

Of Authority, Leadership, And The PC Police

A sermon series by Pr. David Johnson (Week 4)

Over the last three weeks, we've seen how proper order for leadership and authority was set down. Top business heads weren't consulted, nor were the leaders of nations or international movements. Nor was it defined by patterns established in society or culture. No, the perfect design for proper order and authority came from God.

We saw it first in the interaction of the Trinity, and then in the interaction of God's creation of Man and Woman. It wasn't until Satan bypassed that order and manipulated the events of the fall that we see this order compromised. This disintegration of order and leadership was made painfully clear as we see Man and Woman's post-fall blame-shifting, and God's inevitable curses.

Genesis 3:11-13

Man blames Woman...and God for giving her to him. Man doesn't deny the charge (He ate), but deflects the blame.

Woman blames the deceptions of the serpent. Again, Woman doesn't deny the charge (She ate), but deflects the blame.

The Serpent stands gloating, like some Cheshire Cat. The Scripture says nothing of Satan's attempt to blame-shift.

But as we glanced at God's curses for each one, I'm afraid we might simply think that they were for three characters from eons ago. I don't think we understand how deep-seated these issues are, even impacting us today. Therefore, I feel we must go back and briefly look at each curse and identify their application to us.

Genesis 3:14-15 The 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."

Serpent – Cursed as a serpent, slithering on the ground. Hatred will forever be between the serpent and the Woman and her "seed," especially *The Offspring* (Jesus) who will eventually crush the serpent's head.

Okay, what's to explain, right? The Serpent (Satan) is a real snake, slithering on the ground, and cursed more than all cattle or every beast of the field. But that's only part of the curse. The rest is an eternal statement of "enmity" and eventual destruction. God isn't only talking about the rancor felt by most humans towards snakes. He is talking about the ongoing battle that rages between Satan's kingdom of darkness, and God's kingdom of light. God is explaining that from that day forward, all heaven is set against the influences and advances of the Serpent. Satan's wickedness will always be at odds with all that is holy and good. Matthew Henry makes this observation:

"There is a continual conflict between grace and corruption in the hearts of God's people. Satan, by their corruptions, assaults them, buffets them, sifts them, and seeks to devour them; they, by the exercise of their graces, resist him, wrestle with him, quench his fiery darts, force him to flee from them.

Heaven and hell can never be reconciled, nor light and darkness; no more can Satan and a sanctified soul, for these are contrary the one to the other. That there is likewise a continual struggle between the wicked and the godly in this world. Those that love God account those their enemies that hate him, Ps. 139:21, 22. And all the rage and malice of persecutors against the people of God are the fruit of this enmity, which will continue while there is a godly man on this side heaven, and a wicked man on this side hell." – Matthew Henry

That's why the phrase, "And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel" is so critical. This curse is an eternal statement of God's intent to stand in opposition to every advance Satan attempts. It is God's promise to the Serpent that his creation will forever stand against everything he stands for. And eventually, the "Seed" of the Woman, will crush him completely, though the Serpent may have some limited success (*bruise his heel*).

1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 24-26 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive... ²⁴ then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be abolished is death.



Unlike this popular image:

We then turn to the curse God speaks to the Woman: **Genesis 3:16** 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."

The Woman – Pain in childbirth. In the most joyous of times, when Woman gives life back to Man, the darkness of pain will now veil the wonder of this intimate experience. Also, sin will now contaminate the Woman's longing for her husband, and likewise, the Man's response to his beloved wife. No longer will the proper order, mutual respect, and loving interaction satisfy them. She will desire (*or rush over*) her husband, and he will rule over (*dominate*) her.

We must first remember that the aspect of Childbirth was not the curse. God had designed the female of each species to be the life-bearer, and as He observed, it was all "Good!" God intended that the female have this privilege and blessing, though not everyone living after the fall have considered it such. It was the Woman's disobedience that brought the curse of pain to this blessed event.

The second aspect of the Woman's curse would be her unresolved longing for, and resentment of the Man. No longer satisfied to be his helpmeet, now the Woman would forever be in competition with the one she was designed to aid and in whom she was to find protection.

“Yet he will dominate you”...The Lord’s pronouncement predicts the future rivalry between the sexes for dominance, a rivalry resulting from the sinful condition of the man and woman. These words are not an exhortation directed to the man to dominate his wife. Hebrew law recognized the vulnerability of women and required special deference to them (Ex 22:22; Dt 25:5–10). The New Testament explicitly commands husbands to love and honor their wives (Eph 5:25; Col 3:19; 1 Pt 3:7), and Christian husbands and wives observe their spiritual equality (Gal 3:28) while carrying out their respective God-given roles.”
- The Apologetics Study Bible

At this point, we continue to the curse given to Adam: **Genesis 3:17-19** Then 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.”

The Man – Because he has abdicated and disobeyed (eaten the fruit), cursed is the ground and all things due to Man’s rebellion: Work is no longer a joy but toil and sweat, weeds will now grow with ease, death and destruction will now be life’s ultimate end.

But what really did that mean for humanity? How did these few verses impact life post-fall? God’s first accusation is Adam’s guilt in his abandonment of leadership.

“We have here the sentence passed upon Adam, which is prefaced with a recital of his crime: Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, v. 17. He excused the fault, by laying it on his wife: She gave it me. But God does not admit the excuse. She could but tempt him, she could not force him; though it was her fault to persuade him to eat, it was his fault to hearken to her. Thus men’s frivolous pleas will, in the day of God’s judgment, not only be overruled, but turned against them, and made the grounds of their sentence.”—Matthew Henry

Though a man may lay any manner of excuses for his wrongful or in-action before the Lord, God will NOT find him guiltless. Disobedience is disobedience...and rebellion is rebellion; no amount of pleading by wife, child, parent, or boss will change God’s righteous verdict. And it is each man’s job to know God’s decrees for himself. Matthew Henry then takes this principle one step further:

“If man had not sinned, he would always have ruled with wisdom and love; and, if the woman had not sinned, she would always have obeyed with humility and meekness; and then the dominion would have been no grievance: but our own sin and folly make our yoke heavy. If Eve had not eaten forbidden fruit herself, and tempted her husband to eat it, she would never have complained of her subjection; therefore it ought never to be complained of, though harsh; but sin must be complained of, that made it so. Those wives who not only despise and disobey their husbands, but domineer over them, do not consider that they not only violate a divine law, but thwart a divine sentence.”

This principle of sin, competition, and misdirected authority is precisely why God had to include passages

like the ones that follow into His Word. For ever since the fall, our God-given yearning for male/female oneness, love, honor, and respect has been skewed. We’ve never known a time when men haven’t been prone to dominate women, and women haven’t been tempted to over-rule men. It has damaged our relationships, and tainted all attempts at a balanced leadership. That’s why we all need the sanctifying instruction of God’s Word, regardless of how un-PC His principles may be in our culture.

1 Corinthians 11:1-3 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. ² Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you. ³ But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

Ephesians 5:22-33 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. ²⁴ But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. ²⁸ So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹ for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of His body. ³¹ For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. ³² This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

1 Peter 3:1-7 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, ² as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. ³ Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; ⁴ but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. ⁵ For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; ⁶ just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. ⁷ You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.