, in an effort to avoid dealing with difficult issues.

God cannot do this because He is perfect. If He allowed sin to become acceptable at any level then His perfection would be destroyed, as would the perfection of heaven and all of eternity. God does Love us and is providing His best for us, and that demands perfection, so there can be no compromise.

God loves us more than we can know at this time. That love compels, even requires Him to give us His best, and His best is perfect Love, perfect Relationship, perfect Life; God Himself given to us.

One of the results of maintaining perfection; the result of God being God is the judgment of Sin and sins, but it is a judgment that is derived out of Love and nothing less. How do I know? Because the Bible says that "God is love", thus what He does has as its foundation the essence of God; Love. (1 John 4:8)

God Loved Adam, Eve, and the serpent, but that love could not simply wipe away the results of their sins, nor could it protect the rest of creation from the effects of their sins. There was no better way to deal with Sin at that time.

God did not have to make their life difficult, this had already happened because of their sins which had separated them from God, brought about their Death, and caused them to hide from Him in the garden. All God needed to do was to pronounce the circumstances that they would now experience because of the power of Sin.

Previously the earth, plants and mankind lived in harmony. Now division and struggle will exist even at the base level of the earth and mankind. People will have to work hard to survive and that work will be hindered by plants with thorns and thistles.

Ultimately people will die physically and their body which was made of dust will become dust once again. The earth will reclaim the existence that God created from it as a final physical act of destruction resulting from Sin.

As the serpent had promised, Adam and Eve now knew good and evil. They had taken the step to position themselves above God and rule their own lives. To protect them from existing in this state of rebellion against God, this state of death forever, they were driven from the garden and thus away from the tree of life. Suddenly a new reality existed: the only way to end the reign of Sin in a person's physical body was and is physical death.

²⁰Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all *the* living. ²¹The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

²²Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” — ²³therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life. (Genesis 3:20-24)

Before sending Adam and Eve from the garden God made them clothes from the skin(s) of an animal(s). Unfortunately, some animal(s) had to die in order to cover the shame of Adam and Eve, and some see this as the institution of the sacrificial system that is evident by chapter four of Genesis. Even more unfortunate is the fact that death would now be an ever-present dominate force within all of creation. The wages of Sin are always Death. (Romans 6:23)

Now, remember the tree of life? It is interesting to me that the fruit of the tree of life was never eaten by Adam or Eve. Apparently, the desire or temptation had never entered their minds before, nor was it included within the temptation.

There was no rule against eating of its fruit, so they could have done that any time the mood struck them. Of course, that is the first point; the “mood” never struck them. Why not? Because they did not need life, they were fully filled with the very Life that God is, so there was nothing that they needed from the tree of life.

Also, because their actions were in alignment with the will of God no “mood” could have given them an inclination to act unless it was what God wanted. Only the introduction of temptation by the serpent made rebellion more than an extremely remote possibility.

Because Eve and Adam had rebelled against God a desire could now exist within them for the “life” held by the tree of life in the garden. Thus, they had to be driven from it.

The second point is that the tree of life had no place within the temptation by the serpent. That is probably because any life sustaining power created by God, was rejected by Satan for use in the lie he sought to establish as a world view for Adam and Eve.

Perhaps they might be drawn to eat from the tree of life later, but the foundation of Satan’s lie was centered on becoming like God and not being dependent upon Him in any way. Adam and Eve had accepted Satan’s world view as reality and now God had to ensure that they did not exist under the curse of Sin forever.

Even though they would not live forever on this earth the power of Sin would continue to exist, control, and dominate the world. From that time to this day and beyond every person that is born has within them a nature that is derived from the power of Sin.

Why is that true? Because the essence of the cocreative power of all of creation, became infused with the power of Sin as a result of the actions of Adam and Eve in the garden. What does this mean and how does it continue to happen?

It means that there was a fundamental, systemic, and pervasive change in the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual essence of humankind and all of creation; a change for the worse. We cannot know what it must have been like for Adam and Eve to experience and witness this change from Godly order to Sin based chaos.

It is a change that none of us can know because we have never lived in a God lead and controlled world. A world that existed within God.

To have never known anger and suddenly begin to feel anger. To have never known self-centered thoughts and suddenly be seemingly controlled by them. To never have known separation from God and now to know that separation even in God's presence must have been a shocking, shame filled and guilt-ridden experience.

Probably most of humanity finds themselves in a similar position. Still we cannot imagine what it would be like to know that we are the ones responsible for setting the world on a course of Sin and Death. Then add to that the guilt of witnessing this abrupt and dramatic change each and every day of our existence.

¹²Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned— ¹³for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. ¹⁴Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. (Romans 5:12-14)

Through the "one man", Adam, sin entered the world and spread to all people; to all of creation.

²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now." (Romans 8:20-22).

Because of the sins of Adam in the garden all of creation has fallen subject to the power of Sin. It is an inescapable reality for all of life with its source being all that existed at the time Adam's sins occurred.

Was the genetic disposition of all of creation altered as a result of Adam's sins? How can we say unless we had access to genetic material that existed prior to the event? But it would not surprise me if we discover that minor alterations in our genetic structure could dramatically change our longevity of physical life.

Was it a change at the atomic level? Who can tell? Whatever change occurred it was pervasive, and my guess is that it impacted the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual elements of life at all levels, and where applicable in all living things; in everything that God created.

The results of some scientific studies have shown that all people ultimately come from one mother, and that the human mind exists beyond the limitations of the brain and its ability to function.

We are all exposed to mankind's continual search to understand creation at a macro and micro level. It is interesting to watch people struggle to detect, define, classify, declare, and claim "discovery" for

themselves of what God created long ago. It's like the time someone said to me, "You know just about enough to be dangerous."

Our reality is that the more we know, the more we realized that we don't know. Still we are driven to know more, because to "know" is our pathway for control. Yet, even our struggle to learn may be tainted because we must have a hypothesis that we seek to prove or disprove.

In addition, according to chaos theory even the act of observation will change the results of what we observe. It all becomes very complicated, but don't be afraid of that complexity. In fact, it can be fun trying to keep up with the current set of "discoveries", concepts, and new ideas. There are, however, some fundamental issues that are easily lost in the complexity of our human-centered path to understanding.

Do we need to discover the results of Sin at the atomic level to know that it exists? No. All we have to do is look around.

As stated earlier the key issue of the essence of Sin is one of authority. This can be seen as an issue of power or dominance. Because of Sin we see within all of creation the struggle to dominate. Some have observed this and declared it to be the "survival of the fittest".

One living thing sustaining its life from the life of some other living thing, whether it is plants, animals, or humans. "Survival of the fittest" is the ruling principle, and dominance in leadership its trademark.

This is a pervasive reality and if ultimate authority or power is gained then we usually see such distortion in what we call "balance" that some level of destruction is the result. That's why the saying exists: "absolute power, corrupts absolutely".

Even beyond this large scale the struggle to "be the boss" is obvious. From the time that a person is a small baby, if the parents allow it, the baby will dominate the family.

If a child grows up in that type of environment their behavior usually results in someone referring to them as a "spoiled" child. That's because they have come to expect to have their own way about almost everything. Their desire for authority, the desire to run their own life and dominate those around them to meet their own needs, has been enabled by their parents and other adults.

This trait can be seen in groups of people, animals, and even among plant life. We talk about type "A" personalities, the "alpha" male or female of a pack, and apply complex theories to all of these in an effort to understand, explain, and influence behavior.

The Bible has a simpler concept than all this complexity. That does not mean that the Bible, Christianity, or God seeks to deny or avoid complexity, but it does mean that the base concept or foundation for understanding that complexity is different. The Bible talks about the heredity of a person, or the descendants of a person.

Because we are descendants of Adam and Eve we are born in the same condition as they were after Sin entered the world following their act of rebellion against God. They were created sinless with the ability to commit sins, and they chose Sin thus becoming subject to the power of Sin; Sin dominated the

essence of their character and affected them pervasively at a physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual level.

So, everyone who was alive at that time or born after that event is born subject to Sin in the same way, with the same pervasive affect. Therefore, we are born into Sin and will commit sins. This is our heredity and it is inescapable; we cannot set ourselves free from Sin or break its bondage over another's life.

The Biblical view of this extends to the idea that an event can have an effect upon the potential of life that exists within a person. What happens to a person can affect the "seed" of life within that person that represents all of the future generations that will be derived from their descendants.

In essence Sin affected the "seed" of all life on earth; therefore any life derived from that "seed" carries the direct impact of Sin that affected Adam and Eve during the garden event. We will come back to this concept of "seed" within the scriptures later.

Following Genesis chapter three and the events in the Garden, it takes only eight more verses for us to see the result of Sin that leads to death. It is a tragic story of what Sin does to a family; what it does to humankind.

*"¹Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a manchild with *the help of* the LORD." ²Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. ³So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. ⁴Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; ⁵but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. ⁶Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? ⁷"If you do well, will not *your countenance* be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." ⁸Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him." (Genesis 4:1-8)*

Here we see the birth of two sons to Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel. An issue arises concerning their offering to the Lord, then the murder of Abel by Cain, and the confrontation between God and Cain concerning Abel's death.

What we also clearly see is the impact of the temptation and sins in the Garden of Eden. The power of Sin was able to subjugate all of creation at the time of Adam and Eve's sinful acts, but here we see that their children are also under the power of Sin as well.

Where Adam and Eve had two options. They could choose not to ever sin against God, or they could decide to rebel against God thus committing sins. Obviously, they rebelled against God. What is not so obvious is their actions changed what options would be available for all of forms of life after that event.

Now all humankind, and all forms of interactive life can choose to commit sins and will commit sins. Sure, we can choose not to commit certain sins, but we have no option to never sin as Adam and Eve had originally.

Why? Because the nature of creation was changed to be driven by a desire to have individual power and control over our circumstances, and all of creation. The strength of our desire can, of course, vary greatly.

So, all interactive life forms seek at some level to subjugate other created life, including all people. Now all of life, innately, by physical inheritance, entered into rebellion against God and His authority. This was and is the state of being of all types of life by its very nature. Only people have the opportunity to escape this sin-nature.

The essence of that rebellion in humankind is found in an inclination to take authority over one's own life-circumstances, and over the life of others and events so we can have our wants and desires. The desire is to have our needs met, and we are willing to place our needs over that of others.

This is exactly what Cain did that resulted in him killing Able. It could only have been prevented if Cain had mastered it; exerted such self-control that he could defeat the temptation to control the circumstances by killing his brother.

My assumption is that Cain had an issue about the offerings, and about Able before he made his offering to the Lord from the fruit of the ground. That perspective made his offerings unacceptable. He had allowed the power of Sin to dominate his mind and emotions, and thereby control his behavior.

It is an old story repeated yet today. A person's perspective can cause them to have a negative attitude, resulting in negative experiences that in-turn challenges their ability to experience life as they want. That frustration often turns into anger, and people can lose their ability to control their own thoughts, and actions. This can happen to any of us as we seek to manage our circumstances and events, and to influence or manage the thoughts and actions of others.

Rather than mastering our sinful attitudes we may give into our anger, and even make something or someone else the object of our anger. The extreme end of such behavior can be to take the life of another person as Cain did to his brother Able.

It is interesting that God did with Cain what He had done with Adam and Eve. When He approached them hiding in the trees He did not directly challenge them, He simply asked a question that would draw them out.

With Adam He asked, "Where are you" and with Cain He asks, "Why are you angry?" God knew why Cain was angry, so He seeks to engage Cain to lead him away from the desperate sinful act that was within his heart. It is important to note that God does this before Cain commits the act of murder.

God's patience and love are beyond our full comprehension. Unfortunately, Cain ignored God and killed Able anyway.

⁹Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?' And he said, 'I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?' ¹⁰He said, 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground. ¹¹Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹²When you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you; you will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth.' ¹³Cain said to the LORD, 'My punishment is too great to bear! ¹⁴Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.' ¹⁵So the LORD said to him, 'Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold.' And the LORD appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one finding him would slay him." (Genesis 4:9-15)

Now, we see God asking a question to draw Cain out of his sins and into dialogue. Even though Cain compounded his sins by going from an attitude that made his offering unacceptable to murder, God still gives him a chance to repent. Instead of repenting of his sins Cain states an outright lie, "I do not know", and then challenges God with his question, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

When questioned by God Adam had admitted his fear within his response, then proceeded to indirectly blame God, and directly blaming Eve for his sin. Here Cain lies to God and directly challenges God's authority with his comments.

Obviously, we see repetition when comparing Eve and Adam's perspectives, attitudes, and actions with Cain's. It seems to me, however, that there is a kind of hardening of the heart that demonstrates a degradation of respect for God. As we move from father to son in this early story of life after the Garden of Eden, we witness the increased impact of Sin upon people as Satan gains more influence.

Genesis chapter four is wrapped up by the end of verse twenty-six. Chapter five recounts the descendants of Adam to Noah. Then by chapter six we see that the world is so corrupted that God is sorry He ever made humankind.

⁵Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷The LORD said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.' ⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD." (Genesis 6:5-8)

Think about how powerful Sin is that it took mankind from the garden to such a destitute state that God was willing to destroy all living things on the earth with a flood. Sin always equals death; separation from God. Satan, as the origin of Sin will always work to separate us from God to the point of eternal separation.

We've just made our way from the Garden of Eden to Noah with a focus on much that may seem negative. It is time that we take a moment and put the pieces together, trying to simplify some issues.

So What?

Through the actions of Adam and Eve humankind, and all of creation have been separated from God Who was Life to His creation. Specifically, for Adam and Eve God was their Life, but their sins separated them from God-Life and they are Dead in Sin with Satan having dominion over humankind and the rest of creation.

This Death of creation is often referred to as the “fall” of creation including all people. Adam and Eve, however, were not the only ones impacted by their actions. All people inherited this plague of Death from the power of Sin, and so it is today, and shall be until the last person who will ever be cocreated is born on this earth.

The reason is the existence of Death, and the dominance of Sin is not just something like a label, or attribute of every person after Adam and Eve’s sins. Their dominion is passed along physically as well through the seed of Adam, and thus every man that ever lives.

Now, before some of us get upset about this emphasis on men the fact is a man’s seed brings this into the fertilization process that results in a person being cocreated. There are reasons this must be true that we will consider over time. Right now, please be patient with me while these broader statements are made in summary of the events thus far.

Without the intent to prove specifics let’s look at Genesis 5:1-3:

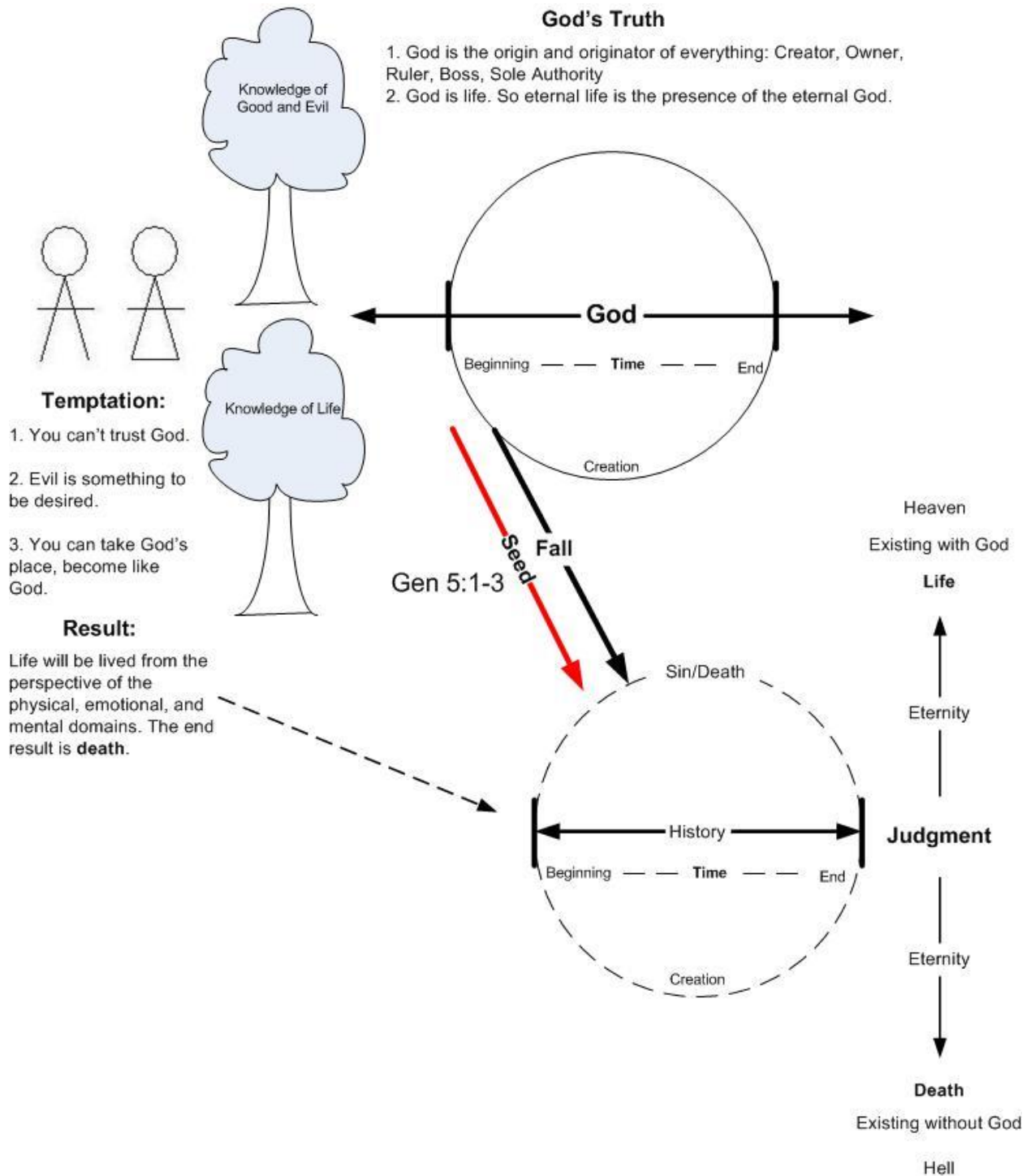
“This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created. When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.” (Genesis 5:1-3)

Please note that the writer makes a distinction between Adam and Eve, and their son Seth, who was born after Cain killed Able and was banished as a wanderer in the world. When God created man, “He made him in the likeness of God”, male and female. When Adam fathered Seth his son, it was “in his own likeness, according to his image” that Seth was cocreated with Eve as his mother.

Adam’s likeness was no longer the likeness of God. Adam had changed fundamentally in ways we know nothing about except by trying to understand the state of humankind today. This included Adam being changed physically.

This study of the “seed” of humankind is interesting, and if it seems the thing the Lord wants me to do it will be considered more specifically later. It’s written, but it’s not clear to me what the Lord desires.

So, also the conditions that caused the judgements to be pronounced by God follow Adam through his seed to every person who is cocreated. Here’s an updated illustration of all of this:



What we saw in Genesis 6:5-8 was that humankind had been so controlled by the power of Sin and Death that there is only one man and his family who are faithful to God in contrast with the rest of the world. In the entire world there is just one man that found favor with God; Noah. Through the work and family of Noah a new beginning is launched, but not a beginning that is free from the effects of sin.

If we were to add a little picture of the ark on the timeline in the above illustration it would be on the dotted timeline of the fallen representation of the earth. That's the reality within which the ark existed.

It would also need to be noted on the timeline of God in the upper illustration of the world, because within His eternal Reality, as a part of God's Will the ark was provided by God to save the seed of humankind from being totally destroyed. The ark was given by God to humankind as a gift that no part of humanity deserved.

Noah had found favor with God, but Noah was still separated from God by the power of Sin and Death just like everyone else. He simply had not allowed the power of Sin and Death to take complete control of him and his family. Noah had lived his faith in the One True Living God, the Creator of all things.

It was his faith in God that made it possible for he and his family to be saved in the ark as the writer of Hebrews states: "By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." (Hebrews 11:7)

God provided this means of Noah and his family to be saved from the flood, but not because Noah had earned the right to be saved. God, out of His Perfect Love for humankind, provided the ark as a demonstration of Who God is as eternal Grace.

Once again, God found a way within His Love to reach out to humankind. In this case it was to Noah and his family, and through Noah to all other people and called the people to repent and turn away from their Sins and trust in God instead. They would not trust God, but Noah and his family did, so they enjoyed God's unmerited favor bound within His Love, which provided the ark to save them.

How about a pause for reflection? That's what's coming up next. It's time to think a bit about some high-level things that will serve as a foundation for understanding ourselves, who God is, what He has done, and why. Then we will come back to Noah and his family.