

Genesis 3 - Elder Summary 4.23.14

Eve was the one deceived. I Tim 2:14 points out that Adam was not the one deceived, but Eve. Still, Paul points to the problem with Adam in both Romans 5:12-14 and I Cor 15:21-22. However, it appears that he is using Adam as a “type” of the one who was to come. He is not concerned with Adam the man as much as Adam the representative of mankind. While Eve was deceived, Adam flat out rebelled. Both sin. Both are responsible. To say that more of the problem lies with Eve or more with Adam seems to miss the point. Both are guilty. Both are held accountable. Both die.

Often missed with this scripture is that the one key consequence of the fall is shame. Previously, they were both naked and felt no shame. Now, they both cover themselves. How does shame work itself out in the world? Is there an application for us?

Also, as a result of the fall, there is a clear description of what happens, recorded in Genesis 3:16-19. Particularly, the man will rule over the woman. Prior to the fall in Gen 3, he did not rule over the woman, or the text would not need to have pointed out this clear description as a consequence of the fall.

Prior to the fall oneness and mutuality abound. Ruling over another is the first indication in our text of the use of or at least the negative use of authority in Scripture. Virtually, everything in the fallen world gets back to authority. With the fall, relationships are damaged. God with man / woman. Man and woman with one another, Man /woman with creation.

The first hint of redemption of the fall happens in Gen 3:15 when the text alerts us that the offspring of the woman will crush the serpent. This is the first Messianic promise.

After the fall, the world turns bad very quickly, as families divide, violence grows, polygamy sets in, and people abandon God so that he is grieved that he ever made them.

Recapping, the garden was marked, not by authority or one ruling over another, but mutuality of relationship between man and woman. This ended with the fall and humankind has been on this path of recovering the garden ever since.

This raises questions. If we are to attempt to return to the garden, in a world marred by the fall, what will it look like?

Isn't there a problem, as big, or almost as big as the one related to the questions of women, regarding male passivity? This typified the garden scene, where Adam is quite passive in accepting and eating of the fruit. Likewise, today, when the women begin to exercise leadership, men seem to back off.

It was pointed out that in the UCC, they went down this path years ago. The result is that their leadership is almost entirely women. You barely find an active man in some of their churches. Then, the next step from women pastors is gay members, and then gay pastors. Where does all this go?

Concern was again raised, where does this vision from Genesis 1-3 take us? How do we deal with all the passages of Paul that talk about husbands being the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church? We would never question Christ as the head? Why should we question men as the head of their wife?

But then, what does it mean to be the head? Since this sounds like authority, again. And remember, there is only one in authority and that is Jesus Christ. His approach was to serve and sacrifice. His approach was to fully honor Mary by bringing her to the position of the Rabbi-in-training, sitting at his feet, previously a only male prerogative.

We may be misdirecting the discussion by talking about how husbands and wives in the operation of their home. For instance, how they make decisions. Every family is different. Many families are appropriately complementary in their approach to allow the man to make the decisions with his wife's input, when someone has to decide. Other families may put the shoe on the other foot, allowing the woman to decide. The question, for us, may need to narrow to simply - can women fully use their gifts in the church?

We need to continue to make an effort to think about the full use of gifts without speaking in terms of equality, if the language of equality is more secular than Biblical. How about the male - female alliance?

However, Jesus way of relating to women and way of interpreting the world according to God's design, shies away from anyone ruling over another, discussions of who has authority, and certainly is more about doing what the Holy Spirit has gifted one to do, without regard for sex.

Wasn't Jesus the new Adam? Wasn't Jesus bringing about new creation, in other words, the kingdom is about the garden revisited. Shouldn't Jesus lens for interpretation be ours as well? While we long for studied and brilliant answers to our questions, or even simple answers that make everything cut and dry, could it be that God has left us a great deal of gray areas where we are to be wise, kingdom-focused, Jesus-centered, and led by the Holy Spirit?