

## 1The Effects of Sin

### The Natural Consequence of Sin

#### Introduction:

1. “If the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation” (Heb. 2:2)?
2. “It is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted . . . when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel” (2 Thess. 1:6-8).
3. “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23).
4. “It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31).
5. “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord” (Rom. 12:19).
6. “These will go away into eternal punishment” (Mt. 25:46).
7. “The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment” (2 Pet. 2:9).
8. These and many other passages speak of the consequences of sin and the punishment that comes as a result of the judgment of God.
9. We know that punishment is real and the judgment of God against sin is severe, but sometimes I think our perceptions of God and punishment are unclear. Maybe we have borrowed our perceptions from our childhood and the punishments we have received from our parents. Maybe our perceptions stem from the world’s perception of punishment.

#### Discussion:

- I. Some seem to have the perception that God is an unfair judge who acts as an ogre inflicting unnatural, inappropriate, unfair and unnecessary pain.
  - A. This image does not “fit” with the descriptions of God in Scripture.
    1. God “is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).
    2. Psa. 103 describes Him as follows.
      - a. One who pardons, heals, and redeems.
      - b. He is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.
      - c. He does not deal with us according to our sins but like a father, he has compassion on his children.
    3. He sacrificed His Son for our forgiveness when we were his enemies, ungodly and sinners (Rom. 5:6ff). Paul asked, “He delivered Him over for us all, how will He not freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32).

4. How does this image “fit” with the passages that describe God as “dealing out retribution,” and bringing people into “eternal punishment?”
- B. God’s punishment against sin is not an artificial unnecessary infliction of pain, but the natural result of sin.
1. The word “punish” is defined in WBD: “to cause pain, loss, or discomfort to for some fault or offense.” The following example is given. “Father sometimes punishes us when we do wrong.”
  2. The example harks back to our childhood and the treatment we received from our parents. Most parents have the best intentions, but to be honest their “punishments,” are often unfair, unjustified, and too harsh. They are marred by misinformation. They are sometimes inconsistent, appear arbitrary, whimsical and capricious. And this is all complicated by the fact that I am a child and have very little understanding. I see things from my immature perspective.
  3. As we grow up maybe we come to realize that our parents were trying to help us, but perhaps feelings of injustice linger and cloud our definition of “punishment.” Besides, punishment is designed to curb our self-will and so “for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful” (cf. Heb. 12:11).
  4. But God’s punishments are not like those of our parents.
    - a. They are not unnecessary. They are not arbitrary, whimsical, nor capricious.
    - b. They are not unfair, unjust, nor inconsistent.
    - c. They are not marred by misinformation.
  5. They are the natural result of our sin.
- C. God’s removal of Adam and Even from the Garden of Eden was not because He was harsh and abusive.
1. He is motivated by His grace (see Gen. 3:22-24).
  2. It is not good for man to stay in his current situation in the Garden eating of the tree of life and continuing to live forever in his sinful state.
  3. God has a better plan that involves victory over sin and death. His plan is to save man and this demands remedial action.
  4. C. F. Keil (The Pentateuch, p. 107) explains, “After man had fallen through sin into the power of death, the fruit which produced immortality (i.e., the tree of life) could only do him harm. For immortality in a state of sin is not the “eternal life,” which God designed for man, but endless misery, which the Scriptures call “the second death” (Rev. 2:11; 20:6, 14, 21:8). The expulsion from paradise, therefore was a punishment inflicted for man’s good, intended, while exposing him to temporal death, to preserve him from eternal death.”
  5. Have we seen God’s action here as an act to save from eternal death or have we seen it as unnecessary and harsh? Have we actually condemned God of injustice? Do we see eternal punishment as unfair? Some criticize the idea of eternal punishment as being too severe for a gracious God. Do you see it as an arbitrary and unnecessary act? It is NOT! It is the natural result of sin. But

God is interrupting the natural result with His remedial action.

II. Do not interpret this to mean that God is passive in His discipline. He is purposeful and deliberate, although there is some sense in which all He needs to do is step aside and we experience consequences.

A. God allowed Job to be severely tested.

1. Satan asked, "Have you not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side?" (1:10).
2. God acted, limiting the hedge (1:12). "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life" (2:6).
3. But God was active in Job's experience. Both in limiting Satan and in allowing him some control over Job.
4. Note: This was not about Job being punished for anything. Yet, his experience was the result of being born outside of Eden and was the result of Adam's sin.
5. You may experience consequences of sin that you did not personally commit.

B. That God does use Satan and his agents to punish people is evident in many instances in Scripture. Notice for example . . .

1. Jer. 11.

- a. Jerusalem had broken their covenant relationship with God. They were worshiping Baal.
- b. "I am bringing disaster on them," (11).
- c. Read vs. 14-17.
- d. Read 12:7.
- e. Judah and Jerusalem were taken captive by the Babylonians.

2. Rom. 1 and 2.

- a. "God gave them over," and received "in their own persons the due penalty of their error" (24-32).
- b. "There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also the Greek" (2:9).
  - 1) There are temporal consequences in this life.
  - 2) There are eternal consequences (Rom. 6:20-23).

3. 1 Cor. 5.

- a. The "so-called brother," in this instance, "has his father's wife."
- b. He is to be "delivered to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."
- c. In this case the "delivery to Satan" was redemptive in purpose. Of course, eternal punishment is not redemptive, but it is still the natural result of sin.

C. God is not passive. Sometimes He uses punishment with a remedial objective. Sometimes it is a matter of the execution of justice (cf. 2 Thess. 1:6-9).

D. God is the only thing that stands between us and eternal death. Without His

gracious intervention we perish in our sin.

III. God's vengeance is not maliciousness, but a natural judgment against sin (Rom. 12:14-21).

- A. "He is not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).
- B. In 2 Pet. 2:13 Peter refers to those who are "suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong."
- C. The prodigal son experienced severe consequences of his sin. He was allowed to experience them by his father. But his father "saw him returning while he was still a long way off, felt compassion, ran and embraced him and kissed him" (Lk. 15:20).
- D. Of Judah and Jerusalem God said, "I have forsaken My house, I have abandoned My inheritance; I have given the beloved of My soul into the hand of her enemies" (Jer. 2:7). That's not maliciousness. It is grief!
- E. Cf. Heb. 12:4-11.

Conclusion:

1. Scripture presents God as one who graciously gives life.
2. But Scripture also identifies me as one who is dead in trespasses and sins and therefore needs God's gift.
3. Scripture does not identify me as one who is alive, well and good, and God as threatening me with death.
4. "He who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).