

Genesis 3: Did God Punish for Sin?

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Regarding your belief that God's law is a natural law and not an imposed one and that you interpret God's law to be natural consequence, rather than legislated, how do you reconcile that with the very first book in the Bible

, Genesis, where in Genesis 3, after Adam and Eve had been tempted & eaten the fruit, God said:

16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

The majority of Christians interpret that as a direct punishment for disobeying God & not as a mere consequence of that they had now entered a new world of sin & this view certainly appears to be supported with the bible words "I will greatly....." & "cursed for thy sake"

How do you reconcile this with your view?

Those who interpret these passages as punishment for sin do so because of misconceptions about God. God had already disclosed to Adam and Eve what the consequence for sin is – death – not pain in childbirth, subordination to husband or difficulty in agriculture. These events were due to sin and God's interventions to save and heal mankind.

After Adam and Eve sinned, humanity no longer naturally or automatically sought to love one another, but instead sought to put self first. This relational fracture was an emergency for humanity; marriages cannot exist where selfishness reigns supreme. Into this crisis God made an emergency intervention. In order to prevent the complete breakdown in society, the complete disintegration of the race, God increased, in women, the desire for relationships such that when two selfish people, within a marriage relationship, disagree, the woman would be more likely to "give in" in order to save the relationship. This emergency intervention allowed marriages to continue in a world marred by sin, providing time for the plan of salvation to be carried out.

But we need to recognize that any subordination of one partner to the other was not part of God's original design, nor is it part of His healing solution. As we experience God's healing power in our lives, as selfishness is purged and love is restored within the marriage relationship, we return more fully to God's original ideal – true and genuine equality. Each partner sacrifices himself to uplift the other, to promote the welfare of the other, and to protect the other.

The pain of childbirth is a powerful object lesson allowing women to experience greater insight into the heart and mind of God. Knowing labor will be painful, why do women choose to have children? In the aftermath of labor, the pain of it, why do women rejoice? Is it not because of love? Doesn't love for their children overcome their pain and fear of labor to bring forth new life? Likewise the Bible says, "for the joy set before Him" Christ endured the cross (Heb 12:2). It was for our rebirth that Christ labored as a human being and suffered through the cross. Thus the birthing process allows women to appreciate in a small way the pain and suffering God went through to rebirth us in newness of life and also the joy in God's heart to see us renewed.

Therefore, Genesis 3:16 does not reveal God "punishing" mankind for sin, but God intervening to protect, heal and save mankind from a world of sin.

In Genesis 3:17 again God looks good as He works to save and heal mankind. In this verse our Savior is pronouncing the natural consequence which impacted nature when God's rule of love was replaced by Satan's rule of survival of the fittest as a result of Adam's abdication of his rule to the devil.

Paul says in Romans 8:22 that all nature groans under the weight of sin. God is announcing in Genesis 3:17, that, for mankind's sake, He would not intervene to prevent the law of sin and death from impacting the earth, but the earth was now under the curse of sin. Why did God allow this? As a protection for mankind in a world of sin.

Once Adam and Eve sinned their natural tendency was toward sin and selfishness. Industry and work is a hedge of protection from the power of the carnal nature. Maybe you have heard the old saying, "Idle hands are the devil's workshop." A powerful truth is espoused in this statement. Idleness allows the carnal mind time to wander away from the right and engage in unhealthy and destructive practices. Therefore, to protect man, to keep his time occupied, to teach self-discipline, self-mastery and diligence, God announced that it was for man's sake that He would not stop the earth from changing.

Further, there is a powerful spiritual lesson in allowing the curse of sin to change the earth, which was also for man's sake. Imagine you have a garden, one you have faithfully tended and is producing a bountiful harvest. What will happen to your garden if you stop tending it? Will it continue to produce good fruit, or will the weeds come up and eventually destroy it?

In a similar way, ever since Adam and Eve sinned, our minds naturally bring up weeds; selfish thoughts, ideas, and conceptions. It is Christ who works through the Holy Spirit to plant the seeds of truth in our minds. He then nurtures and protects the seeds of truth to grow into the fruits of a Christ-like character. It is by utilizing the Sword of the Spirit (which is the Word of God, the truth) that we work with Christ to weed our minds; we uproot the lies and false theories that keep us captive, and instead maintain a healthy and productive mental garden.

So, we find that as soon as mankind fell into sin the natural consequence of deviation from God's law of love was destroying mankind and nature. But God was right there intervening, not to punish, but to save and heal. What an awesome God we serve!