

Principle Faith: Genesis Three

Part 8

The audio and print files for this class can be found online at <http://www.etspm.org/audio/principlefaith>

Our Purpose: ... to honor and glorify God through heart, soul, strength and mind ... in a way that demonstrates love for others and self at the same time. ... to focus on ... principles that help us understand the biblical text, our relationship to God and others

Our Goal: To examine at least the first eleven chapters of Genesis during the quarter, looking for, explaining, and applying the principles we find.

What is a principle? - a foundational truth or premise upon which we build beliefs, practices and explanations. ... a study of key ... principles in light of how they generate and strengthen faith, reflect God's nature and glory and build a case for all things spiritual. Biblical principles: reflect the existence/nature of God; indicate God's connection with the overall biblical theme; demonstrate divine providence; illustrate how tightly organized the "scheme" of redemption really is

Genesis In Context: ... how Israel fit into God's divine plan for the redemption of all mankind

3:1ff The origin of sin (Satan)

1. The opening verses of Genesis 3 provide the setting for the account of man's first sin.
2. It is not, however, the *very* first sin. The *very* first sin occurred at some point in divine history prior to this account.
3. The first sin involved Satan (the devil) and his angels, occurred in heaven not on earth, and resulted in the banishment of all beings involved in this rebellion (cf. 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Rev 12:1ff)
4. Principles involved:
 - a. All free moral agents (heavenly and earthly) are tested by circumstances (Satan and angels in heaven; mankind on the earth)
 - b. The test inherently involves some commandment or prohibition from God that was to be kept/followed.
 - c. The sin occurred in each case when the free moral agent (Satan and his angels and/or mankind) failed to keep/follow God's command/prohibition
 - d. In each case some judgement/consequence occurred (Matt 25:41; Rev 12:9)
 - e. If the principle that applies in Genesis 2:17 applies, and there is no reason to suppose otherwise, then God's commandment/prohibition that was violated in heaven was given in advance (God is the God that he is here and now because of what the God that he was then and there - he doesn't change in time or eternity; cf. Jn 17:20ff)
 - f. The origin of sin in Satan/angels probably parallels the origin of sin in man in principle (cf. below)

3:1ff God and Satan

1. God is the Creator; Satan was created
2. God is eternal; Satan is "temporal" (John 8:44; 1 John 3:8)
3. God is omniscient, infinite, perfect, holy, etc. in ways that Satan is not (John 8:44; 1 John 3:8; Jude 6-8)
4. God is sovereign; Satan is subject (cf. 1 John 3; Rev. 20)
5. All of these differences indicate that, even in the heavenly realm where angelic beings existed, clear cut distinctions exist between God and everything else
6. The issues of the problem of evil; God's creation in light of his foreknowledge, etc.; apply with equal force to angelic as well as human sin
7. While we will not take the time to fully explore God's will in this regard, scripture indicates that:

- a. God always acts in accord with his nature (Ex 3:14; 2 Tim 2:13; Mal 3:6; Titus 1:1ff; Heb 6:18; 13:8; James 1:7)
 - b. Satan's nature was corrupted, but not initially; indicating that it was uncorrupted at first (1 Tim 3:6; cf. Jude 6 and "proper estate")
8. Satan's work on this earth is always in opposition to God:
- a. the adversary (1 Peter 5:8 - God's and man's);
 - b. destroyer (Rev 9:11)
 - c. our enemy (Mt 13:39)
 - d. liar, murderer (Jn 8:44)
 - e. accuser (Rev 12:10)
 - f. dragon (Rev 12:1ff)
 - g. power of darkness (Col 1:13; cf. Eph 6:12); prince/god of the world (Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 1 Cor 4:4); of air (Eph 2:2); of all disobedient (Eph 2:2); the tempter (Mt 4:3; 1 Th 3:5); the wicked one (Mt 13:19, 38; Eph 6:10-20)
 - h. the book of Job (challenges God re Job's faithfulness; asserts that Job serves God for something other than true love/devotion for God; declares Job's unfaithfulness given a change in circumstances - why is Satan so opposed to God, cf. Zech 3:1 - every indication is that he sought to usurp God's authority, to place himself in God's role)
9. Satan's desire to thwart God's will is seen in:
- a. his willingness to tempt Christ (Mt 4:1ff)
 - b. his opposition to truth (Lk 8:10ff, esp. 12; cf. Acts 13:6ff re Sergius Paulus)
 - c. his M.O. (deceit, lies, half-truths, etc.)
 - d. his relentless pursuit to devour (1 Pet 5:8); to challenge (Lk 4:3ff - "if you are the Son of God ..."; his assumed authority (Mt 4/Lk 4); his willingness to be worshipped (Mt 4/Lk 4); his distortion of scripture (Mt 4/Lk 4); his demand that we submit to him (cf. Rom 6:14ff; James 4:7); his willingness to wound (Eph 6:16 - "fiery darts"); his willingness to tear down and destroy everyone and everything in order to get back at God

3:1ff The origin of sin (humanity)

1. Genesis 3 tells us a significant part of the origin of sin, but it does not tell us everything.
2. Though not fully address in this context, we must note that we are the ones responsible for sin, not God.
3. James depicts sin and the responsibility of sin in this way (James 1:13-15):
 - a. we cannot claim that God is responsible
 - b. God does not tempt us to sin - because God cannot be tempted
 - c. we cannot claim/blame that anyone else is responsible other than ourselves (Adam > Eve, Eve > Satan)
 - d. we are tempted due to our own desires (sin starts within - Eve, David, et. al.)
 - e. not all desires are inherently sinful, but desires can lead to sin (be angry and sin not)
 - f. desires give birth to sin; sin when full-grown, leads to death
4. The origin of sin in man is not God's fault (Rom 9:20), even though God created us with the ability/potential to sin, God did not force us to sin; God's "culpability," though it might be viewed as logically and/or chronologically prior, is not necessarily morally the cause of our sin (the effect) - God created us with the ability to choose sin, but we are the ones who actually choose it - we all choose it (1 Kings 8:46; Rom 3:20ff)

3:14ff: The consequences of sin

1. Though Satan said otherwise (you will not die), Genesis 3:14ff teaches that sin has consequences.
2. The serpent was cursed (later, Satan is bound)
3. Eve was cursed (pain in child bearing)

4. Adam was cursed (thorns and thistles)
5. The ground was cursed (cf. Rom 8 - the whole earth groans in anticipation of the end)
6. This truth appears throughout the Bible: Moses (did not enter the promised land), Saul (lost the kingdom), Solomon (caused the kingdom to divide), David (lost a son, was shamed before the people, challenged by a son, embarrassed by another son, etc.)
7. Key passages: Gen 2:17; Ezek 18:4, 20; Romans 5:12; 6:23; 1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 3:10; 6:7-8

3:15ff Sin can be overcome

1. Though God warned against sin, though God lamented and punished because of sin, God still provides a way for us to overcome.
2. 1 Corinthians 10:13 teaches this in principle: “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”
 - a. We are never so uniquely tempted that our temptation is unlike any/all other/s
 - b. We will never be tempted beyond our ability to resist
 - c. There is always a way out
3. God knows what we are and allows us time and opportunity to learn what sin is, how bad it is, what its consequences are, and then gives us time to change
 - a. God’s longsuffering/forbearance is our salvation (2 Peter 3:15; cf. Ps 145:8 - slow to anger, great in mercy; Ex 34:6 - merciful, gracious, longsuffering, abounding in goodness and truth, et. al.)
 - b. he knows our “frame” (Ps 103:14; 78:38-39)
 - c. he provides ample/repeated opportunity for us to learn (cf. Amos 4:6ff - “yet you have not returned ...”)
 - d. he stands ready to forgive (Ps 86:5) and is abundant in mercy (86:15)
 - e. does not immediately condemn (Psalms 103:10; 130:3); punishes less than we deserve (Ezra 9:3; cf. Neh 9:31; Job 11:6; Lam 3:22)
4. God says that we can overcome sin
 - a. It is one of the major themes of Revelation - if you overcome, you can come over
 - b. Resist the devil and he will flee from you - James 4:7; draw near to God - he will draw near to you (8)
 - c. Our armor was designed to fend off Satan’s attacks (cf. Eph 6:10ff)
 - d. The roaring lion can be resisted (1 Peter 5:8-9)
 - e. We can overcome (Rev 12:11)
 - f. Greater is he that is within us (1 John 4:4), therefore we can overcome sin, that is, we must be able to keep from abiding in sin (1 John 3:6, 9; 5:18)

Up and Coming Principles: chapter three - the first gospel; chapter four - children are from God; principles of proper worship; the “second” sin; God’s mercy continues; brother’s keeper; one wife, not two (God’s subtle revelation); chapter five - God’s selective history/the role of genealogies

Assignment: Read through and continue to study Genesis 4-5 for additional principles.