

SAME REBELLION, DIFFERENT RESPONSE

Genesis 1-3

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In the first two chapters of Genesis, Moses records the creation of the universe. God imagined the most perfect planet, and with effortless ease he perfectly created it. He spoke it into existence, and when paradise was complete, He began work on his masterpiece. Men and women were made different than all other creatures; they were custom-made in God's image. They were God-like and godly. God loved them. He walked and talked with them. He made them like kings on his earth to rule and reign on his behalf. They would prosper; he would be pleased. Additionally, God entered into a covenant with them whereby he would eternally befriend them as long as they did not rebel, disobey and betray him. He would be their God, and they would be his most blessed people. (Hosea 6:7) God then reviewed his work and called it "very good." Adam and Eve would have agreed.

However, in chapter three, the mood changes. The greatest enemy of God and the godly entered the Garden. He had already been responsible for starting a rebellion in heaven and taking one-third of all the angels with him. Now he was targeting God's couple in the Garden, and he wanted them to join his unholy coalition. It did not take him long to find success. Lucifer led the couple in questioning the words of God. Next they questioned the wisdom of God, and finally they questioned the character of God. When all was said and done, Adam and Eve followed the leadership of Lucifer. One-third of the angels, and One-hundred percent of humans, were rebelling, disobeying and betraying God.

The results were catastrophic. Immediately, Adam and Eve sensed something was wrong. Before their transgression, they were comfortable being naked and transparent in the presence of God as they walked and talked with him in the Garden. Now everything was different. They felt a need to cover themselves. They felt a need to hide from God. They remembered the words of the Creator and Lover, "In the day that you eat from the Tree, you will surely die."

At this point, the holy angels knew what to expect. Previously, God had exercised his holy wrath and excommunicated Lucifer and his followers from heaven. God would, and he did, do the same thing in Eden.

However, the angels saw God respond to the first couple in a different manner than he did to Lucifer. In his wrath, he displayed mercy and grace. God came near the sinful couple. God spoke to the couple. God disciplined them, but promised them a Savior. Then he ceremonially clothed them in the skin of a sacrificed animal. God would continue to discipline Adam and Eve, but he would not damn them.

Friends, do we see ourselves in this true historical story? Adam and Eve represent us well. We have been created in God's image and called into his service. However, we quickly and consistently question God's words, wisdom and character. Soon we are found following our own wills. We are turn-coats, rebels, disobedient children or followers of Satan. As such, we deserve nothing but the holy wrath of God. His love did not demand a sacrifice for the fallen angels; neither does his love demand a sacrifice for fallen mankind. With righteous justice he could damn all who sin to eternal perdition. But he has chosen not to; he has chosen, in his

wrath, to display mercy and grace. He comes to us; he calls us; and he provides a substitutionary Lamb who was slaughtered in our stead. For the present, we will be disciplined and we will suffer, but our eternal condition is good. Paradise will once again be opened for all who hate Satan and love God. Therefore, let us make that our aim today. Let us loathe our sin, hate Satan, and worship the Father, Son and Holy Spirit who hates sin and loves the repentant sinner.