

The Curse of Humanity

Let us begin with the bleak reality: we are cursed! No, I do not mean the way we see it in movies. There is no witch standing over a cauldron, cackling as she ruins our lives. Neither does somebody hold a voodoo doll over our lives, manipulating us, and bringing destruction wherever we move. No, the curse of humanity is *much worse*.

The curse of humanity is that we are sinners. At first, this does not sound as bad as voodoo dolls and cauldrons. However, that only serves to show the gravity of the problem. We are desensitized to sin so much so that we think fictitious curses would be a bigger problem than reality. The curse of sin is a serious problem and we must understand why.

Sin is a detractor from glory. God is all glorious and perfect in His eternal attributes. Sin is everything that God is not. This being the case means, if we are sinners, we are far from what God expects us to be. This curse is a problem which forms a barrier between us and the creator. Sin is the reason we suffer and it is everything God hates

(Prov. 6:16-19). Living in a world full of what God hates has serious consequences.

We are destined to live our lives bound to our endless quest for sinful pleasure. We want the pleasure that comes from this world and will sin gravely to gain it. There is nothing we can do by our own efforts to change. Sadly, most people in the world live without any consciousness towards this reality. Sure, some people have seen the existence of problems. Philosophers have puzzled over human existence, the creeping reality of death, and the ever-present knowledge that something is wrong. Religions have also tried to tackle these problems. People make sacrifices, write discourses, and try to suppress the reality of our curse. All to no avail.

There is only one right way to respond to humanity's curse. We must face it, understanding what the Bible says about it. We will begin by looking at how we ended up cursed. After this we can be hopeful, because God has made a way for us to be cured from our curse. We will see from the very beginning of humanity's curse that there has always been hope. This hope will overcome mankind's problem and provide an everlasting solution.

In Adam

Think about perfection. Difficult, right? Your marriage may be wonderful, but there are always imperfections; irritating things which never seem to go away. Your life might be going well. Maybe you got promoted at work, bought a new house, or your garden is coming along nicely. Despite this, there are still things going wrong. Maybe even small things like burst lightbulbs and broken coffee cups. The clear conclusion: you have never experienced a single iota of earthly perfection.

Since we cannot imagine it, we need to look outside our experiences to understand perfection. For that we turn to the opening chapters of Genesis. God created the entire universe in six days and then said “it is good” (Gen. 1:31). Within this good universe He planted a Garden. In that Garden there were luscious plants, vivid wildlife, and a perfect ecosystem. We have a hard time imagining such beauty. It was created “complete” by a perfect God. The Garden of Eden was an earthly paradise. Why can you not see this gorgeous spectacle today? Unfortunately, it has been lost. We desperately wish we could regain it, but none of our wishes are good enough.

We cannot regain this complete state of existence on earth. We will never walk in harmony with roaring lions and howling wolves. We will never taste the sweetest fruit without caloric consequences. Something happened which brought disaster and ruin in this universe, something which would have cosmic repercussions. This event spoiled all humanity from now until the end of history.

The Fall of Mankind

The Bible tells us that in the Garden of Eden mankind fell into sin. What does that mean? The goodness of God and His creation was not good enough for us. The first humans wanted something more. They wanted to be like God. Eve was tempted by the devil and, through temptation, learned she could become “like God” (Gen. 2:5). All she had to do was reach out and take the fruit for herself. Desiring this, instead of trusting their creator, Adam and Eve disobeyed God for the first time.

Hearts filled with pride, they took fruit from the tree. Fruit which was forbidden to eat. For a piece of fruit, they

declared war on God with their rebellious actions. Humanity, from then on, plunged into spiritual mutiny. Anybody who would be born in the future was Adam's child. This means all would be born with the guilt of the same rebellion. With that guilt comes the same sentence of eternal punishment. We are direct descendants of Adam, making us guilty of the same rebellion.

Does that sound unfair? It might at the beginning, but consider what the Apostle Paul said: "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned" (Rom. 5:12-14). The Bible affirms we all have the same sinfulness in our hearts. Because we have the same sinfulness, we are doomed to die. Adam and Eve died after they rebelled. We also die because of our rebellion. That is our curse. We are sinners, because our first forefather was a sinner. We are destined to live on the path of sin, because he was our representative. We follow in his sin-stained footsteps as willful sinners.

Understanding the Legal Implications

But what about God's mercy? Yes, that is definitely something to consider. God did not kill Adam and Eve on the spot, after all. He was merciful. He allowed them to continue living, but they were cursed for their disobedience. Men would perform the backbreaking task of field work (Gen. 3:17-19). Women would have pain in childbirth (v. 16). Men and women would, eventually, die after living long and hard lives. Chaos had been brought into the world. What was good is now marred by the thick marks of sin. The worst consequence of all, however, was in our relationship to God. After the Fall, a division was placed between God and man. God cannot have anything

to do with sin (Hab. 1:13) and man was now infected by its piercing darkness. Sin means we cannot have a perfect and unending relationship with God. What a travesty we live in.

Adam and Eve did not stop sinning after this one mistake. They were now lifelong sinners. I am sure they maintained their relationship with God (marred as it was), but nothing they did was good enough. They would sin again and again, never breaking the cycle. Even if they never sinned again after Eden, they were still stained by their initial sin. That stain was something which remained in their hearts and infected everything they did. Furthermore, that infection spread to all their children. We, being their descendants, also have that black mark in our hearts.

Rather devastatingly, this means, from our very conception, we are guilty of sin (Ps. 51:5). Our forefather sinned and left that curse in our hearts. We will also pass that curse onto our own children. Their children will do the same and so on for all of history. Until Christ returns, there will always be sin and imperfection.

That does not sound like mercy, right? Initially, it seems like a mercy to spare their lives. However, the blackening silence of death is surely greater than a life of turmoil and troubles, right? Well, it gets worse. Mankind has fallen from the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). We deserve punishment for all our sins. That punishment is death (Rom. 6:23). The punishment is not only death itself, but also what comes after death.

There is no hope in death. The world has tried to philosophize death, but no answer of hope can ever be found outside the Gospel. We cannot escape the turmoil of life by embracing the darkness of an ever-silenced consciousness. Death is actually an intrusion on creation. Before the fall

there was no death. Just God and His good creation. Death, intruding in this world, however, is not the end. There is something which follows. Since our hearts are naturally against God (Gen. 6:5), we deserve something worse than death. We deserve a second death. That second death is to go to hell for all eternity. We deserve to burn forever, unceasingly and unyieldingly.

This means that, for the cursed sinner, even death is not a great mercy. It is only a painful and scary bridge to a worse fate.

Where, then, does the God of mercy come into the picture? Fast-forwarding through history we come to the Exodus. God's chosen people, Israel, were in slavery in Egypt. Daily, it seemed things were getting worse. Nothing was good enough for their masters and it seemed like God had disappeared. They would cry out to Him, yet no response arrived. Thankfully, He was listening. He raised up Moses to lead the people out of Egypt into the Promised Land.

As the people were traveling to the Promised Land, God gave them commands on how to live. The objective of the law was to draw people to God's perfect holiness. Hundreds of years had passed without a clear guide on how to please God. Now everything had changed. God had given His law and now His people could learn how to live. People could find their way to God by living a righteous life. This would prevent experiencing the fires of hell after death.

Unfortunately, reading the law immediately reveals a problem. You could never possibly keep this perfectly. You could live one-thousand lives and every single one would be splattered with sin. You would never attain perfection in a single life. Nobody can perfectly keep this law and all

are rightfully condemned before the throne of God. What a dreadful situation.

The Promise

Do not be downcast. This is actually good news. How can a perfect law which we cannot fulfill be good news? The good news lies in representation. We have seen how Adam represented us. We are as guilty as him, destined to hell for eternity. Think, however, if one man can represent us, maybe somebody else could represent us differently. If we are represented by Adam's guilt, then if somebody could flawlessly keep the law, then anybody whom He represents could escape from their misery.

That is exactly what the Bible teaches. When Adam and Eve were cursed in the Garden of Eden they were given a promise. God said: "I will put enmity between you [the devil] and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). I know that does not look like much right now, but let's think a little. The devil was the one who tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden, and this is *his* curse. If we look closely, we will see that his curse is our blessing.

The blessing is seen in the devil's head being bruised (or crushed) as the offspring of Eve has His heel struck. This tells us that a day would come where the power of the devil would be diminished. Somebody would have to suffer (struck heel) in order for that to happen.

This is a prophecy about the coming of Jesus Christ. This is exactly what happened on the cross, after all. Through evil men, Satan took Jesus to the cross where He suffered immeasurably. Satan, however, suffered his own defeat at