

# Knowing Good and Evil

*God's Curse and God's Provision*

*“In the Bible, to curse means to invoke God’s judgment on someone, usually for some particular offense.”*

– Gordon J. Wenham, Genesis 1-15, p.78

- ✦ *At the same time that God dispenses judgment, He also begins the process of restoration.*
- ✦ *Verses 14 through 19 reveal the terms of the second major biblical covenant, the Adamic Covenant. Here God specified the conditions under which fallen man was to live (until God lifts His curse on creation; cf. Rom. 8:21). The elements of this covenant can be summarized as follows:*
  - ✦ *God cursed the serpent (v. 14), but promised a Redeemer (v. 15).*
  - ✦ *He changed the status of the woman in two respects: she would experience sorrow and pain in motherhood, and continuing headship by the man (v. 16).*
  - ✦ *God also changed Adam and Eve's light workload, in Eden, to burdensome labor and inevitable sorrow, resulting from His curse on the earth (vv. 17-19).*
  - ✦ *Finally, He promised certain physical death for Adam and all his descendants (v. 19).*

*<sup>14</sup> So the Lord God said to the serpent:*

*“Because you have done this,  
You are cursed more than all cattle,  
And more than every beast of the field;  
On your belly you shall go,  
And you shall eat dust  
All the days of your life.*

*<sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity  
Between you and the woman,  
And between your seed and her Seed;  
He shall bruise your head,  
And you shall bruise His heel.”*

*– Genesis 3:14-15 NKJV*

- ✿ *The snake had been “cunning” (Hebrew ‘arum), but now was “cursed” (Hebrew ‘arur).*
- ✿ *It would ‘eat dust’. We won’t get into whether this is figurative or literal (I vote for figurative).*
- ✿ *There would be enmity between the serpent and human beings. Or, between those who love God and those who love self. Each of the characters of Genesis will be either of the seed of the woman that reproduces her spiritual propensity, or the seed of the Serpent that reproduces his unbelief. – from Bruce K. Waltke, Genesis*

✦ *Mankind (through Christ) would eventually destroy the serpent, though the serpent would wound mankind (including Christ; v, 15b). This is a prophecy of the victory of the ultimate “Seed” of the woman (Messiah) over Satan. (cf. Rev. 19:1-5; Gal. 3:16, 19; Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8)*

✦ *Dr. Constable notes: Most interpreters have recognized this verse as the first biblical promise and prophecy of the provision of salvation from sin (the protoevangelium or "first gospel"). The rest of the book, in fact the whole Old Testament, proceeds to point ahead to that Seed: Jesus Christ.*

*<sup>16</sup> To the woman He said:*

*“I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception;  
In pain you shall bring forth children;  
Your desire shall be for your husband,  
And he shall rule over you.”*

*– Genesis 3:16 NKJV*

- ✿ *The woman would experience “pain” in bearing children. Childbirth pain would be increased.*
- ✿ *The woman will have a great longing for, yearning for, and dependence on her husband, physically and mentally. He shall rule over you.*
- ✿ *That’s the ideal anyway.*



# However,

- ✿ *"There is nothing in Scripture to suggest that the woman was inferior to the man in any way or more susceptible to temptation than he was."* [Susan Foh, Women and the Word of God, p. 63.](#)
- ✿ *"The 'curse' here describes the beginning of the battle of the sexes. After the Fall, the husband no longer rules easily; he must fight for his headship. The woman's desire is to control her husband (to usurp his divinely appointed headship), and he must master her, if he can. Sin had corrupted both the willing submission of the wife and the loving headship of the husband. And so the rule of love founded in paradise is replaced by struggle, tyranny, domination, and manipulation."* [Susan Foh, Women and the Word of God, p. 69.](#)

*17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it':*

*"Cursed is the ground for your sake;  
In toil you shall eat of it  
All the days of your life.*

*18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you,  
And you shall eat the herb of the field.*

*19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread  
Till you return to the ground,  
For out of it you were taken;  
For dust you are,  
And to dust you shall return."*

*– Genesis 3:17-19 NKJV*

- ✿ *Dr. Constable notes that, in view of Adam's sin, we might have expected God to curse him, but, graciously, God curses the ground for his sake.*
- ✿ *"These punishments represent retaliatory justice. Adam and Eve sinned by eating; they would suffer in order to eat. She manipulated her husband; she would be mastered by her husband. The serpent destroyed the human race; he will be destroyed."*
- ✿ *Matthew Henry ties all this together in his Commentary on the Whole Bible:*

*"How admirably the satisfaction our Lord Jesus made by his death and sufferings answered to the sentence here passed upon our first parents.*

*(1) Did travailing pains come in with sin? We read of the travail of Christ's soul (Isa. 53:11). (2) Did subjection come in with sin? Christ was made under the law, Gal. 4:4. (3) Did the curse come in with sin? Christ was made a curse for us, died a cursed death, Gal. 3:13. (4) Did thorns come in with sin? He was crowned with thorns for us. (5) Did sweat come in with sin? He for us did sweat as it were great drops of blood. (6) Did sorrow come in with sin? He was a man of sorrows, his soul was, in his agony, exceedingly sorrowful. (7) Did death come in with sin? He became obedient unto death. Thus is the plaster [bandage] as wide as the wound. Blessed be God for Jesus Christ!"*

*– Mathew Henry, Commentary On the Whole Bible, p.11*

*"Curses are uttered against the serpent and the ground, but not against the man and woman, implying that the blessing has not been utterly lost. It is not until human murder, a transgression against the imago Dei [image of God], that a person (Cain) receives the divine curse."*

– Kenneth A. Mathews, Genesis 1—11:26, p.243

*<sup>20</sup> And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.*

*<sup>21</sup> Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.*

*– Genesis 3:20-21 NKJV*

- ✿ *Here in verse 20 is the first redemptive act by man: Adam names his wife Eve meaning the mother of the living. Through Eve Adam gives us all the grace life on earth.*
- ✿ *“This may well be at once the most astounding, the most profound, and the most exuberant thing the man ever did.”*

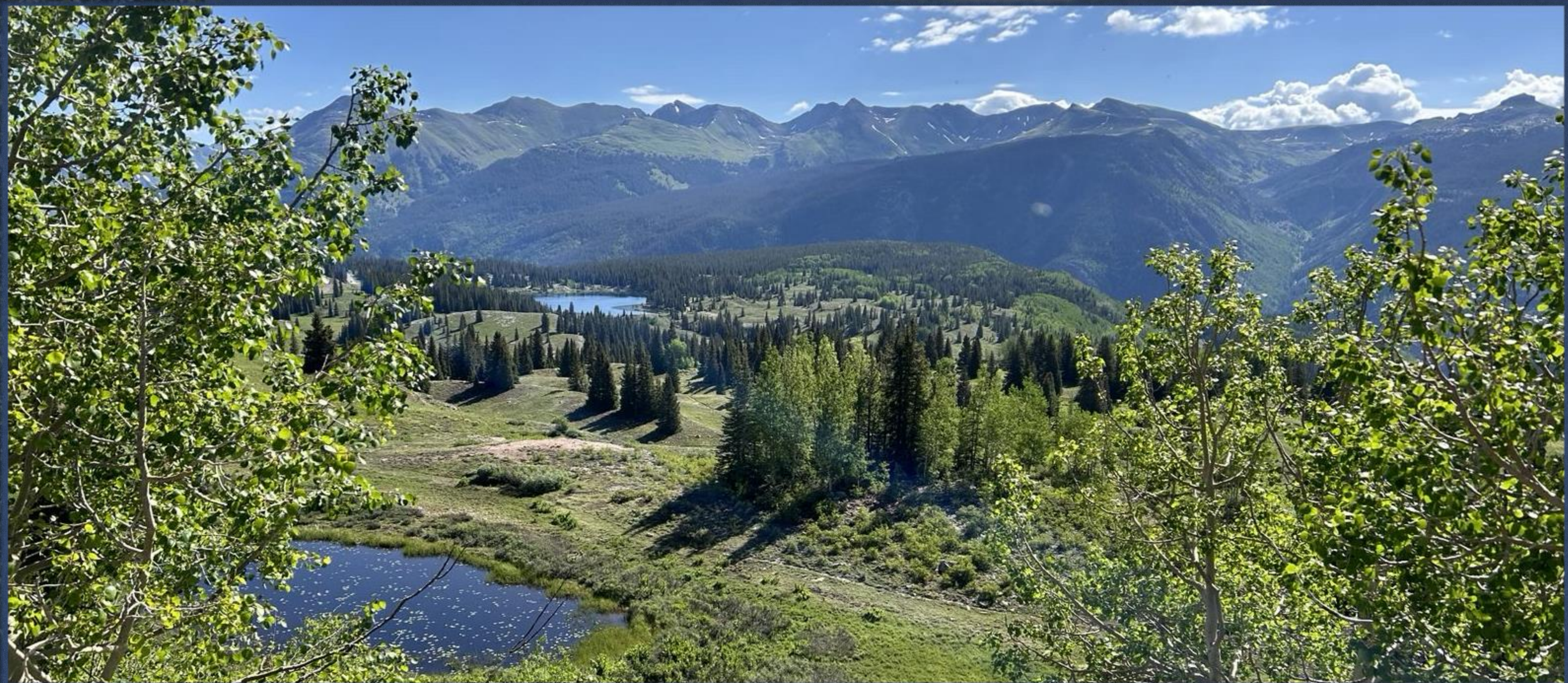
*Charles C. Cochran, The Gospel According to Genesis, p.46*

*<sup>22</sup> Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” — <sup>23</sup> therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. <sup>24</sup> So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.*

*– Genesis 3:22-24 NKJV*



- ✿ *Once there was Eden. But we cannot go back. It is not for us, the descendants of Adam, in this life.*
- ✿ *We must “suffer” and “sweat” here and now.*
- ✿ *I love it here. I grow weak with age, but I have lived! I am grateful.*
- ✿ *So what have we learned?*



# Application Questions

*Near Bayfield Colorado Sunday 6/23/24*

# I'm Going There

- ✿ *“If man had lacked the ability to choose, the prohibition from God not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil would have been superfluous. One is not told to abstain from something unless he has the capacity not to abstain.”* Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1—17*, p.211
- ✿ *Thus, Genesis 3 introduces us to the fact of human freedom, as well as reminding us of divine sovereignty.* Dr. Constable's Notes
- ✿ *“Character must be developed, and it can only be developed in the presence of temptation.”* J. Vernon McGee

- ✿ *Can anyone in good conscience, say that he has not been too free in sinning?*
- ✿ *Did that sin originate in the past or the present? In other words, is it your sin or Adam's?*
- ✿ *Matthew Henry says, "If Adam had not sinned, he had not sweated." Do you think this is true?*
- ✿ *Do you think the land is overly difficult to tend since the fall?*
- ✿ *What "land" is being referred to? The whole earth? Or just the Middle East?*

*“I have chosen to premise this, for the sake not only of excusing myself, but of admonishing my readers, that if they sincerely wish to profit with me in meditating on the works of God, they must bring with them a sober, docile, mild, and humble spirit. We see, indeed, the world with our eyes, we tread the earth with our feet, we touch innumerable kinds of God’s works with our hands, we inhale a sweet and pleasant fragrance from herbs and flowers, we enjoy boundless benefits; but in those very things of which we attain some knowledge, there dwells such an immensity of divine power, goodness, and wisdom, as absorbs all our senses. Therefore, let men be satisfied if they obtain only a moderate taste of them, suited to their capacity. And it becomes us so to press towards this mark during our whole life, that (even in extreme old age) we shall not repent of the progress we have made, if only we have advanced ever so little in our course.*

*– Calvin, John. Calvin's Complete Commentaries, Kindle Edition*