

The Curses of Genesis 3

(Genesis 3:14-19)

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I. Introduction

This exegetical paper analyzes the curse of the Serpent, woman, and man as found in Genesis 3:14-19. This exegesis presented in the paper follows the three-part method of analysis of the Old Testament as suggested by John Bright¹. Finally, some theological conclusions are proposed.

II. Grammatico-Historical-Contextual Analysis

This section contains the grammatico-historical-contextual exegesis of the Genesis 3:14-19 passage.

1. The Passage – Gen 3:14-19

In Genesis 3:14-19 God curses the Serpent, woman, and man for their respective parts in the Fall.

Gen 3:14 And the LORD God said unto the Serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. 16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. 17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,

¹ Bright. The three parts are; 1) grammatico-historical (contextual) exegesis, 2) the theological understanding of the Old Testament, 3) the Christian conceptualization of the passage.

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till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

2. Genre of Material

The material contains a speech report. The speaker is the Lord God. The audience is the man, the woman, the serpent and in some sense, the earth itself.

The speech is a monologue. God completed investigating the situation and extracted a confession from the parties of their guilt. This speech is the rendering of God's judgment with penalties.

Allis notes that the material of Genesis 3:17-19 has characteristic features of Hebrew poetry including repetition or parallelism in phraseology and content (parallelismus membrorum)².

A. Contextual Analysis

This section starts with two different structural outlines for the passage. The first outline is the outline of the passage itself without any consideration of the prior context. The second outline attempts to place the passage within the context of the first few chapters of Genesis.

² Allis, Oswald T., *The Five Books of Moses*, pp. 108-109.

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1. Structural Outline of the Passage

A proposed structural outline of the passage is:

14-15	<p>Curse on the Serpent</p> <p>Serpent will crawl on belly and eat dust</p> <p>Serpent will be enemy of woman and her offspring</p> <p>Offspring will bruise Serpents head</p> <p>Serpent will bruise offspring on heel</p>
16	<p>Curse on the Woman</p> <p>Sorrow in conception</p> <p>Desire for husband</p> <p>Husband as ruler</p>
17-19	<p>Curse on the Man</p> <p>Curse on the ground</p> <p>Sorrow in eating the fruit of the ground</p> <p>Thorns and thistles</p> <p>Eat the herb of the field</p> <p>Return to the dust</p>

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2. Alternative Structural Outline - Blessing/Curses

An alternative way to view the passage is as an undoing of the previous blessings of God.

	Blessings	Curses
Land/Earth/ Vegetation	Gen 1:11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.	Gen 3:17b cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Gen 3:18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;
Animals	Gen 1:20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. Gen 1:22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. Gen 1:24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.	Gen 3:14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.
Man	Gen 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. Gen 1:28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. Gen 2:15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.	Gen 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Gen 3:18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; Gen 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.
Woman	Gen 2:18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.	Gen 3:16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

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3. Contextual Sketch

This passage is placed at a “hinge point” between the creation of Adam and Eve with their placement into the Garden of Eden, and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden into the world at large.

a) **Prior Context**

In the events leading up to this passage, God creates the cosmos, the animals and finally the first two humans. All is in a state of purity and innocence. Adam and Eve lived idyllic lives tending the Garden. The only thing that they were not allowed to do was to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The defining event is the temptation of the woman by the Serpent and the sin of the woman and man in eating the fruit. In eating the fruit, the man and the woman lose their innocence and hide from God.

b) **Post-passage Context**

After they eat of the tree, God speaks to Adam and Eve and tells them the consequences of their act for themselves and their posterity. God then casts Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden and prevents Adam and Eve from re-entering the Garden of Eden by posting Seraphim as guards.

c) **Context of the Passage**

The Serpent is the first one addressed with a curse. The woman is the second one addressed. The man is the third one addressed. The passage is the penalty phase of the

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trail of Adam and Eve³. God had completed His investigation and is now pronouncing the penalties. Further comments on the context of the passage are in the following exegesis.

B. Detailed Exegesis of the Passage

This section contains a verse by verse detailed exegesis of the passage. Key words are also grammatically analyzed in the following sections.

1. Verse 14 – Curse on the Serpent

Gen 3:14 And the LORD God said unto the Serpent,

The first to be cursed is the Serpent⁴. The order of the curses is the reverse order of the act of the sins. The Serpent leads the woman into the sin. Therefore, the first one addressed by the Lord God is the Serpent. He will be quickly disposed of.

a) Identification of the Serpent

At the barest grammatical level, this passage contains an account of a talking Serpent. Even more shocking than that, God is portrayed as spending His time talking to the Serpent. This passage seems absurd since we don't often run into talking animals, much less ones that are portrayed as being such cunning (reasoning) animals⁵. These are the sorts of things that we normally associate with fables and fairy tales⁶. Nor is it

³ It should be noted that this is a penalty measured out with mercy.

⁴ Gowan, p. 57, points out that this is one of only three curses pronounced by God in the entire Old Testament (also v. 17; 4:11).

⁵ The extra-Biblical book, Jasher (Noah, 1840), has an example of a wolf talking Jacob. Jasher 43:43 And the Lord opened the mouth of the beast in order to comfort Jacob with its word. The wolf then proceeds to explain that it wasn't intending to kill Jacob's son, but was looking for its own son, Joseph.

⁶ The Old Testament one other example of a talking animal, but never presents talking animals as normative. Even in the passage animals do not normally speak, but God specifically opens the mouth of the animal to speak to the prophet Balaam. Num 22:28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?

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reasonable to assume that before the Fall all the animals could talk.

However, in this passage, there's much more to this Serpent than merely a talking animal.

This Serpent deliberately led Humankind into sin and the Fall was the result. These are hardly the acts of a mere animal.

Grammatically, there is also no simple escape. The Hebrew word used for Serpent refers to nothing more than a Serpent. Isaiah does use the same word to refer to a Serpent in a figurative sense, but there's no real help to be found for understanding the Genesis passages in the Isaiah passage⁷.

The Old Testament contains 34 references to Serpents, but only a couple of passages that may cross-reference this particular passage. Both of the two references are found in Isaiah. One of these is the reference to the lion lying down with the wolf⁸. In the passage, the serpent is portrayed as eating dust, which is quite possibly a reference to the curse of the Serpent. The other passage is Isaiah 27:1 which describes God punishing the Serpent⁹.

⁷ Isa 14:29 Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.

⁸ One possible exception is: Isa 65:25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD. Interestingly all of the other animals are shown as blessed (at peace), but the Serpent is still in the same condition of eating dust. Gowan, p. 57, makes this point.

⁹ Isa 27:1 In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

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No Old Testament passages directly expose the Serpent as Satan¹⁰. Yet, the description of the Serpent in Genesis fits Satan as described in the Old Testament theologically quite closely¹¹. Satan is seen acting behind the scenes in deception in many places in the Old Testament¹². The book of Job portrays Satan attempting to get Job to curse God¹³. In the Old Testament, Satan is portrayed as the enemy of Humankind pitted against man¹⁴.

Psalms says that God gave authority over the earth to man¹⁵. It is commonly said that in the Garden man surrendered his authority over the earth to Satan¹⁶, though this teaching is not completely consistent with certain Old Testament passages¹⁷.

The theological purpose that the Serpent serves in the Old Testament text is as an external agent. God created a good creation, but with free wills so that humans could choose to not follow God. Thus, Humankind is fully responsible for the choice to disobey

¹⁰ The Old Testament does not have nearly as well developed a demonology as the New Testament and the inter-testamental books.

¹¹ As an example; Ezekiel 28:12-20 contains a lamentation against the King of Tyre that has textual elements which transcend the king's situation. In particular, Ezek 28:13 xThou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

¹² One such example is: 1 Chr 21:1 And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

¹³ Job 1:9-11 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

¹⁴ Dan 10:13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

¹⁵ Psa 115:16 The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.

¹⁶ This theme is present in the New Testament as well: Mat 4:8-9 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

¹⁷ Psa 24:1b The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

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God. The New Testament book of James tells us that God does not tempt anyone¹⁸.

Without an external agent to stir things up, how would Humankind possibly conceive of anything other than obedience¹⁹? The Serpent allows man to make a wrong choice without making God the author of the evil. This pushes off the problem one level. The Genesis text is silent about how Satan Himself fell. That's left to other Old Testament exegetes²⁰.

Was the Serpent actually inhabited by Satan? Or, did Satan appear as a Serpent? Or, is this passage allegorical as some Church Fathers taught²¹? In extra-Biblical literature, Satan appears in various different forms²². In the New Testament, demons are seen inhabiting animals²³, although there are no recorded cases of demons actually speaking through animals in the New Testament.

¹⁸ This is well described in James 1:12-15 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

¹⁹ The Serpent provides another possibility in; Gen 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

²⁰ Isa 14:12-21 refers to Lucifer, which is taken in two senses. The immediate sense is the king of Babylon. The other sense is a personification of Satan.

²¹ Augustine, in *City of God*, saw the creation account of Genesis as an allegory.

²² In the Book of Jasher (Noah, 1840), Satan appears as an old man sent to tempt Abraham. Jasher 23:25 And whilst Abraham was proceeding with his son Isaac along the road, Satan came and appeared to Abraham in the figure of a very aged man, humble and of contrite spirit, and he approached Abraham and said to him, Art thou silly or brutish, that thou goest to do this thing this day to thine only son?

²³ Mat 8:31-32 So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

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At a higher level²⁴, the Serpent is directly identified in the Book of Revelation as Satan²⁵. This is a clear allusion to the Genesis passage. In Revelation, the Serpent is once again seen deceiving the entire world²⁶. The binding of the Serpent for a thousand years is foretold²⁷. Finally, the Serpent receives his due for the deception of man when the Serpent is thrown into the bottomless pit to spend eternity with the fallen persons who have followed the Serpent²⁸.

Paul refers to the Serpent in the New Testament book, the Second Epistle to the Corinthians²⁹, but without providing any great amount of detail or further identification with Satan. Paul also referred to the deception of the woman by the Serpent³⁰, using it as a device to contrast his teachings from those of the false apostles.

At possibly the highest level (or the lowest to be more accurate) Satan is seen in the betrayal of Jesus as filling the heart of Judas. Psalm 109³¹ is indirectly referenced by the writer of the book of Acts in the New Testament as referring to the role of Satan in the betrayal of Jesus by Judas³². Certainly if Satan could fill the heart of Judas to betray

²⁴ In the light of the Christian revelation.

²⁵ Rev 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan,

²⁶ Rev 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world:

²⁷ Rev 20:2-3. Explanations of the various millennial understandings of this passage are beyond the scope of this paper.

²⁸ Rev 20:10

²⁹ 2 Cor 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

³⁰ 2 Cor 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in

³¹ Psa 109:6 Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand.

³² The passage "Acts 1:20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take." directly quotes Psa 109:8 "Let his days be few; and let another take his office."

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Christ³³ he could also fill the mouth of a Serpent to betray our Original Parents.

The Father of the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther, noted, "The devil was permitted to enter beasts, as he here entered the serpent. For there is no doubt that it was a real serpent in which Satan was and in which he conversed with Eve"³⁴.

The skeptical challenges to the passages often take a historical critical form. For instance:

Some of the saviors or demigods of Egypt, India, Greece, Persia, Mexico and Etruria are represented as performing the same drama with the serpent or devil. "Osiris of Egypt (says Mr. Bryant) bruised the head of the serpent after it had bitten his heel." Descending to Greece, Mr. Faber relates that, "on the spheres Hercules is represented in the act of contending with the serpent, the head of which is placed under his foot; and this serpent guarded the tree with golden fruit in the midst of the garden Hesperides" -- Eden. (Origin of Idolatry, vol. i.p. 443.) "And we may observe," says this author, "the same tradition in the Phoenician fable of Ophion or Ophiones." (Ibid.) In Genesis the serpent is the subject of two legends. But here it will be observed that they are both couched in one³⁵.

Because thou hast done this,

Both the Serpent and the man have a "because you did this" indicating cause and effect.

This is part of the judicial pronouncement. The animals were created to serve man³⁶ not usurp authority over men. The man was responsible for ruling over the animals and should not have allowed one of the animals to lead him. The Serpent was the great

³³ Luke 22:3-4 Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.

³⁴ (*Luther's Works, Lectures on Genesis*, ed. J. Pelikan and D. Poellot, trans. G. Schick, 1.511).

³⁵ A prominent atheist web site lists this point. See:

http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/kersey_graves/16/chap3.html

³⁶ Gen 1:28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

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deceiver and he knew quite well what he was doing by deceiving Humankind³⁷.

thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field;

The Serpent would be the lowest of all of the animals. This passage is not a curse on the rest of the animals, per se, but a result of this curse would be that the animals would be cursed as well. Even their existence would not be idyllic as it had been before the Fall. The creation had been placed in subjection to Humankind and now would suffer bondage along with Humankind³⁸.

upon thy belly shalt thou go,

The physical position of the Serpent is to be below the other animals. Leviticus states that animals that crawl on their bellies are unclean animals and cannot be eaten³⁹.

and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

Skeptics have pointed out that snakes don't actually eat dirt⁴⁰. It is true that Serpents don't actually eat dust but do consume dust along with their food. This refers more to the position of the Serpent on the ground than the dietary habits of the Serpent⁴¹. This shows

³⁷ The most likely thing is that he was trying to kill man. Jesus said "John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

³⁸ Rom 8:22-23 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

³⁹ Lev 11:42 Whatsoever goeth upon the belly, and whatsoever goeth upon all four, or whatsoever hath more feet among all creeping things that creep upon the earth, them ye shall not eat; for they are an abomination.

⁴⁰ A prominent atheist web site lists this point as an example of scientific error in the Bible. See: http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/joseph_wheless/is_it_gods_word/chapter_17.html.

⁴¹ Leupold, Herbert Carl, p. 162 notes, "Serpents do not eat dust and the Scriptures do not mean to say that they do. Parallel to the expression "eat dust" is the other more common one in the Scriptures, "lick dust,"

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the lowering of the Serpent to the lowest level, and the death of the Serpent as well.

2. Verse 15 - Enmity Between Serpent and Woman

15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman,
and between thy seed and her seed;

The seed of the serpent are the natural descendents of the serpent. The seed of the woman is seen as the natural descendents of the woman.

There are two time-related aspects to this portion of the passage. The immediate aspect is the relationship of Eve to the Serpent. Because the serpent caused the Eve to be in a state of sin, the woman and the serpent would become mortal enemies⁴² for both of their lives.

Secondly, this portion is causative but it also has a prophetic nuance as well. God is the cause agent in creating this enmity between the Serpent and the Woman. To be more precise, the broken relationship between Humankind and God was due to the Serpent. Humankind would take this out on the Serpent through a traditional enmity over time. Man would resent the part that the Serpent played in the Fall and take out that resentment on snakes⁴³.

An interesting New Testament example of this relationship is the shipwreck of Saint Paul on Melita. Paul was met by helpful Islanders who were shocked when Paul was bit by a

(Mic. 7:17; Isa. 49:23; Ps. 72:9) which in every case implies “to be humbled,” “to suffer defeat.”

⁴² Leupold, p.164 argues that the Hebrew word for enmity (‘ebhah) can only apply to morally responsible agents and he makes an appeal to other uses of the word in the Old Testament.

⁴³ A favorite pastime of children in rural settings is chasing after snakes with sticks and killing them. After

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viper⁴⁴ and shook it off into the fire⁴⁵. The Islanders watched Paul and when he failed to die from the snakebite they concluded that Paul must be a god. This led to an opportunity to share the Gospel on the island and minister to the needs of the people on the island. What was intended for evil was turned into an opportunity for good among the people of that island.

it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

This is the key part of the passage⁴⁶. Until this point, the seed is plural. The Woman would have offspring, as would the Serpent. Because the serpent is on the ground, the “natural relationship” would be that the descendents of the women would step on the serpent’s head and the serpent would bite the woman’s descendents heel.

However obvious this interpretation might seem on the surface, that is not the grammar of this passage. At this point a very significant grammatical shift occurs. The words, “it”, “thy”, “thou” and “his” are all singular⁴⁷. This refers to a specific individual. The passage does not say, “they shall bruise your head(s), and you(all) shall bruise their heels⁴⁸”. This is significant in a couple of ways.

A table representing the flow of verse 15 is:

all, if they get too close, the snakes will bite them.

⁴⁴ Poisonous serpent.

⁴⁵ Acts 28:3-6 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

⁴⁶ This particular part of the passage is the reason that the passage was chosen for exegesis in this paper.

⁴⁷ Leupold. P. 166, points out that the pronoun (hû'), “he” or “it”, is singular.

⁴⁸ One Jewish translation of this passage renders it as: “they shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise their heel” (The Holy Scriptures, Jewish Publication Society of America, p. 6). Even this contains a hint of the problems presented by the passage by the use of “heel” instead of “heels”. Jewish commentators would

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Time Element	Serpent	Woman
1 – Current	thee	Woman
2 – Future – general	Thy seed	Her seed
3 – Future – specific	Thy head	His heel

One key point to note is that it is not a descendent of the Serpent, but the Serpent himself who would have this future encounter. In the encounter, the Serpent and the descendent of the woman would bruise each other. Also, there's to be a difference in the outcome due to the relative positions of the two. The bruised head of the serpent and the bruised heel of the descendent of the woman show two different degrees of injury⁴⁹.

There's no help in the immediate context to determine who this individual might possibly be. The passage doesn't give any guidance and there are no direct references to this passage in the Old Testament. It's left open as an enigmatic passage, although there are possibly some hints in a number of Old Testament passages.

Some of these sorts of enigmatic passages are well answered in the New Testament. In the clearest New Testament passage, Romans 16:20, Paul refers to the bruising of Satan by the church⁵⁰. This eschatological understanding is part of a blessing Paul gives to the

tend to see this passage as referring to Israel.

⁴⁹ Although the Hebrew word for both injuries is the same word translated as bruise, some translations render one as "he shall crush your head:" and the other as "you shall bruise his heel". A head injury and a heel injury are quite different.

⁵⁰ Rom 16:20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

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church at Rome at the end of his Epistle⁵¹.

The end of Mark also shows believers fearlessly picking up snakes without fear as a sign that they are true believers⁵². This reverses the curse of Genesis, at least in some sense.

This passage is frequently referenced as the first “messianic passage⁵³” or protoevangelium⁵⁴, in the Old Testament⁵⁵. In this interpretation, the bruising of the (singular) seed is the death of Christ. Also, the bruising of the Serpent is seen as the triumph of the cross over the Serpent⁵⁶. In killing Jesus, the Serpent seals his own fate⁵⁷.

The temptation of the woman and the man⁵⁸ can also be contrasted on at least several levels to the temptation of Christ⁵⁹. Where Adam and Eve failed, Christ succeeded⁶⁰.

An interpretation that has been offered by some is that the passage refers to the Anti-

⁵¹ Paul clearly shows Jesus as triumphing over Satan on the cross in other passages.

⁵² Mark 16:18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

⁵³ McDowell, Josh, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, pp. 144-145.

⁵⁴ Gowan, p. 57, notes that Irenaeus was the first Christian writer to defend this passage as the “first messianic promise”. Gowan notes that this interpretation was rejected by Chrysostom, Augustine, Jerome and Calvin. Gowan misunderstands the force of the argument as referring to the seed, rather than the singular “he” who would crush the head of the Serpent. There’s no need in the passage to take the seed to be singular, but clearly the rest of the passage is singular. The change is not, as Gowan misinterprets the argument, strictly speaking between vv 14 and 15, but between 15b and 15c. On the other side, Leupold, p.164, argues forcefully that this passage is the Protoevangelium.

⁵⁵ There are over three hundred passages which are seen as prophecies of the Messiah in the Old Testament.

⁵⁶ Col 2:15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

⁵⁷ Famous skeptic Robert Ingersoll wrote, “Take the Devil From the Drama of Christianity and the Plot is Gone.” *The Devil*, 1988. http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/robert_ingersoll/devil.html.

⁵⁸ Leupold, p. 170 makes this contrast forcefully. The New Testament shows the temptation of Jesus by Satan immediately following the baptism of Jesus. This parallel to the temptation of the Original Parents is unavoidable.

⁵⁹ Matt 4:1-10.

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Christ⁶¹ as the incarnation of the Serpent that would have his head bruised⁶². The strength of the argument is that the Anti-Christ receives a fatal blow⁶³, but he recovers⁶⁴. The problem here is that the passage doesn't refer to the offspring of the Serpent, but to the Serpent himself⁶⁵.

Some commentators even take this passage as a veiled reference to the virgin birth. This is fueled since this passage contains a rare reference to woman's seed and most Biblical references are to men's seed.⁶⁶ It is noted as significant that the particular Genesis passage does not refer to the offspring of the man, but refers to the offspring of the woman. The passage is clearly meant as prophetic since it refers to events that have not yet happened. Another possible New Testament cross-reference to this passage is found in Gal 4⁶⁷, where Paul describes Jesus as "born of a woman".

But, does the "he" in the passage refer to Jesus⁶⁸? It seems quite probable that the author

⁶⁰ The first Adam and the Second Adam (Christ) is a frequent theme of Paul.

⁶¹ 2 Th 2:8-12 is taken to refer to the Anti-Christ who is empowered by Satan.

⁶² In one fanciful presentation, Chuck Smith, pastor of Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa writes, "It is very possible, according to Revelation 17, that Nero might be reincarnated as the AntiChrist." (Smith, Chuck, *The Soon to be Revealed AntiChrist*, Costa Mesa, Ca. Maranatha House Publishing, 1976).

⁶³ Presumed to be to the head although there's no scriptural evidence for this.

⁶⁴ Hab 3:13 Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. And: Rev 13:12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And: Rev 13:14b that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

⁶⁵ Although the indwelling of Satan in the Anti-Christ is part of the Scriptural case itself.

⁶⁶ - xref to gal 4:4 "made of a woman"

⁶⁷ Gal 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

⁶⁸ Leupold, p. 16, makes a point that he attributes to Luther that by leaving open the question of just what woman the Savior was to be born, God mocks the tempter, always leaving him in uncertainty which one would ultimately overthrow him. So that the devil had to live in continual dread of ever woman's son that was born. This is also interesting on a deeper level when the events of the killings by Pharoah of the sons of Israel, and the killings by Herod of the sons of Israel. Satan is conspiring with the rulers of the ages to kill

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himself did not have that intent. Theologically, from the Christian perspective, Jesus is the particular descendent of the woman, and he is the Messiah who reversed the curse of the Serpent on Humankind. Also, on the cross, Jesus is pierced by the nails in his feet⁶⁹. Failing any other Old Testament identification of interpretation to the contrary, Jesus is the prime New Testament candidate for fulfillment of the prophetic element of this passage, but it's not likely that was what the author of the passage had in view.

3. Verse 16 – Curse on the Woman

16 Unto the woman he said,

There is no "because you", like there is for the Man and the Serpent, the Woman was asked already what had happened and she confessed her part⁷⁰. The Serpent had deceived Eve⁷¹. God had given the instructions about the trees to Adam⁷² before Eve was created⁷³. However, the woman knew about and understood the instructions because she correctly repeated them back to the Serpent when questioned by the Serpent about the instructions⁷⁴.

the seed of the woman before He can bring deliverance.

⁶⁹ Isa 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

⁷⁰ Gen 3:13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

⁷¹ Ibid. Same passage.

⁷² Gen 2:15-17 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

⁷³ Gen 2:18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

⁷⁴ Gen 3:2-3 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

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I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception;

This has any number of possible interpretations including, miscarriages, death of husband and children, the added physical effort needed for life. The interesting phrase is “multiply conception”, does this mean having more children is a part of the Fall⁷⁵? If so, surely it mitigates against the phrase, “be fruitful and multiply⁷⁶”. This doesn’t seem to be a likely interpretation. Another question raised by the passage is if women would have sorrow at all if it had not been for the Fall. It seems that they would not.

in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children;

This probably refers to the physical pain of childbirth. There are a large number of references in the Old Testament to the pain of childbirth⁷⁷. The loss of life at birth was common in ancient world with poor medical care. The lack of effective anesthesia for difficult cases brings little relief to the pain. The multiplication of children brings with it a multiplication of pain.

and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

There is some disagreement between commentators on this passage. Does the passage refer to the desire⁷⁸ to be ruled by the husband or is it the desire to rule over the

⁷⁵ Kaiser, Walter. p. 30-32, deals with this question with an interesting possible explanation that the word translated as conception should be translated as “sighing” based on the Hebrew word used. Kaiser suggests that the passage should read “A snare has increased your sorrow and sighing.”

⁷⁶ Gen 1:28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

⁷⁷ For instance, see: Isa 13:8, 26:17-18; 66:7, Jer 6:24; 22:3, Psa 48:6 and Micah 4:10.

⁷⁸ Kaiser, pp. 33-37 argues that the word translated as “desire” should be translated rather as “turning.” Kaiser bases this idea of mistranslation on the work of Katherine C. Bushnell who traced the translation to an Italian Dominican monk named Pagnino. Every English translator since then has followed Pagnino’s lead in translating the word as “desire.” Kaiser suggests a better translation of the passage as; “You are turning

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husband⁷⁹? It is beyond the scope of this paper to determine which interpretation is correct.

Some of the more radical feminist scholars take this to mean that the woman is cursed to live in a patriarchal society⁸⁰. Before the fall, the woman is portrayed as the helper not the subject⁸¹. The establishment of the hierarchy of God ruling over the husband who is in turn ruling over the wife, instead of the husband being equal to the wife seems to be in view here. The problem here is that after the Fall of Eve and before the Fall of man, she had sought to control man by taking him where he should not go. Thus, this is a proper penalty for her actions. Because she improperly sought to control her husband, she would herself be controlled by her husband.

This relationship is to be a functional hierarchy rather than a malevolent dictatorship, although this passage doesn't deal with commandments for the man in that regard⁸².

away from God to your husband and as a result, he will rule over you." Gen 4:7 has a parallel usage.

⁷⁹ Tucker, Ruth. *Daughters of the Church*. Chapter 1, fn 82, p. 475 includes a ½ page long excursus on the question of interpretation. The key word is the word teshukah, translated as "desire" in the passage. Tucker gives a decent argument to support the interpretation that the verse is not referring to competition for leadership, but desire.

⁸⁰ Tucker, Ruth. *Daughters of the Church*, Grand Rapids, Mi. Zondervan, 1987, has 6 pages on this subject. See also the comments of Gowan, p. 59 as typical; "This is the result of sin, and not the will of God."

⁸¹ Gen 2:18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

⁸² This same theme is carried over into the New Testament, confirming that the Genesis account preserves much more than conventions of society of its day; Col 3:18-19 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. This is in salvation, for in salvation; Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

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4. Verse 17 – Curse on the Man

17 And unto Adam he said,

The man was held responsible and God had first asked the man what happened. Man was afraid of God and hid from God. Adam is the last one addressed in the curses. Adam was the one to whom the command was given directly originally⁸³.

The Old Testament has surprisingly few references to the cursing of Adam as found in this passage although there is a reference to Adam in the book of Job⁸⁴. This reference is interesting since there are few other markers in the book of Job to indicate dating⁸⁵.

In contrast, Paul makes extensive theological use of the event in Romans⁸⁶, 1 Corinthians⁸⁷, and 1 Timothy⁸⁸. The sin of Adam, per Paul, was the sin of one man that caused all Humankind to become guilty⁸⁹. Similarly, the righteousness of Christ is the way that all can escape the death that Adam brought into the world.

Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife,

Eve is not referred to by name in this passage, but Adam is. Eve is referred to as “the

⁸³ Gen 2:16-17 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

⁸⁴ Job 31:33 If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom:

⁸⁵ There are no references to the Patriarchs, for instance, in Job.

⁸⁶ Rom 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

⁸⁷ 1 Cor 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 1 Cor 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

⁸⁸ 1 Tim 2:13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

⁸⁹ Rom 5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

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woman” and “thy wife” before the Fall. Adam didn’t name Eve until after the Fall⁹⁰.

This follows the previous naming pattern where Adam named each of the animals⁹¹.

Adam had listened to his wife instead of God. Eve had listened to the Serpent instead of Adam or God.

This raises the hypothetical question, what if Adam had not eaten along with Eve? Would she alone have been cast out? Like most hypotheticals of this sort, there is no evidence to draw a firm conclusion in the passage.

It’s worth noting that Eve’s sin was due to deception, but Adam's sin was deliberate. This is shown theologically in the New Testament⁹². Contrary to popular homiletical usage, this is not a commendation of men.

and hast eaten of the tree,

There were two trees to eat fruit from; one was the tree of life⁹³, the other was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve ate from the wrong tree, the one they were told not to eat. There was no prohibition from eating the fruit of the other tree⁹⁴.

⁹⁰ Gen 3:20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

⁹¹ Gen 2:19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

⁹² 1 Tim 2:14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

⁹³ Gen 2:9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

⁹⁴ Gen 2:16-17 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

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This raises another hypothetical possibility. What if Adam had gotten to the tree of life before God came down to the Garden for His evening stroll? This is yet another unanswerable question. Adam and Eve were too busy making clothes for themselves from the leaves of the trees⁹⁵ to apparently think of it. Yet another tree⁹⁶ became the source of their coverings. God had to expell Adam and Eve from the Garden before they took the fruit of the tree and lived forever in their sinful state⁹⁷. This is again a foreshadow that God had something better for them than remaining in their sin.

There are few other Old Testament references to the tree of life. One of the few is in Proverbs⁹⁸ referring to wisdom. This is another enigmatic subject that is mostly neglected in the Old Testament and later picked up again in the New Testament.

The tree of life reappears in the New Testament in the book of Revelation⁹⁹. Its fruit is promised to those who overcome the present age and make it to Paradise. The tree of life is in the middle of the New Jerusalem¹⁰⁰. A good deal of additional information about the tree is added in the book of Revelation including details of when it bears fruit and the uses of the fruit. Finally, the tree of life is given as a promise to those who do the

⁹⁵ Gen 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

⁹⁶ The fig tree in this case.

⁹⁷ Gen 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

⁹⁸ Prov 3:18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.

⁹⁹ Rev 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

¹⁰⁰ Rev 22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the

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commandments of God¹⁰¹. This is another “undoing” or reversal of the curse God placed on mankind in the Garden.

of which I commanded thee,

God reminded Adam that He had given this as a direct commandment. In fact, it was the only commandment and Adam and Eve broke it. There is much here that speaks to us of our condition¹⁰². Adam was not repentant, just embarrassed.

saying, Thou shalt not eat of it:

God reiterated the commandment He had given that Adam was not to eat of the tree¹⁰³. Part of the original warning was the statement, “in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”. Yet, Adam and Eve did not die the day that they ate of the tree. There are a couple of possible explanations.

One is that God used it as a warning, but gave grace. Certainly, it was God’s prerogative to determine whether or not He would terminate their existences. This has the negative of making God appear as One who gives idle threats.

To be sure, Adam and Eve set in action a course of events that would result in their own physical deaths and the deaths of all of their offspring. It was delayed, but not forever.

healing of the nations.

¹⁰¹ Rev 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

¹⁰² But we were warned against getting too devotional in this paper, so the author will restrain himself.

¹⁰³ Gen 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

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A more popular view, albeit one that has Christian overtones, is that Adam and Eve died spiritually that day. In breaking their relationship with God, they died to God. They no longer had that intimate fellowship that they had once enjoyed with God. No longer would the Lord-God take walks in the Garden with them. Their relationship with God would now be adversarial and long-distance.

cursed is the ground for thy sake;

The curse went beyond Adam and Eve and touched the earth itself¹⁰⁴. Previously, the Garden had produced freely for Adam and Eve. This would no longer be the case. The trees themselves had come out of the earth and given fruit, but even the ground was now cursed.

But, the Garden was not cursed. It was closed off to Adam and Eve. The ground of the rest of the Earth which had been blessed and told to be fruitful in beginning would no longer be cooperative with Adam. The previous blessing¹⁰⁵ was not completely undone. The land would still produce, but with much toil.

in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

Adam and Eve would have a particularly pointed sorrow due to their memory of the Garden. If only they had not sinned, they could have stayed in that beautiful garden.

¹⁰⁴ This is the second curse in the passage at hand. The first was against the Serpent.

¹⁰⁵ Gen 1:29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

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Instead of the fruit of the Garden, they got the fruit of their sins, a limitation of lifespan¹⁰⁶ and sorrows.

Also there would be sorrow because the garden required much less labor. Adam went from the keeper of the Garden to someone who had to work to get anything at all to grow. Particularly as the outside world had no previous tenants and would have been quite bare.

5. Verse 18 – Thorns and Thistles

18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee;

Instead of automatically producing fruit, the ground would produce thorns and thistles.

One only needs to go to visit areas where there is no farming to see this. The natural state is quite hostile. This would play out quite soon after they left the Garden where Cain was a farmer¹⁰⁷.

and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

This passage has led some to speculate that humans were vegetarians between the Creation¹⁰⁸ and the Flood. After the flood, God tells man that He had given man herbs before, and that he was now giving man both vegetable and animal life for food¹⁰⁹. If this

¹⁰⁶ Gen 2:17 - But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

¹⁰⁷ Gen 4:2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

¹⁰⁸ Gen 1:29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. Leuopold, p. 97, for one, sees that as the meaning of the passage.

¹⁰⁹ Gen 9:3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

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is so, why did Abel raise sheep¹¹⁰?

Additionally, what seems to be in view here is the loss of fruit and switch to vegetables. No longer would Adam be able to live from the fruit that freely grew from the trees but Adam would be forced to scratch his sustenance from the ground. Like the Serpent, this is a movement down.

It may be significant that the coverings that Adam and Eve made for themselves were plant leaves, but the covering that God made for man was skins¹¹¹, presumably animal. This has Old Testament continuities with the animal sacrifices of the Law. In these sacrifices, the life of the animal is given as an exchange for the sin of the one making the sacrifice¹¹². This theme has its highest expression in the Old Testament in the Passover where the blood of the lamb was placed over the lintels of the children of Israel and the Destroyer passed over their house.

This theme is picked up in the New Testament where Jesus is the Passover lamb. Instead of the blood of an animal, it is the blood of the Son of God that is sacrificed¹¹³ as a final offering for the sins of the people.

¹¹⁰ Gen 4:2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. Perhaps some would speculate that Abel raised the sheep for their milk (Leupold, p. 192) or wool?

¹¹¹ Gen 3:21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

¹¹² Exo 30:10 And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD.

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6. Verse 18 – Sweat and Death

19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,

This again points to the labor required to get food contrasted to Garden where food came relatively effortlessly.

till thou return unto the ground;

Adam was created from the ground¹¹⁴ and Adam was to return to the ground¹¹⁵. This was a reference to the physical death of Adam. God had threatened Adam that the day he ate of the tree of life he would die. That threat is now delayed indefinitely, but it will happen.

for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Chemically, the physical composition of man is the same as the ground. This is obvious in that we grow from small to large by what we eat. All that we eat comes ultimately from the ground even if it is animals. Thus we still derive our lives from the ground. At death, man would be reduced to elemental organization and returned to the ground.

Death is at the end of the monologue. There are notes of hope in the monologue, but by and large it is a terminal point which has no undoing in the Old Testament. It's not until the New Testament that the curse is reversed. Death is the ultimate release from the toil that man was cursed to perform, but even death had uncertainty¹¹⁶.

¹¹³ Mat 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

¹¹⁴ Gen 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

¹¹⁵ There is another interesting parallel passage in Job: Job 10:9 Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again?

¹¹⁶ The Old Testament contains very few passages which deal with the issue of life after death.

III. Theological Conclusions

This passage marks a transition from the prior state of the man and the woman to the present condition. It has explanatory power for the question of why men and women find themselves in a state of sin and death.

The role of the Serpent is also pivotal. God is not responsible for our present condition, the temptation of the Serpent, and the willing obedience of the man and the woman to the Serpent, rather than God, is the cause of the present condition.

This passage provides explanatory power in answering the question of how this world got so messed up. After all, if God is good and only makes things that are good, yet the world is clearly not good, the question of how it got this way is a fundamental question that needs to be answered. The Genesis narrative as a whole serves this purpose.

Other theological systems have either a Pantheon of Gods with their petty jealousies between the Gods or a series of lesser gods emanating as lesser lights. In the Genesis account, there is a single intermediate agency, the Serpent, which is used to explain the mediation of evil into the world. Free will required a choice between alternatives and the woman and man freely made the choice, albeit they were not told the truth by the Serpent.

Even in the curses, there's a seed of a promise.

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