

Consequences!

Just as in metaphysics there is no cause without an effect and in physics no action without a reaction, in life there is no act without a consequence. Some acts bring about favorable consequences and some acts do not, but there are no inconsequential acts. This principle is taught early in the Bible and is another of its cornerstone doctrines. The Apostle Paul taught this principle in the New Testament when he wrote:

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil (2 Corinthians 5:10 ESV).

Simply stated, our actions have consequences.

If you recall from our previous article, Adam and Eve disobeyed the one commandment that God had given them, "... of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat..." They did eat. There were consequences. There were immediate consequences and there were future consequences. There were consequences for man who was tempted and consequences for the one who tempted them. In the first prophecy of the Bible (Genesis 3:14-15) we see that there would be enmity between Satan's seed (figuratively his offspring; literally those under his control and influence) and the woman's Seed, the coming Christ. Satan would bruise His (Christ's) heel, i.e. deliver a non-mortal wound (the suffering, crucifixion, death, but resurrection), and He (Christ) would bruise Satan's head (a fatal blow to his power through Christ's conquering of death).

Both the man and the woman were condemned with immediate and future consequences pronounced against them. The woman would experience pain in childbirth and submit to the rule of her husband (Genesis 3:16) and the man would make his way in the world by the sweat of his brow (Genesis 3:18). Life would change from idyllic to difficult. Worse still, life would ultimately come to an end. Both would be expelled from the Garden of Eden wherein was the tree of life. They would be separated from God, the only renewable life source. Thus, man became a mortal being. It appears that the same knowledge of good and evil granted to Adam and Eve is transmitted through the generations and we, like Adam, cannot resist the temptation to disobey God. The same consequences that befell Adam and Eve await us for our sins, the separation from God, the source of life. The result for us all is death.

We can identify a pattern here that will be repeated, with one exception, after the universal flood that, except for one family, destroyed all mankind. Borrowing and building on an idea found in Dr. Gary Parker's book *Creation Facts of Life*, that pattern can be summarized as follows: Creation + Corruption + Condemnation + Consequences = Catastrophe.

God created, Satan corrupted, man was condemned, consequences ensued, and man faced catastrophe... pain in this life and, ultimately, death, spiritual as well as physical; eternal as well as temporal.

You may ask "What does this have to do with me? I did not disobey the command not to eat. I was not there in the garden when all this mess

began. I did not even ask to be born, much less be subjected to grave jeopardy, namely everlasting destruction. It does not seem fair!" We would agree, if we were the judge of fair or if the whole of this creation business was about us. But, remember, this is not about us, but about God. The Apostle Paul addresses this complaint in Romans 9:20-21: But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" Does not the potter have power over the clay...?

This is a statement that declares we did not have a say about our own creation or the conditions into which we were born. We must see that without God's creation I would not be a person, much less one which could complain about the deal. The sovereignty of God is the issue at hand. He is the power, not we. He is the Creator; we did not self-create. He is the One who determines the limits of the creation and the laws by which it will be governed, both the non-living and the living. The story is about God and the Creation through which He will be glorified. We have a simple choice, submit and live, or rebel and die.

We need not despair of our situation because He has not left us without a way of escape from our dilemma. Soon we will see that the equation above is converted with a substitution, Christ. The Old Testament is preparing the way for the coming of the Lamb of God who will take away the sins of the world. The equation will become:
Creation + Corruption + Condemnation + Consequences = Christ.

[Read Genesis 4-5 and we will discuss Cain and Abel, Adam and Eve's first two sons, in our next article.]