

Why is Life So Hard?

Genesis 3:14-24

PREFACE COMMENTS:

“What sort of freak then is man! How novel, how monstrous, how chaotic, how paradoxical, how prodigious! Judge of all things, feeble earth-worm, repository of truth, sink of doubt and error, glory and refuse of the universe... Man’s greatness and wretchedness are so evident that the true religion must necessarily teach us that there is in man some great principle of greatness and some great principle of wretchedness” (B. Pascal).

Why is it universally held that things are not as they ought to be? -- Sartre’s, “a person struggles against the thought that his mistakes are not his destiny” or Hume’s “crooked timber of humanity.”

History changed with Adam and Eve. God’s ordered world is given over to human rebellion. There are consequences:

We now have estrangement in our intimate relationships.

The companionship of marriage is turned into a competition. Besides blaming one another (vv. 12-13), we see that the husband and wife become opponents. Abuse and selfishness will emerge (v. 16).

Blessings are now touched with physical pain.

Every new human being comes into the world by the mother’s pain (v. 16). Work becomes painful (v. 17). The God-given good of work becomes laborious toil.

Creation itself is out of order.

God says “Cursed is the ground because of you” (3:17). When we turn to Romans 8:18-25, we see the natural world is not as it ought to be.

Humans all experience physical and spiritual death.

God warns Adam and Eve that if they disobey His boundaries for flourishing, they will surely die (2:17). After the Fall, all humans will now “return to dust” (3:19). Adam and Eve are exiled from the garden and cut off from “the tree of life” (3:24). This clearly refers to spiritual death.

After breaking God's boundaries, Adam and Eve feel shame.

We're all infected by sin.

We were all seminally present in Adam, and we've inherited a sin nature. Human beings come into the world hostile to God. We are DOA= dead on arrival (Cf. Rom 5:12f).

It is not just that we commit individual sins or "mistakes", but rather that we are sinners. We are not sinners because we sin, but we sin because we're sinners.

It does not take long for God to declare that "every intention of the thoughts of [man's] heart was only evil continually" (Gen 6:5) and that "the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen 8:21).

God Redeems His Creation.

Genesis 3:15 is commonly viewed as the first prophecy of Jesus. God will send someone in Adam's likeness, born of a woman, to defeat Satan (Cf. Rom 16:20).

God initiates and clothes Adam and Eve in their shame (3:21).

The cross of Christ becomes the new tree of life. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written 'cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree'" (Gal 3:13; Cf. 1 Peter 2:24; Acts 5:30, 10:39, 13:29).

Key Point: In Adam, we've all been taken down. In Christ, we can all be lifted up. Satan said "take and eat" unto death, Jesus says "take and eat" unto life.

Application Questions:

In what ways do we see the goodness and fallenness in every person?
How does this help us to be more gracious?

The idea of universal sinfulness has been described as the most easily observed Christian doctrine and also the most resisted. Why is this the case?

How might we describe "spiritual death" to a non believing friend or colleague?