

Perspective On the Negatives

Introduction:

1. Since Gen. 3 mankind has struggled with the effects of sin, all of which are negative.
2. The word “death” epitomizes these negatives.
3. We would think that the people of God would be relatively clear on their perspective about these negatives. We would think that we would, of all people, oppose them personally and help others in their battle to oppose them.
4. But alas, this is not always the case. If someone gets sick we may blame them. If they suffer from a mental illness we may call them names and tell them to snap out of it, to read their Bible more and to pray more.
5. What? Isn't our understanding of God's revelation clearer than this? Don't we understand that we are all born outside the Garden of Eden and that as a result of this condition we are moving toward death and that sickness both physical and mental are related to this circumstance?
6. Ladies and gentlemen, we are all marred by sin and the sooner we recognize it the sooner we will seek out the life that God has to offer through His Son.

Discussion:

I. Sin's effects are far-reaching.

A. I am not a Calvinist. I do not believe that mankind is so marred by sin that he cannot

respond positively to God.

B. However, Scripture does indicate that we are severely marred by sin.

1. When God said, “You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die,” He knew what He as

talking about.

2. Yes, it meant that we would die spiritually.

a. The main thing is that sin separates from God.

b. Sin also changed Adam and Eve’s relationship and it mars all human relationships.

c. It also marred the whole of creation, of which we are a part (Rom. 8:20-23).

3. God is the source of life. Spiritual life, yes! But not just spiritual life! He is the source of

all life.

4. It would seem to me that in our emphasis on spiritual life we have neglected God’s

rulership in physical life. Scripture doesn’t do this. See Rom. 8:10-11.

II. What are the effects of sin? See Rom. 8:31ff.

A. Death, both physical and spiritual. But I want to emphasize the physical consequences.

1. Gen. 5—“and he died.” Well what did he die of? It doesn’t say, but he died of something.

Old age. Some sickness or disease. Accident. Murder. Heart disease. Cancer.

Alzheimers disease. Respiratory disease. Kidney disease. Whatever killed him traces

back to the consequence of sin in Eden.

2. The flood destroyed life, but it was always God's design that water give life. Death from

the flood was not what God initially intended for water. But by God's intervention Noah

was saved.

3. Sickness, disease, famine, blindness, deafness, murder, destructive weather conditions,

mental illness, locust plagues and many other things are all consequences of sin. Not

necessarily of any one person's particular sin, but broadly as a result of being born

outside of Eden.

4. Look at the plagues on Egypt if you want to see what happens when God steps aside and

lets Satan have his way. He is know as the Destroyer for a reason. And yes, I know this

may be a different way of looking at the plagues than you have seen before. I

understand that God brought the plagues on the Egyptians, but only in the sense that He

stepped aside and let Satan do what he wanted. We would all be destroyed if God

stopped protecting us. It was only by His grace that the Egyptians and Israel had not

already been destroyed. Ex. 12:23 says, “The Lord will pass over the door and will not

allow the destroyer to come into your house to smite you.” He allowed the destroyer to

destroy the Egyptians. He did not allow the destroyer to destroy in the houses of Israel.

B. Passages that establish who is behind destruction.

1. Jn. 8:44 says, “The devil was a murderer from the beginning.”

2. 1 Pet. 5:8 says he prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

3. Jn. 10:10 says the thief comes to steal, to kill and destroy. Jesus said, “I came that they

may have life and have it abundantly.”

4. The Hebrew term “abaddon” means “angel of death” and its Greek equivalent

“apollyon” means “destroyer.” Rev. 9:11 describes a scene where a bottomless pit

was opened. Locusts came upon the earth tormenting men. They had tails like

scorpions with power to hurt men. Their king is, abaddon, the angel of death in

Hebrew, and apollyon, the destroyer in Greek.

C. Yes, again, I understand the tension within you that says, “But God allowed this.” Yes He

did but that is just it. He allowed it. Why? To try to bring men to repentance (Rev. 9:20).

To describe sickness, pain, disease, famine, etc. as “acts of God” is unfair. They are acts of

Satan, allowed by God, in order to bring us face to face with the consequence of sin.

They are not acts of a malicious God who wants to destroy us. Read Heb. 12:4-11.

Some of us believe in God, but not the God of the Bible. We believe that God is out to get

us. That He is the destroyer. That’s not what the Bible teaches. He is the God who gives

life.

III. God is in the business of reversing the effects of sin.

A. He is not willing that any should perish but that all come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9).

B. He sent His Son to reverse the effects of sin and to give life (Rom. 5:6-11).

C. Paul said, “Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! There is now no condemnation for those

who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 7:24-8:1).

D. When Jesus came He came proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every kind of

disease and every kind of sickness among people (Matt. 4:23). What does that mean? It

means that the kingdom of God is designed to reverse the effects of sin. Not just some of

the effects but all the effects. The kingdom of God is not only about reestablishing our

relationship with God, but our relationships with each other, and with the created order.

You have a sickness. Not in glory (Rom. 8:18-23). A genetic deformity? Not in glory.

Someone done something to you that has marred your brain development? Gone in glory.

Mental defect? Gone in glory.

1. When John sent his disciples asking Jesus, "Are you the expected One or should we look

for someone else?" Jesus said, "Go and report to John what you hear and see. The blind

receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear and the

dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. 11:2-5).

2. Jesus healed a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute. The people said, "This

cannot be the Son of David can he?" Notice their perception of the Kingdom. The

Pharisees said, "This man casts out demons only by the power of Beelzebul the ruler of

demons." Jesus said, "If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God

has come upon you." See Matt. 12:22ff; Lk. 11:14ff.

3. This is what Isa. 35:5ff predicted as a result of God's intervention into man's predicament.

E. This is what the righteous Branch from Jesse was to bring (Isa. 11:6-10).

F. Of the new heaven and new earth Rev. 21:4 says, "He will wipe away every tear from their

eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or

crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

G. Heb. 12:12-13 in a context encouraging us to endure through suffering tells us how to

respond to those who are suffering. "Strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees

that are feeble, and make straight paths for you feet, so that the limb which is lame may

not be put out of joint, but rather be healed."

H. Rom. 14:25 calls on us to not destroy with our food him for whom Christ died. 1 Cor.

8:11 says do not destroy with your knowledge him who is weak. We are in the business

of bringing life, not destruction.

IV. So what does all this mean?

A. Do not shame yourself or others for getting sick, for not being able to hear or see. Do not

mock the one who blind, deaf, old or otherwise affected by being outside Eden.

B. Do not shame yourself or others for having a mental disorder. We pray for people with

cancer, pneumonia, coronavirus, but how about depression, panic attacks, schizophrenia?

C. Recognize that sickness, although ultimately traceable to sin, it is not necessarily the result

of some personal sin that you have committed. Recognize the same for others and do not

shame them as Eliphaz did Job. He said, "Remember now, who ever perished being

innocent? Or where were the upright destroyed?" (4:7). Job said, "For the despairing man

there should be kindness from his friend, so that he does not forsake the Lord" (6:14).

D. Do accept personal responsibility for where you go from here. Be responsible to act. We

can't blame all our problems on Adam and Eve, or our parents, or some tragic experience

that we have had and excuse ourselves from acting responsibly. If diabetes runs in my

family and I have it then I need to act responsibly. I may need to control what I eat. I may

need to take insulin. If I have a mental condition, and some of this is traceable to genetics, I

need to do what is appropriate to respond to it. I do not have special permission to sin and

act irresponsibly.

E. Accept yourself and others where you (they) are—damaged by sin, physically, genetically,

chemically, emotionally, relationally, spiritually and let us help each other be all we can for

the Lord. Let us join Jesus Christ in bringing life and healing.

F. Don't condemn every doctor, psychiatrist, counselor and their professions as being

godless. Some are, just like some famers, preachers, teachers, merchants. But most are

trying to help people find life in some sense of that word. Be cautious about medications

but don't categorically deny their benefits.

Conclusion:

1. Understand the effects of sin.
2. Choose life and extend life to others.