

THE KING'S STORY (3)¹

The King Curses

A. Introduction

1. The Bible is a story.

It is a story that makes God's glory known.

It is a story about Jesus Christ.

It is a story of salvation achieved through judgment.

It is a story of the King who establishes kingdoms and rules over them by means of covenants.

2. The story of the Bible begins with the King creating a kingdom.

The kingdom of creation.²

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1)

God the King chose to rule over His kingdom of creation through humans whom He made in His image.

"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth." So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female." (Genesis 1:26-27)

Being made in the image of God means that humans have been created to express what God is like by being relational and by being representatives.

As God is a relational being (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), so people are to be relational beings too (male and female).

As God rules over creation by forming and filling, so we are to rule over creation by forming (subdue the earth) and filling (be fruitful and multiply).

"God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth." (Genesis 1:28)

This rule was to be seen, first of all, in the place God provided for the first man and woman to live in relationship with Him. It was then to spread to the whole earth as Eden's borders were expanded as they subdued the land and had lots of children so that the earth would be filled with those who bear God's image.

As creatures, the first man and woman were to do their duty and obey their Creator by living within His boundaries (the moral law) and ruling over His creation (subduing and filling/the creation mandate) without expecting any reward from Him.

Yet God was pleased to give a reward to them – the promise of eternal life – which He did by establishing a covenant with Adam.

3. In the covenant God made with Adam, he, was given the responsibility of representing the entire human race (federal head).

¹ The titles for this series are taken from Biblical Theology by Nick Roark & Robert Cline

² Throughout this series I will refer to 3 kingdoms, the kingdom of creation, Israel, Christ, which is an idea taken from The Mystery of Christ by Samuel Renihan.

Adam was given specific commands to obey (in addition to keeping the moral law and the creation mandate). He was to take care of Eden, keeping it pure and holy, by ensuring that God's boundaries were not transgressed.

"The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it."
(Genesis 2:15)

He was also not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

"And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die." (Genesis 2:16-17)

If Adam obeyed (he was capable of sinning) these commands, he and those he represents would be rewarded with eternal life. But if Adam disobeys, he will die, and all humanity with him.

In this covenant of works was the opportunity for all people to dwell with God for all eternity.

4. God tested Adam's obedience by allowing Satan disguised as a serpent to enter the Garden.

How would Adam respond? Would he love and trust God and rule on His behalf?

Adam failed to take care Eden.

He allowed the serpent to approach Eve (a failure to subdue creation).

"Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made."
(Genesis 3:1)

He allowed the serpent to speak to Eve words that doubted God's goodness and denied God's judgment.

"He said to the woman, "Did God really say, "You can't eat from any tree in the garden?"
(Genesis 3:1)

"No! You will certainly not die," the serpent said to the woman. "In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
(Genesis 3:4-5)

He allowed the serpent to deceive Eve.

"The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it." (Genesis 3:6)

"So the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (Genesis 3:13)

Adam broke the covenant and sin entered the world, and with sin, the curse of the covenant.

The wages of sin is death. Death in every way. When God said, "You will certainly die," He meant it.

Adam and Eve were alienated from the life of God.

B. Death came for Adam

1. Sin stops Adam and Eve from expressing God's likeness.

In their relationship with each other.

"Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves." (Genesis 3:7)

They can't face each other. They are no longer comfortable in each other's presence. They felt shame and cover up.

In their rule over creation.

"And he said to the man, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'Do not eat from it': The ground is cursed because of you. You will eat from it by means of painful labour all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field." (Genesis 3:17-18)

"For the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly, but because of him who subjected it—in the hope that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God's children. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together with labour pains until now." (Romans 8:20-22)

Forming the earth by subduing it became a struggle.

"He said to the woman: I will intensify your labour pains; you will bear children with painful effort. Your desire will be for your husband, yet he will rule over you." (Genesis 3:16)

Filling the earth by being fruitful and multiplying became difficult and deadly.

2. Sin stops Adam and Eve from enjoying God.

The intimacy with God they had was gone.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden." (Genesis 3:7-8)

Adam and Eve hid from God. They no longer wanted to walk with God in Eden in the cool of the day, and no longer would be able to.

They died spiritually.

"So the LORD God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken." (Genesis 3:23)

They will die physically.

"You will eat bread by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground, since you were taken from it. For you are dust, and you will return to dust." (Genesis 3:19)

They would die eternally.

"The LORD God said, "Since the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live forever." (Genesis 3:22)

"He drove the man out and stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life." (Genesis 3:24)

C. Death came for all

1. When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, we all sinned.

His sin was the sin of all people.

That's because in the covenant of works God established with Adam, Adam was our federal head and represented all of humanity.

The curse of the covenant of works that came to Adam has also come to us.

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned." (Romans 5:12)

"For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also comes through a man. For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:21-22)

We are dead spiritually and we will die physically and then eternally.

2. When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, we all became sinners.

Though as creatures we are still obliged to obey our Creator by keeping the moral law; and as those who have the image of God, the creation mandate (subduing and multiplying), the curse has made this harder.

Adam's sinful and corrupted nature has been passed on to us, so that we cannot obey the moral law perfectly or do anything to please God. We choose according to what we are – sinners.

"Adam was 130 years old when he fathered a son in his likeness, according to his image."
(Genesis 5:3)

"Indeed, I was guilty when I was born; I was sinful when my mother conceived me." (Psalm 51:5)

"...as it is written: There is no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away; all alike have become worthless. There is no one who does what is good, not even one." (Romans 3:10-12)

We are living outside the Garden of Eden, where work is frustrating, hard and tiring, and childbearing brings pain and suffering.

3. When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, the reward of eternal life was lost.

We still live in the kingdom of creation where God rules through the covenant of works.

We are living under the curse of covenant because our representative failed.

We cannot recover from this and receive the reward of the covenant that Adam would have received had he obeyed, by obeying ourselves.

Why?

The covenant was made with Adam not us. We are no longer in the Garden of Eden. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is gone.

Because we are sinners, we are unable to do our duty as creatures by obeying the moral law, and this condemns us as being deserving of the curse.

4. Is there any hope?

Before He curses, God the Son – the pre-incarnate Christ – comes and preaches the gospel.

"I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." (Genesis 3:15)

He promises an offspring of the woman (why the woman?) will save them (crush the serpent's head) through judgment (His heel will be struck by the serpent).

Eternal life is still possible, but it won't come by the covenant of works.

Adam and Eve believe God's Word putting their faith in the promised offspring.

"The man named his wife Eve because she was the mother of all the living." (Genesis 3:20)

God responds by saving them as He covers their shame (they will die physically but not eternally).

“The LORD God made clothing from skins for the man and his wife, and he clothed them.”
(Genesis 3:21)

But for this to happen judgment needs to fall; blood needs to be shed in sacrifice (animals die in their place).

We are left wondering who the promised offspring of the woman is.