

Genesis 3 (The Fall/Curse):

In the first two chapters of the Bible we read about the beginnings of all things in the natural world. Now in chapter three we will encounter the man and woman in the Garden of Eden. A new character will come on the scene; the serpent. The man and woman will be deceived by the serpent and rebel against their Creator. God will then issue a triad of curses. These curses are the subject of one of the most heated debates between YECs and OECs. Most YECs believe the curses were global in extent and suggest that the entire Creation is cursed because of Adam and Eve's sin. In opposition to this view most OECs argue a local extent of the curse and say that only Adam, Eve and the serpent were cursed. They maintain there is no biblical evidence the natural world itself was cursed. Based on their position on the extent of the Curse in Genesis 3, members of both sides of this debate will interpret the scientific data very differently. YECs say the earth is cursed and therefore may "look" ancient, but there is no way we can deduce anything about the earth's history because of its fallen state. Meanwhile, OECs say that the text does not limit the way we use and trust modern scientific methods such as radiometric dating because the earth was very much the same before the Fall as it is today. Let's explore this text with a mind clear of any pre-conceived ideas.

Genesis 3 (ESV)

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"

2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,

3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.' "

4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

9 But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

10 And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."

11 He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."

13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

14 The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

16 To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

17 And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.

19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

20 The man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

21 And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

22 Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—”

23 therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.

24 He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

After the Creation accounts in the first two chapters of the Bible, Moses begins to tell the story of Adam and Eve in the garden. Presumably, by this time, all of Creation is in working order and the man and woman are beginning to fulfill God’s command to take dominion and cultivate the land. A new character is introduced here in the serpent. There is not much debate over just who the serpent really is as he is called Satan by the Apostle John in Rev. 20:2. In fact, there are a number of NT passages that refer to Genesis 3. A few of them touch on Adam’s sin (the Fall) and some mention the punishment for that sin (the Curse). The debate, as it was in the Creation accounts, is really over the matter of extents. For example did God curse all of Creation (global extent) or did He just curse the man, woman, and serpent (local extent). Again, depending on which interpretation you subscribe to will affect your interpretation of the rest of Scripture as well as scientific observations. As we study this passage we will again need to be mindful of not only the Hebrew word choice and grammatical considerations, but also how a 15th century BC Israelite listener might have understood the passage. We must not read into the passage any preconceived ideas regarding our scientific knowledge in the 21st century. We must also be careful not to read anything into the text that is not absolutely clear. As an appendix, I offer commentaries on a few NT passages that refer directly and indirectly to the pericope at hand.

The Sin:

Genesis 3:1-7 (ESV)

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”

2 And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,

3 but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”

4 But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.

5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

In order to figure out what kind of writing we are dealing with and where we are in relation to the pericope we must first look at the verbs. The first verb we see is *hayah* (to be) which is perfect. This is followed by a string of *wayyiqtol* verbs. This tells us that we are dealing with a narrative of sequential acts with a sentence containing background information to kick it off.

The pericope begins with the introduction of a new character, the serpent (Heb. *nachash*). The word is used 29 times in the OT and each other use refers to a typical snake as we know it today (an exception may be where Isaiah refers to Leviathan as a serpent (Is. 27:1)). We will soon see that this is no ordinary snake here. John refers to this serpent as Satan in Rev. 12:9 and 20:2. Many global-extent Young Earth Creationists (YECs) believe that this serpent originally walked upright and was doomed to crawl on its belly upon God's cursing in 3:14. We will examine this possibility later when we explore that text.

The serpent is here referred to as crafty. This is the Hebrew word *arum*. It is used only 12 times in the OT. TWOT indicates the term can mean crafty either in a positive or negative sense. However, the LXX translation *phronimos* usually carries a positive connotation in most of its 41 occurrences. It may seem obvious to think of the serpent's craftiness as a negative trait, especially when referred to in 2Cor. 11:3. The word Paul uses in that text is *panourgia* though and not *phronimos*. *Panourgia* is used exclusively in the NT in a negative sense, and indeed Philo described the serpent's craftiness with *panourgia*, but the LXX translators chose *phronimos* which is positive. In the NT Jesus instructs His disciples to shrewd (*phronimos*) as serpents and innocent as doves (Matt. 10:16). It is hard to imagine Jesus telling His disciples to be crafty like serpents if a negative connotation was in view. Though the serpent may have used his craftiness for evil, it appears it was an inherently good trait he possessed.

This reference by Jesus to the craftiness of serpents tells us a few things about the nature of the serpent in Genesis 3. First, the serpent did not lose his craftiness when cursed for it still existed in Jesus' day. Second, if that is true, then we know that this is no ordinary snake because snakes are not known for their craftiness today, nor do they speak. It appears that this passage is not describing the encounter between Eve and a snake, but rather Eve and the one who is indwelling the snake, namely Satan. This will be a key observation when discussing the effects the curse on the serpent has, if any, on present-day snakes.

Another interesting observation from the text is that the serpent (i.e. Satan) was made by God. It must always be remembered that the greatest evil power in Creation is part of Creation and is therefore subordinate to God. By saying that the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field, the text seems to give the allusion that Satan had indwelt the serpent for quite some time as the serpent itself was known for its craftiness and its ability to talk. It is as if Adam and Eve thought this was truly coming from the creature itself with Satan's identity hidden from them. It does seem clear however that the text is describing not the body, but the possessor of

the serpent. The idea of demons occupying animal bodies is also found in the NT (Mark 5:11-13).

The first *wayyiqtol* verb in the pericope describes an action by the serpent. Interestingly it is the identical verb describing God's first action in 1:3. It is the verb *wayyomer* (and [he] said). Whereas God's first words called light to shine out of the darkness (2Cor. 4:6), the serpent's first words, in a sense, usher darkness back into Creation. To start, the serpent drops the personal name *Yahweh* when referring to God. He asks Eve, "Did *elohim* actually say..." As we will see, he was successful in causing Eve to neglect the personal name of her Creator in this dialogue whereas the rest of the passage that follows keeps the Name.

Presumably, the serpent asked Eve a question he knew the answer to already, but in concordance with his craftiness he asks if God really told them not to eat of any tree in the garden. This prompts an interesting response. Not only does Eve not consider the personal name *Yahweh*, she adds to God's words in verse 3. She correctly states that God warned them not to eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, but she adds the phrase neither shall you touch it. If God said these words they are not recorded in Scripture. More likely, the warning was far removed from Eve's mind and embellishments therefore naturally followed. This is not difficult to understand if there had been a time where close communication between God and Eve had ceased or had become sporadic at best (perhaps this is the reason for Paul's warning to the Corinthians in 2Cor. 11:3). Such a time was ideal for the serpent to make his move. It is significant then that he chose Eve as his target rather than Adam (1Tim. 2:14). Although Adam was with her (verse 6), the easier target was Eve. The serpent most likely guessed Adam would fall easy prey to his wife upon her offering the fruit to him.

Whether or not Eve was aware of her additions to God's words, an act which is strictly forbidden (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18), she correctly reiterated the penalty for disobedience: they would die (Heb. *muth*). Just as there are warnings against adding to God's words, there are some for taking away from them as well. The two appear to be equally serious in the whole of Scripture. What did Eve leave out? In addition to the name *Yahweh*, she omits the seriousness of the penalty for the sin. In Genesis 2:17, God said they would surely die (*moth tamuth*). The infinitive absolute is thereby given to emphatically pronounce the certainty of their death should they disobey and eat the fruit. In verse 3, Eve only restates the imperfect without the infinitive part of the construct. We can begin to get the sense of manipulation and intimidation the serpent has over Eve at this point. He has successfully gotten her to haphazardly recall God's command and lessen the severity of the consequences for failure to obey.

A few critical observations and conclusions can be made in the serpent's final reply to Eve. To her he says, "You will not surely die." Satan here uses the infinitive absolute *moth temuthun*. Where Eve had failed to restate this, the crafty serpent here replies to the emphatic with a negative. God had expressed a *certain* death. The serpent countered with a *certain* escape from death. In Scripture, the term death can mean either a physical one or a spiritual one. For sure, God's punishment in 2:17 has elements of both. Satan played on strictly the physical component. He knew she would not physically die in the day (*yom*) she ate of the fruit, so he boldly stated the certainty of that to her. From Scripture and from fossil evidence we know that animal death had occurred before Adam and Eve's sin. They were aware of what physical death

was and therefore understood just what death was when God warned them in 2:17. It seems Eve was unaware or unmoved by the spiritual death she would instantaneously encounter upon falling into sin. She was apparently comforted by the authoritative response from the serpent. It came from someone who no doubt was there when God issued the warning to Adam and was able to twist it in his favor. This clearly sounds like someone who believes himself to be at the least equal to God Himself (Is. 14:12-14).

The serpent's persuasive statement continues, "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." To go with the idea that he believed he is God's equal he commences to explain what God is actually thinking. He goes so far as to make God out to be the one who is deceiving and keeping information from them. The position of being like God is here defined as knowing good and evil. The fact that this tree was able to give this power to those who eat of it and that Adam was warned not to eat of the tree on Day 6 proves that Satan (who is called the Evil One (Matt. 13:38-39)) had fallen before God pronounces His Creation "very good" in Gen. 1:31. This is contrary to what most YECs believe who regard "very good" to be equal with perfect in every form. Satan had most definitely turned evil because of his pride (Ezek. 28:17) before the end of the Creation Week. Something about the original nature of mankind was hindering a true knowledge of good and evil. It was only after their rebellion that they understood there is a way contrary to God's (i.e. evil). Originally they knew no guilt (2:24). Afterwards they would realize their guilt completely (3:7).

Though he was in the body of an ordinary snake, Satan had disguised himself as an angel of light (2Cor. 11:14) and offered Eve a chance to be like God. Eve looked at the tree and saw that it was good (LXX: *kalos*) for food. The tree was a delight (*taawah*) to her eyes. The tree was to be desired (*chamad*) to make her wise. Eve then takes the fruit and eats. We see here a logical recipe for sin. It starts with the eyes and initially seems harmless. The first two steps were not in and of themselves wrong for Eve to consider. After all, much of the vegetation God created was pleasing (*chamad*) to the eyes and good for food (2:9). Eve had to eat. The tree was good in so far as being able to fulfill that purpose. The tree was pleasing to her eyes and was desired, but as the Scripture alludes, not just for food but more so to make her wise. It was this desire (*chamad*) to be like God and obtain this "secret" knowledge that caused her to fall to temptation. In His 10th Commandment God strictly forbids the negative form of this desiring (Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21) using the same Hebrew word. In Deuteronomy He also uses the verb form of the other word here, *awah*, to further describe this negative desiring. In a sense, Eve lusted after this knowledge and gave in to temptation. James tells us when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin (Jas. 1:15). Her eyes were now open to what she had done.

Scripture is clear both here and in other passages in that it was Eve who was first tempted and fell (2Cor. 11:3; 1Tim 2:14). But it is also clear that the responsibility for the sin nature being imputed down through the generations to the present is solely Adam's (Rom. 5:12-19; 1Cor. 15:21-22). In verse 6 it says that Adam was with her. Later in verse 9 God searches out Adam and not Eve to give an account of his actions. Though Eve was deceived and fell and started the chain reaction of disobedience, it appears that Adam stood idly by and watched everything before he himself took part.

With both of their eyes now opened to the knowledge of good and evil, they noticed they were naked and made coverings for themselves out of leaves. The Bible mentions that in their pre-fallen state they were naked and were not ashamed (2:25). Upon committing the first sin they became ashamed of their nakedness. It was not so much the fruit of the tree that opened their eyes but the fact that they had disobeyed their Creator's command and had fallen out of their perfect spiritual relationship with Him. They now had the first feeling of true guilt. It is interesting that the couple's first act in addressing their shame is to provide for themselves a covering. The only thing they could do is hastily put together a few fig leaves for their loins. In providing a true covering (*kippur*) for the atonement of mankind's sin (Lev. 17:11) through His Son Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:7; Heb. 12:2) the gracious Creator did away with man's shame when man could only mask it. Before the hope of that promise existed, Adam and Eve did the only logical thing; they covered up, ran and hid.

The Blame:

Genesis 3:8-13 (ESV)

8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

9 But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

10 And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."

11 He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."

13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Yahweh elohim has to this point seemed far away. In the conversation between Eve and the serpent only "God" was mentioned as if the serpent was attempting to distance the relationship between man and his Creator. After the Fall, it is the LORD God (*Yahweh elohim*) who comes looking for His special creatures. As it turned out, *Yahweh* was never far away. The serpent accomplished his mission to separate the couple with their Creator. When *Yahweh* comes it is now man that tries to run away. The text says they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. This verse is difficult to translate and has been the subject of a lot of confusion. The phrase in the ESV in the cool of the day reads in the Hebrew *leruach hayom*. The phrase is most literally rendered "at the wind of the day". It is usually translated "in the cool of the day" because the windy part of the day is in the late afternoon in Palestine and it usually cools off the land. Other translations are "at the time of the evening breeze" (HCSB, NRSV), "in the evening breeze" (The Message), "at the breezy time of the day" (NET), "during the cool part of the day" (NCV), and "when the cool evening breezes were blowing" (NLT). The LXX simply has *deilinos* (at evening). *Deilinos* is used 5 other times in the LXX always referring to the time of the evening sacrifices (Ex. 29:39, 41; Lev. 6:13; 1Kings 18:29; 2Chr. 31:3). In most of these verses they translate from the Hebrew *erev*. This is the typical Hebrew word for evening. The typical LXX and NT word for evening is *espera*. *Deilinos* is not used in

the NT. It seems the LXX translators saw this event in 3:8 as occurring around the time of the day when the evening sacrifices would later be instituted (i.e. around twilight).

Some have argued that the phrase should be translated as “the wind of the storm” suggesting a storm theophany where *Yahweh* is coming to judge the couple after their first sin. Jeffrey Niehaus (Pratico and Van Pelt: Basics of Biblical Hebrew, pp. 397-9) claims the word *yom* which is almost exclusively translated as “day” has an Akkadian equivalent of *umu* which can mean either “day” or “storm”. While it does make good theological sense to think of *Yahweh* coming mightily in judgment, this interpretation is not the simplest. There appears to be no other place in the OT where *yom* should be translated as “storm”. It is true that *qol* (sound) could be translated more intensely as “thunder” as in Ex. 19:19. It is also true that *mithhalek* (the *hithpael* participial form of “walking”) could be translated more intensely as “walking back and forth” as in Esther 2:11 and here in the YLT. In fact, in most of the 7 other uses of *mithhalek*, the word connotes a majestic powerful walk of a king either human (1Sam 12:2) or God Himself (Deut. 23:15). With all of these data before us, perhaps the best interpretation is a mixture of the two. There seems to be no textual or contextual evidence that God is merely taking His usual stroll through the garden to chat with Adam and Eve. Rather He appears to be majestically “walking” through the garden accompanied potentially by peals of thunder as He comes to meet His creatures to deal with their disobedience. This “storm” comes at the usual windy part of the day near twilight, but the couple is hiding as this is obviously no typical tempest. Of the other eight uses of *chava* (hide) in the intensive reflexive *hithpael* stem that refer to a person or people, all of them refer to the subject as hiding themselves out of fear of death. It stands to reason here that Adam has recalled God’s promise of death in 2:17 and is hiding for his life.

With the couple in hiding amongst the trees of the Garden, *Yahweh* calls and singles out Adam with a rhetorical question. The “you” in verse 9 is in the singular suggesting *Yahweh* holds Adam responsible for what had transpired. This fits with the rest of Scripture particularly the NT. Surely God knew where Adam was or else the Psalmist is in error when he claims His understanding is infinite (Ps. 147:5 – NASB). Elsewhere the Apostle John claims that God “knows all things” (1John 3:20). This question seems merely to start the dialogue and call Adam to judgment.

When caught, Adam confesses that he hid because of the [thunderous] noise of *Yahweh* (v. 10). He then covers up his real fear by saying that it was because he was naked that he was afraid. More likely the realization of his nakedness was a by-product of his sin and his fear was truly that of being punished for his disobedience. The text seems to portray Adam here in a frenzied panic and understandably so.

Yahweh then continues with two more rhetorical questions that go unanswered: Who told you that you were naked? and Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? In an act of desperation Adam answers in v. 12 by blaming not only Eve for giving him the fruit, but also God Himself for giving him Eve. God’s attention then turns to Eve for an account of her deeds. Eve promptly shifts blame to the serpent. In the end they both confess that they ate the fruit of the forbidden tree. It was now time for God’s punishment to come to the three individuals. Interestingly, He does it in reverse order according to the giving of the blame.

The Curse:

Genesis 3:14-19 (ESV)

14 The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

16 To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

17 And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.

19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

This section of the pericope is known as the Curse. It is one of the most hotly debated passages in Scripture particularly with regards to the subject of the age of the earth, the reliability of scientific observations and the timing of animal death (fossilization) and Noah’s Flood. Most global-extent YECs hold that the Scripture claims that death (even that of animals) was a direct consequence of the Fall and therefore all of the fossils we see were a result of Noah’s global deluge. Local-extent OECs maintain that only human death is mentioned here and as a result, the fossil record could have predated the Fall possibly by hundreds of millions of years based on the interpretations of the Creation accounts and the record of nature. YECs respond by claiming that the natural record cannot give an accurate history of events because nature was cursed by God here in Genesis 3. The world we live in and study, they say, is fallen and has been subject to physical laws not present in the original Creation (see Romans 8:19-22). We have already seen however that the natural world of Genesis 1-2 was nearly identical to the one we know today with respect to the processes at work. If all Creation is cursed as a result of Adam’s original sin, we will be able to clearly deduce that from a detailed study of these six verses. We will also touch on Romans 8 to see if it adds support to this theory. The serpent is punished first in the opening two verses.

Verse 14 begins with the *wayyiqtol* verb *wayyomer*. This time it is *Yahweh* who is speaking as if to have the final word over the evil serpent who began the pericope by speaking to Eve. The serpent is to be cursed above all livestock and all beasts of the field. The word for cursed here is *arar*, a verb used 48 times in the OT. It is one of 6 verbs translated as “curse” in the OT. The other 5 are *qelalah*, *taalah*, *qavav*, *naqav* and *zaam*. According to TWOT the primary meanings are as follows:

- 1.) *Arar* – the absence of blessing
- 2.) *Qelalah* – the absence of a blessed state and the lowering to lesser state
- 3.) *Taalalah* – curses as in a large broad category
- 4.) *Qavav* – having to do with actually uttering the curse
- 5.) *Naqav* – blasphemy
- 6.) *Zaam* – to defy or denounce

The curse against the serpent is here spelled out for the reader in a three-fold manner. The first part of the curse is uttered on your belly you shall go. Many have taken this to be a morphological change regarding the locomotion of the serpent. That is, originally the snake had legs and walked about until here where it was sentenced to slither along on its belly. There is no doubt that that is the most straightforward literal reading in the English translation. But is that really the intended message of Moses to his original audience? First of all we have already seen that this pericope so far has not been about a snake but the one who embodies the snake, namely Satan. Certainly Satan does not slither along on his belly today, so either this curse is truly meant for the snake or it is not to be taken literally as a physical one. The former does not make much sense in the context of the passage and certainly seems unfair to the snake. The latter may then be taken as a sense of shame. Satan was to figuratively crawl away defeated, much like the snake he embodied.

The second part of the curse reads dust you shall eat all the days of your life. The Hebrew audience knew quite well that snakes do not actually eat dust. To take this literally would quickly encounter contradiction in the natural world today. Therefore, like the first part of the curse, we are to take this figuratively as a sense of shame and defeat. This is attested in Micah 7:17 where the nations against Israel will “lick the dust like a serpent” when they come trembling before *Yahweh*. Interestingly, Is. 65:25 is often seen as a picture of when the conditions of Eden are restored and the curse is lifted. In this verse the prophet speaks of a time when the “wolf and the lamb will graze together” and “the lion will eat straw like the ox”. But he goes on to say that “dust will be the serpent’s food”. In Genesis, the serpent’s dust eating is a product of the curse. This puts the Edenic restoration interpretation of Is. 65:25 in jeopardy. Rather this verse should be seen as prophesying a new era in the future and not a time when pre-Fall conditions will be restored.

The final part of the curse against the serpent is given in verse 15. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. This verse is often claimed as a protoevangelium. To determine if this is so, it will be helpful to distinguish all the characters. To be sure, there are five. First it is *Yahweh* who is pronouncing the curse. Next there is the addressee, the serpent given as the second person singular pronoun “you”. Then we encounter the woman, Eve. Next we see the serpent’s offspring. This noun (*zera*) is never pluralized but it can be either singular or plural in meaning based on context. Here it is uncertain if there is a single offspring or a collective group of offspring intended. Finally there is the woman’s offspring. We know this is an individual because he is later identified with a third person singular masculine pronoun. In addition to the cast, there is another observation worth mentioning upfront. While there will be enmity between Satan’s offspring and Eve’s offspring, the ultimate battle is between Satan and a certain male descendent of Eve.

God begins the verse by saying He will put enmity between Satan and the woman. The word here is *eyvah* (LXX: *echthra*) and it is only used 5 times in the OT. It generally conveys a feeling of hatred or hostility between parties. In the NT the idea is that anything of fleshly or worldly bias is hostility (*echtra*) towards God whether it is the mind (Rom. 8:7) or just plain friendship with the things of the world (Jas. 4:4). That same idea is present in Genesis where the

woman and Satan will have nothing but hatred and hostility towards each other. The same goes for Satan's offspring and the male offspring of Eve. It stands to reason then that this descendent will have a mind set on God and the things of the Spirit rather than a focus on worldly lusts.

Next we are given a prophecy that he (the male descendent of Eve) shall bruise your (Satan's) head and you (Satan) shall bruise his (the male descendent of Eve) heel. The ESV accurately represents the verb bruise (Heb. *suph*) as it is in the *qal* stem in both occurrences. Since the verbs are identical, the English translations should be as well. The NIV, NCV and the Latin Vulgate change verbs unnecessarily. The LXX translates both as *tereo* which is a bit odd as it generally means to "keep watch over", but can have the sense of "aim at something"; in this case the head and the heel. Since the Vulgate paved the way to translate different verbs it has been tempting to see the serpent as merely lying in wait and striking at the male offspring while he himself would ultimately crush the head of the serpent with his foot. This interpretation with its emphatic biases should be dismissed as it is not what the text is truly saying. While the serpent only attacks the heel and the male offspring attacks the head, it can, however, be interpreted that the male offspring's attack will cause more damage perhaps even being fatal.

There are a few supposed allusions to this text in the NT. First, there seems to be a parallel in Rev. 12. The passage clearly calls Genesis 3 to mind by mentioning that Satan is the "serpent of old" (12:9). Satan is here symbolized as a dragon who fell from heaven taking a third of the angels with him. Both he and his angels were thrown down to earth. This event has not happened yet according to the Scripture. When this happens, Satan will come in great fury knowing he has only a little bit of time left (12:12). Verse 13 states that he will persecute the woman (Israel) who gave birth to the male child (Jesus). Actually in the Greek it is only a male (*arsena*). The word "child" is not in the text. This may have allusions to Genesis 3:15 where we saw that a male descendent of the woman will have a hostile relationship with Satan. Then in verse 17 we find the text saying that Satan will be "enraged with the woman" in perhaps another fulfillment of the enmity mentioned in Genesis 3:15.

Another NT passage is Romans 16:20 where Paul states that "the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." The forcefulness of some translations including the Vulgate may have been influenced by this verse. There are a few problems with this, however. First, the Greek word here (*suntribo*) is different than the LXX word in Gen. 3:15 (*tereo*) with *tereo* literally meaning "to watch over". Second, the one doing the crushing in Romans is God, while in Genesis it is the male descendent of Eve. Third, there is no method given for the bruising in Genesis 3, while it is "your foot" in Romans 16. The "your" here refers to the "brethren" (v. 17) in the church in Rome. Again, in Genesis it is the male offspring who is doing the bruising. So if there is an allusion here to Genesis 3:15 it is indirect at best. There is no textual evidence to interpret the passage here as someone crushing the head of a snake (Satan) with his foot. To do this is to miss the figurative language which predicts only a "bruise" (probably permanent and fatal) to the head of Satan. The details and methods are not given.

Since Eve's offspring is singled out as a male, is it possible to determine exactly who this man is? The answer is not exactly clear in Scripture although I believe it can be logically inferred. If we read on in Revelation regarding the dragon who we clearly saw was Satan, the "dragon of old" (12:9; 20:2), we find that an angel binds him up in the abyss for 1,000 years (20:1-3). The

angel himself cannot be the male descendent of Eve, and it is clear that this is only a temporary confinement. After the 1,000 years are up, Satan is released for one last battle. Quickly he is defeated and thrown into the Lake of Fire (20:7-10). In Luke 12:5 Jesus instructs the people to fear God who “has the authority to cast into hell.” Since the Bible is clear on the deity of Christ and since the events in Revelation take place just after Christ’s 1,000 year reign on earth, it seems more than reasonable to infer that Satan’s fatal wound is dealt by Jesus Himself. Jesus fits the description of a male descendent of Adam and Eve (Luke 3:23-38). Jesus alone is able to bruise the head of Satan in the sense demanded by the text. All this evidence strongly proclaims this passage as a protoevangelium, or first telling of the gospel. The implication is that immediately after Adam and Eve’s first act of disobedience, and during their punishment, they were offered redemption. While there was clear and strong consequence for their sin, they had hope in a future savior.

Next *Yahweh* speaks to the woman in verse 16. In the first part of the curse against Eve, *Yahweh* says I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing. The phrase surely multiply (*harbah arbah*) is an infinitive absolute. This construction is used to add emphasis and certainty that the action of the verb will take place (see also Gen. 2:16 and 17). Most often this phrase is translated with the English word “surely” as in the ESV. Almost every other English version translates the phrase “greatly multiply” which seems to miss the meaning of the statement. The emphasis is on the certainty not the severity. Nevertheless, Eve’s pain was to be multiplied, which stands to reason she was to have at least some pain without the addition of God’s curse. In addition, we saw the first use of the word *ravah* in Gen. 1:22 where God blessed the creatures of the sea and the air and told them to multiply. Obviously there was an initial quantity of each in order for them to multiply. Many who claim the entire Creation was cursed here in Genesis 3 site Eve’s pain in childbearing as proof. Clearly the text supports the presence of pain before the curse, even if it was slight. Furthermore the word *itstsavon* (pain/toil) is only used 3 times in the OT; here, verse 17 where it speaks of Adam’s toil in his labor and Gen. 5:29 where it is prophesied that Noah will bring rest from the toil caused by God’s curse. The Greek word here in the LXX is *lupe* which could either mean physical or spiritual pain and carries a more general feeling than *itstsavon*. Eve’s pain was to be in her *herayon* (childbearing). This word is used only here in the OT and could more literally mean “conception” or “pregnancy”. The LXX interestingly uses *stenagmos* (a groaning).

The second line of the curse towards Eve seems to be a parallel of the first; in pain you shall bring forth children. This time pain is *etsev* (again translated as *lupe* in the LXX). You will notice the root is the same as *itstsavon* in the first part of the curse. Now Eve will experience pain or sorrow while bringing forth children. This passage is often interpreted as such that the pain experienced by women during childbirth is a result of Eve’s sin. While it is possible that this is correct, there are a few things often missed that should be accounted for. First, there was pain in childbearing before this curse. Second, the curse is directed towards Eve, therefore it is an assumption that it is passed down to all women. Third, it is assumed that the terms here describe a physical pain. Again, these may be correct assumptions, but care should be taken to avoid reading things into the text. The phrase *teldiy vaniym* (you shall bring forth children) does seem to call to mind the familiar pain that a woman experiences during delivery. The LXX reads *texe tekna* which speaks of bringing a child into the world. While the traditional interpretation of this curse is that it affects all women from Eve down and is speaking of a physical change to the

female body that is more conducive to pain during child birth, the text does not address what exactly that change was. Therefore, since the text implies there would be some pain even without the curse, it makes more sense (in my opinion) that the additional pain Eve was to incur was emotional or spiritual pain. Such feelings are common in the conception, pregnancy and delivery process. Perhaps in the original Creation women would have experienced none of the emotional effects of this process though still experiencing the physical pain. Out of necessity there must have been a severe alteration to the female body to go from a pain-free delivery to the one experienced by women today. That change is not recorded in Scripture. Is there a Scriptural basis for assuming the pain is emotional?

In the next and final part of *yahweh's* curse towards Eve, He mentions a change in her desire. This is clearly a behavioral change and not a physical one. Also, the spiritual pain of *etsev* is attested in Scripture. It does mean physical labor in places, but it also depicts more of a "sorrow" in places such as Prov. 10:22 where it says that "the blessing of the Lord makes rich; and He adds no sorrow (*etsev*) with it." Also in Prov. 15:1 we see that a "harsh (*etsev*: painful, sorrowful) word stirs up anger." Furthermore, in the 18 verses in the LXX where *lupe* is used, at least 14 of them are strictly dealing with emotional pain or grief. Finally, in the NT *lupe* is exclusively used to denote grief or sorrow, not physical pain. An important and relevant passage is John 16:20-22. Here Jesus is telling His disciples that He is going to be leaving them for a while, but then He will return. The disciples would experience grief (*lupe*), but then would experience joy at His return. Jesus uses an analogy in verse 21 of a woman experiencing "pain" (NASB, NIV, NLT, NRSV); "sorrow" (ESV, NKJV, KJV) when she is in labor because her time has come to give birth. The word *lupe* is used here not to describe the physical pains of labor, but the emotional as demanded by the context. Jesus here is essentially saying that the *lupe* experienced by women during the childbearing process is not physical (although that definitely exists!) but sorrowful. He also adds that our gracious God has allowed for the moments after childbirth to be that of joy. So much so that the *lupe* of the curse is remembered no more. Additionally, consider Is. 26:17 where it says, "As the pregnant woman approaches *the time* to give birth, she writhes (*chiyl*) and cries out in her labor pains (*chevel*), thus were we before You, O Lord". In a verse that obviously speaks of physical pain, none of the words used in Genesis 3 are found. All of this textual evidence leads me to believe that the pain with which Eve was cursed during labor was not physical, but spiritual.

The last part of the curse against Eve would be that her desire shall be for [her] husband, and he shall rule over [her]. There is a bit of consternation over just what is meant here. Is it a physical desire? Is it a desire to be the head of the household? The word here is *teshuqah* and it is only used 3 times in the OT; elsewhere in Gen 4:7 and Song 7:10. The LXX curiously translates as *apostrophe* (a turning back) which does not seem to make sense. It uses *apostrophe* in Gen. 4:7 whereas in the Song of Solomon, the similar *epistrophe* is used. The word's sparse usage may lead to more questions than answers and certainly the LXX appears not to help. We can deduce however in Gen. 4:7 that sin is crouching at the door and its *teshuqah* is for us (i.e. it wants to control or master us), but we must master it. The poetic use in the Song of Solomon speaks more of a physical desiring. From the context, the use here more closely resembles that of Genesis 4:7 where someone or something is doing the desiring but someone else must do the mastering (Heb. *mashal* in both verses). All this evidence seems to suggest that Eve is cursed by having a desire to dominate or control her husband, but it will be the husband who rules over her. The Bible

does not comment on whether Eve's curses will be imputed to all women down through the ages, but the traditional view is that they are.

While Eve will want to control the relationship with Adam, he will *mashal* over her. In the LXX, *kurieuo* is used while the similar passage in Gen. 4:7 uses *archo*. *Mashal* is first used in Gen. 1:18 where the sun and moon are given to "rule" over the day and night. The word carries a wide range of meanings, but the general sense is to govern or to be master of. It can mean a fierce, harsh ruling as in Is. 19:4, or it can be a righteous ruling in the fear of the Lord as in 2Sam. 23:3. While the current passage does not mention the extent of this governing, the Bible is clear on the relationship of a man with his wife. While man is head of the woman (1Cor. 11:3), he is to love her and give himself up for her (Eph. 5:27) and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life (1Pet. 3:7). The Scriptures clearly lay most of the responsibility on the man to nurture the relationship with the woman, and it is not to be done in a malicious manner. Rather than rule in a sense of a dictator, the NT suggests the man is to lead with respect to moral integrity. Nevertheless, the woman will desire the lead role in the relationship according to the passage at hand.

So far in the account of the Curse there does not appear to be any mention of a change in the way the physical world operates. The curse against the serpent (Satan) was strictly a prophecy of his ultimate demise at the hand of a male descendent of Eve who, it can be deduced, is Jesus Christ. Secondly, the curse against Eve (and reasonably assuming all women thereafter) seems to be purely emotional. There would be increased grief in childbearing and a desire to be the head of the marriage relationship. There appears to be no physical effect on either her or the reptilian body of the serpent. The passage now moves towards the curse against Adam where natural effects of the Curse are often sited.

The curse against Adam spans verses 17 to 19 of chapter three. Because Adam ate of the tree, cursed is the ground because of [him]; in toil [he] will eat of it all the days of [his] life. Many have taken this cursing of the ground to be universal in extent; proof that the physical Creation in its entirety is cursed (with backing from Romans 8). I will comment on Romans 8 later, but if all Creation is cursed it should be readily evident in this, the account of the Curse itself. The word for curse here again is *arar* which I argued above depicts the absence of a blessing or a barrier in the way of the blessing (cf v.14). Taken as such the blessing of the ground (i.e. abundant crops) would be prevented and absent. The cursing of the ground is seen elsewhere in Scripture. In Genesis 4:11, Cain is "cursed (*arar*) from the ground" which is later defined as "when you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you". So when Cain murdered his brother Abel, God cursed the ground. This meant it would no longer yield abundant crops when Cain tried to cultivate it. It did not mean that the laws of nature were altered in any way. Next, in Genesis 5:29 Lamech prophesies that his son Noah will bring rest from the "toil of our hands arising from the ground which the LORD has cursed (*arar*)". This prophecy would make no sense if somehow Noah were to reverse the natural laws to what they were before the Fall. Also, in a passage of conditional curses in Deut. 21:18, the produce of the ground would be cursed (*arar*) if Israel disobeys God in the land He is giving them. If the cursing of the ground in Gen. 3 is to be a permanent one, then how could it be that it could be cursed again? These three passages seem to indicate that the ground that was cursed was local to Adam. The evidence being that the ground was later cursed because of Cain's sin, Noah would bring an end to the

curse on the ground, and there would be a possibility the ground could be cursed again if Israel rebels against God in the Promised Land. There is no mention here of a lasting change in the way the physical world operates.

What of the toil that Adam would encounter while working the ground? This is the same word (*itstsavon*) used for Eve's "pain" in childbearing in verse 16. The LXX also translates this word here as *lupe* which as was discussed above almost always depicts an emotional pain, not a physical one. The word may be better translated as "sorrow" here rather than "toil" as in the KJV and YLT. Thus the translation of "painful labor" (HCSB) seems unwarranted. Perhaps the NLT's paraphrase "all your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it" conveys the proper message of Adam's sorrow he would feel as he no doubt worked hard to reap just a little in the field that was cursed.

Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you. This phrase has also given proof to some who adhere to the notion of a global curse. They argue that this is the first appearance of thorns and thistles in creation. They are then a new physical creation ushered in to aid in the cursing of the earth. First of all, the word *bara* (to create) is not used in this passage; neither are any of the other verbs commonly regarded as denoting a new appearance such as "be", "make", "fashion", etc... The verb translated here as shall bring forth speaks of a common ordinary growth of vegetation. While the verb is in the *hiphil* stem denoting causative action on God's part, it is unnecessary to demand a creative act. Since God was in His resting stage having completed Creation (Gen. 2:1-2), it seems more correct to think of this as a change that made thorn and thistle growth more conducive. Perhaps this acted in tandem with the couple's expulsion later on into a land that was overrun with this kind of vegetation. This would account for Adam's sorrow in his labors to try to cultivate good crops.

The next part of the curse against Adam reads by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread. It is important to see that hard work is not the result of the Curse. Adam was told in 2:15 to cultivate and keep the land. In 1:28 the couple was told to subdue the land. The word used there implies that it would not willingly be subdued, but rather it would take some effort. Hard work is not a curse. No doubt cultivating the Garden of Eden would have been easier because thorns and thistles were not present. The curse here is stating that his efforts would need to be multiplied. He would have to work extra hard to cultivate this new cursed ground. We have seen in Genesis 2:5-6, that this land is naturally poorly irrigated. The seasonal waters would make it difficult for Adam to sustain a bountiful harvest. All of this would add to Adam's sorrow, but it is crucial to understand that the rewards of good honest hard work are a blessing and they are to be enjoyed as a gift from God (Eccl. 2:24; 5:19).

We come now to the most theologically relevant portion of the curse, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return. The death sentence itself is not so much debated, but the extent of it is hotly contested. Was the death sentence passed on to all humanity (local extent) or is it spread across to the animal kingdom as well (global extent)?

The words make it clear that Adam is to eventually experience a physical death. We must be honest, however, that the text here does not say if this death would have happened anyway or if it

is the product of the curse. If anything the curse given to Adam seems to emphasize the hard work he would experience *until* his death, not his death specifically. This has led to speculation as to whether Adam was created mortal. The Bible does not address this here, but it seems clear when taking all Scripture into account that that is not the case. First of all, God warns him that he would die on the day he eats of the fruit (Gen. 2:17). While that speaks primarily of spiritual death, it is clear that there is a component of physical death intended as well. Secondly, the NT seems to indicate that Adam's sin is responsible for death entering the world (Rom. 5:12-21; 1Cor 15:21-22). In each of these passages *thanatos* is used which is the same word in Gen. 2:17 (LXX).

Many YECs take a global-extent view saying that through Adam's sin *all* death came into the world; both to man and to the animal kingdom. This has been the predominant view down through the ages. But is this really what the Bible teaches? Hopefully we can agree that physical death to human beings was part of the Curse. At the very least, it is a punishment for Adam's sin (Gen. 2:17) and the Curse involved the imputation of the sin and therefore physical death to every successive generation (Rom. 5:12-21). Animal death is not specifically mentioned in the narrative on the Curse in Genesis 3. Those who adhere to the global-extent view call on Romans 5:12 as proof. This verse states that "therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned." It must be noted that not only are animals not mentioned in this verse either, Paul seems to go out of his way to state that death "spread to all *men (anthropos)*". In my opinion, he intended to stress that death was passed down only to humans. He could have left out the word *anthropos*. He also could have included animals. But he did not. Similarly, 1Cor. 15:21-22 is called upon as proof that animals did not die before the Fall. In that passage we read, "For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive". While the passage does not say that death came to men, it also makes no mention of animals. There is yet another problem in suggesting this speaks of death to the animal kingdom. Verse 22 implies that if in Adam all (including animals) die, then in Christ all (including animals) will be made alive. There are obvious theological and biblical contradictions that appear if these verses include animal death. The Bible is very clear that Christ died for us for our sins (Rom. 5:6,8; 14:15; 1Cor. 8:11; 15:3; 1Pet. 3:18). Therefore, since the Bible makes absolutely no claim that animal death is a result of the Fall/Curse, we can very reasonably assume that animals had died for some time prior to Adam's sin.

The other argument used as proof that animals did not die before the Fall is the statement made by God in Gen. 1:31 that everything He created was "very good". Some have taken these words beyond their meaning to say that the original Creation was "perfect" and free of any natural evil. As I discussed earlier at 1:31, there is no reason to read that into the text. In fact, Paul says in 1Tim 4:4 that everything created by God IS good. It does not say that it WAS good and then was corrupted by man's sin. Likewise in other portions of Scripture animal death is depicted as a good thing. Abel's sacrifice of an animal was considered a good thing (Gen. 4:4). God Himself even provided a ram for Abraham to offer as a sacrifice (Gen. 22:13-14). God gives the lions their prey (Job 38:39-41; Ps. 104:21). In a few cases God even tells His people to destroy the animals in a city (Deut. 13:15; 1Sam 15:3). To say that animal death is a product of the Curse and had no part in God's "very good" Creation is to not only contradict Scripture but also to accuse God of feeding the fallen nature of His creatures. When looked at properly, Scripture

reveals that humans are God's masterpiece in Creation. Animals are wonderful creations but they are made lower than man. Man fell into sin, but God provided a covering in the Old Testament through the death of animals (Lev. 17:11). The Bible says that when an animal was offered up it was a soothing aroma to the Lord (Lev. 1:9, 13, 17). That is not to say that God enjoys animal death. Rather this practice was given as a type of what would be the ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the cross (Heb. 10:1-10). Therefore animal death in the Bible fits with God's Creation being "very good" just as He said (Gen. 1:31).

To summarize the extent of the Curse as given here in Genesis 3 ...

- The curse against the serpent was directed towards the one controlling the serpent, namely Satan, and not towards the physical body of a snake
- Satan was to be banished in shame (3:14) and later defeated once and for all by a male descendent of Eve (3:15).
- Eve was to undergo two emotional changes. First her sorrow during childbearing was to be multiplied. Second, she would now want to dominate the relationship with her husband.
- The ground was cursed and Adam was to eat of its produce in sorrow (same word used for Eve's sorrow in childbearing).
- Adam would be sent back to the land from which he came which was overcome with thorns and thistles
- Adam would experience physical death

In analyzing the six verses in the Curse narrative, we must be honest in concluding we see absolutely no mention of any change in the physical laws nor do we see any mention of the entire Creation being cursed so as to alter its physical appearance or the way it functions. We must be careful not to read into the text that which is not there. Not only is suggesting God cursed His entire Creation *eisegesis* (a reading into the text) it also backs one into an unfortunate corner when trying to explain the harmony between Scripture and scientific data. No change in any physical laws has been found in the rock record or the astronomical record. To say that the earth was free of natural evil (i.e. earthquakes, volcanoes, storms, animal death, disease, etc...) before the Fall is to depict the earth as a mystical fairy tale place. A world without these things is a world without plate tectonics. A world without plate tectonics cannot produce the physical features seen in Genesis 2 such as topography for flowing rivers, gold and other minerals. Such a world is not "very good". It is dead. It cannot sustain human life.

The Consequence:

Genesis 3:20-24 (ESV)

20 The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

21 And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

22 Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" 23 therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.

24 He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a

flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

After God delivers His curse to the three involved persons, the narrative picks up again in verse 20 with a *wayyiqtol* verb. After the Curse, Adam called his wife's name Eve. In Hebrew Adam calls her *chawah*. This word is similar to *chayah* which is the word for "life". The LXX interestingly translates Eve as *Zoe* (life). In Gen. 4:1 (the only other mention of Eve), the LXX uses *Eua* from where we get the English "Eve". Translated literally, the LXX reads "Adam called his wife's name Life, because she was the mother of all the living". By saying she was the mother of all the living, the Bible makes it clear that we are all descendants of Adam and Eve. Scientists now believe that all human beings were descended from a single human pair. Based on Y-chromosome DNA in males today, it is believed that all humans descended from Adam roughly 60,000 years ago. Considering the first six Creation Days spanned 4.5 billion years, it seems fitting that God's masterpiece of Creation is a most recent event. Long ages need not be discounted because of our limited minds to understand them. Rather they should be looked at with appreciation that our Creator took such a vast amount of time to prepare a beautiful planet for us to inhabit. Once again, science has confirmed what Christians knew all along: Eve was the mother of all the living.

It says next that *Yahweh* made for them garments of skin and clothed them. Many feel that when God killed the animal to make the coverings for Adam and Eve, that this was the first death incurred in the world. This conclusion is reasonable if one assumes there was no death prior to the Fall, but as we have seen, there is no biblical reason for assuming animals had not died before that event. In any case, it shows God's concern for the new state of His creatures. They had fallen and needed a physical and spiritual covering for their sin. The spiritual covering had already been promised in verse 15. The physical covering is now given to cover their shame of nakedness.

Next *Yahweh* makes an interesting statement. He says that the man has become like one of Us and then He clarifies that by saying that he now knows good from evil. As we saw in chapter 1, the use of the first person plural when spoken by God most likely is a reference to the Trinity (one God in three distinct persons). The triune God's statement on the surface seems to give credence to Satan's temptation in verse 5. Satan appears to have gotten it right, but as is typical for him, he throws tidbits of truth in with his deceptions. The man only became "like God" in that he was aware that his rebellion was evil. This knowledge was not comforting, rather it caused him great fear and anguish and even cost him his life.

God's concern was that now Adam might eat of the Tree of Life and live forever. This tree was not forbidden. It was there for Adam to eat of freely (2:16). The debate over whether these trees were literal or figurative should end now with this verse. If the tree was figurative, there would be no need for Adam to have to leave and no need for God to guard the path. These two trees were most definitely literal trees. Adam ate from the literal Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and then he was blocked from the literal Tree of Life. The tree, however, is probably a model of the true tree that is in heaven (Ezek. 47:12; Rev. 22:2), much the same as the tabernacle was a model of the one in heaven (Heb. 9:21-24). Just as the heavenly tree will bring healing to all who eat, so too would this earthly tree apparently. The text says that Adam would live forever. This verse should also end the debate over whether Adam was created mortal. If he was

allowed to freely eat of this tree which would make him live forever, then it stands to reason that he was originally made to live forever. It is only his sin which brought about his death (Rom. 5:12). The word for forever here is *olam*. It is used 439 times in the OT and is the Hebrew word for “eternity”. The LXX translates with the beautiful phrase *eis ton aiona* which is literally rendered “into the age” or “into the eon”. This phrase is hard to bring into English because we tend to water down such words like “forever” and “eternity”. In the NT this phrase is sometimes expanded to *eis tous aionas ton aionon* when speaking of God’s transcendent glory (Phil. 4:20). Literally that means “into the ages of ages”, a breadth of time that goes beyond time itself. The incomprehensiveness of this should not let us minimize the phrase. Adam would live into eternity, having never to experience any kind of death, in his physical body if he was to eat of this tree. But now his soul would live on because of his faith in his spiritual redeemer (3:15), but he would need a new physical body because it was sentenced to death.

Therefore in verses 23 and 24 God would send Adam and Eve out of the garden back into the land in which they were created. It was a land unlike the Garden of Eden. It had ephemeral irrigation (Gen. 2:5-6) and it was overrun with thorns and thistles (3:17-18). Adam was cursed to cultivate *this* land because of his disobedience. Cultivating in the garden would have been a breeze compared to this. Here, he will work much and reap little. In sorrow and with the sweat of his brow will he toil in *this* land all the days of his life (3:17,19).

It was not enough for God to merely drive the couple out. He also placed cherubim and a flaming sword to guard the way to the Tree of Life. The word cherubim is a transliteration of the Hebrew word. It is used 90 times in the OT, most often in reference to the carvings that rested above the Ark of the Covenant and in Solomon’s temple. They are also the beings seen by Ezekiel in his visions (Ezek. 10-11). Apparently, cherubs were mighty angelic beings. One particular cherub mentioned in Ezekiel 28:11-19 is thought by many to be Satan himself. Though not mentioned by name, it is readily apparent that this is not the earthly king of Tyre. The cherub was in the Garden of Eden (v. 13) and was blameless until unrighteousness was found in him and he fell (v. 15). Obviously, the timing of Satan’s fall lies somewhere between the Beginning (Gen. 1:1) and the passage at hand. For now it is enough to say that the beings guarding the way to the Tree of Life were of the same race as Satan himself before his rebellion. One can only imagine Adam’s chances of slipping past them and partaking of the healing fruit of the tree.

It is interesting to remember that Adam’s job in the garden was to cultivate and keep (*shamar*) it (Gen. 2:15). After his sin and expulsion, God places the cherubim at the entrance to keep (*shamar*) him from the Tree of Life. God made sure that the only means to salvation was through the promise of the seed given in verse 15. The Tree of Life was a means to the physical healing that Adam needed, but it was guarded such that access to it was impossible. Adam, and every human being since, only had one cure for the wages of sin; that is the hope of the male descendent, Jesus Christ.

Appendix: Other Passages with Allusions to Genesis 3

It seems good to now discuss other passages in Scripture that both allude to or allegedly allude to the Fall and Curse of Genesis 3. In the passages below we will read the text, discuss the context

and check out word choice to see if they directly or indirectly refer back to our text in Genesis. Some of the passages are hotly debated as to whether they give credence to the YEC no-death-before-the-Fall and the entire-Creation-is-cursed views or whether they support alternate interpretations. I will compare and contrast these passages as objectively as possible.

Romans 5:12-21 (ESV)

Death Enters the World

12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

13 for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law.

14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

16 And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.

17 For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

20 Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

21 so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In this passage the Apostle Paul is instructing the church in Rome regarding the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. Adam is mentioned twice by name and six times by the phrase "one man". The most debated verse here is verse 12. Global-extent YECs use this as evidence that there was no death in the world, including animal death, before Adam sinned. Others maintain that this passage does not speak to animal death but only mentions the human death that was passed down to all generations. As we dive into the passage we need to pay attention to any possible references to Genesis 3.

Paul starts the passage with a therefore (Gr. *dia*) which should always prompt the question "What's it there for?" The word always looks back, and in this case, Paul was discussing our state of being helpless to save ourselves and that at the right time, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us to save us. Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned. The first thing to note is that what Adam did in the Garden of Eden was indeed sin. There is no getting around that. Sin came into the world through one man (Adam, v. 14). Through sin (Gr. *hamartia*) came death (Gr. *thanatos*). I believe Paul is directly referring to Genesis 2:17 and 3:19 where we found the warning and punishment for sin, namely death. The death referred to in Genesis is both spiritual and physical. Spiritual in that Adam would be fallen from his perfect relationship with his Creator, thus spiritually dead and in need of a savior. Physical in that his body would return to the dust from which it was made. Paul echoes this punishment for sin in Romans 6:23 where he says that "the wages of sin is death (*thanatos*)".

In reading that death entered the world through sin, many YECs have taken this to mean that there was no death, period, before Adam's sin. This might be a reasonable interpretation if the verse would not go on to say that death spread to all men. Paul seemingly goes out of his way to say that death affected the human race (*anthropos*). *Anthropos* is never used to mean anything other than man. In fact, Jesus says that *anthropos* is distinct from and more important than the animals (Matt. 12:12). It is clear that *anthropos* cannot include animals, and the fact that Paul specifically mentions death spreading to all men, may mean that he wished to exclude animal death from the conversation. Perhaps this was because animal death is either unimportant to the story or because it had been in the world for a long time before human death. I believe it is dangerous to read into the Bible what it does not say. Specifically where it might cause contradictions with other portions of Scripture or cause the adoption of heretical doctrine. If that is not clear here, it is so in the parallel passage in 1Cor. 15:21-22. There, Paul says that in Adam all die, and in Christ all are made alive. If that includes animal death, then Paul is saying that Christ died so that animals may have eternal life. This notion is not supported in Scripture. I believe the idea of lumping animal death in with these passages is not only careless exegesis at best, it is approaching the fine line of heresy.

So what is Paul saying here? He says that death spread to all men because all sinned. Because of Adam's sin, death entered the world. This death spread to all (*pas*) men because all (*pas*) sinned. The word "sinned" here (*hamartia*) is in the aorist tense which is the closest thing Greek has to the English past tense. Many people, including me, believe that Paul's use of the aorist here implies that all people sinned when Adam sinned. Adam's sin, and its punishment were imputed, or charged, to all future generations. Though verse 13 says sin is not imputed where there is no Law, it goes on to say that death reigned in the time between Adam and Moses when the Law was given. This means that if those people were not charged with sin, but still suffered the consequences of sin, they must have been charged with Adam's sin. Even after the giving of the Law, which was meant to show us our sin and our inability to live up to God's standards, we are still charged with Adam's sin. While this may not seem fair, it is a fact we cannot deny. Unless someone saves us from this sin, we will suffer death in its fullest capacity. While everyone will suffer physical death because of Adam, the unsaved will suffer the second death which is called the lake of fire, or hell in Rev. 20:14; 21:8. Because of Adam's sin, we are all condemned sinners (Rom. 5:18).

Adam was a type of the One who was to come (v. 14). Just as through Adam's disobedience we are all called sinners, through Jesus' death on the cross we can all be called righteous (v. 19; Phil 2:8). This means that Jesus Christ is the salvation we need to get this imputed sin off of our records. The Bible clearly says that we are all sinners (Rom. 3:23). David even affirms that initially this is of no fault of our own, for he says "in iniquity I was brought forth" (Ps. 51:5). David recognized he was a sinner from his birth. Like him, we need a savior. If we say we are not a sinner, we make ourselves out to be liars (1John 1:8). Jesus did not die on the cross to save animals from condemnation, he came to save sinners (1Tim. 1:15).

1 Corinthians 15:21-22 (ESV)

In Adam all Die

21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

Like the expanded parallel passage in Romans 5:12-21, these verses have been used by some people to say that animals did not experience death before Adam's sin. These two verses nicely summarize the more theological discourse of the Romans passage. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul is proving the resurrection from the dead. In verse 13 he claims that if the dead are not raised then neither has Christ risen from the dead. If Christ has not risen from the dead, then our faith in Him is worthless and we are still in our sin (v. 17). Paul brings home the point that Christ has indeed been raised from the dead in verse 20, thus putting an end to the debate.

In verse 21 we find a reference to Adam though not by name: by a man came death. In the Greek we read *di' anthropou thanatos*. The word *thanatos* is the same word for "death" we find in Romans 5:12 and it is the same word used in the LXX in Gen. 2:17. God had warned Adam that if he rebelled he would surely die. Adam did indeed rebel and now Paul teaches that through Adam came *thanatos* just as God had promised. Knowing that God had also promised a savior in Gen. 3:15, Paul counters with the statement by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead (*di' anthropou anastasis nekron*).

It is clear from the parallelism in this sentence in verse 21 that the *nekros* refer to those who have experienced *thanatos*. What happens if we say that through Adam's sin all death, including animal death, entered the world? If that is true and animals are included in the first part of verse 21, then they must be included in the second half. That is to say that animals will experience the resurrection of the dead. That notion is not supported elsewhere in Scripture. If that is not quite clear in verse 21 it will become abundantly clear in verse 22.

The verse states for just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. The use of the comparative *hosper* (just as) forces the reader to interpret the two halves of the verse as parallel. There is another interesting word choice here. Paul uses the word *pantes* which is the plural of *pas* meaning "all". Is Paul using the word "all" as collectively referring to humans and animals as most YECs claim? If one believes that there was no death in the animal kingdom before the Fall, then the logical interpretation would be to lump humans and animals together here. Let us pay careful attention to the implications of just such an interpretation. If in Adam all [animals] die, so also in Christ all[animals] will be made alive. As mentioned above, such a notion of Christ dying for animals is not mentioned anywhere else in Scripture. In fact, I believe it is a dangerous position to take. In Matthew 12:12, Jesus preaches that we (*anthropos*) are distinct and more important than the animals. In 1 Timothy 1:15, Paul tells us that it is a trustworthy statement that Christ came into the world to save sinners. Nowhere in the Bible does it mention that animals have the capacity to sin. It stands therefore that Christ could not have died to save animals. If Christ did not die to save animals, then the first half of the verse does not include animals either. Adam's sin may have ushered in death, but this death is unrelated to animal death. If it is unrelated, then it stands very possible that animals experienced death for some time before Adam's sin.

Based on the words and mission of Christ Himself, I believe it approaches heresy to say that Adam's death ushered in death for the animal kingdom. By necessity we are forced to say then that Christ died for animals because animals sinned. By a simple perusal of Scripture will find that this is not at all the case. Animals were offered on the alter as a sacrifice for the sins of the people (Lev. 4:3, 28; 5:6; 19:22, etc...). Notice that the sacrifices are for the sins of the people (Heb. 5:3; 7:27) and there is no mention of animal sin. There is no passage in the Bible that speaks of animal sin. Likewise there is no passage that speaks of the initiation of animal death. It is complete eisegesis to speak of these verses and Romans 5:12 as including animal death as a consequence of the Fall. We must be very careful to let the text speak for itself and not read anything into it just to try and find evidence for a specific doctrine that is not there. It appears that Paul is going out of his way to state that Adam's sin brought about death for humans and humans only, just as he states in Romans 5:12. The notion that animal death originated as a result of the Fall is unbiblical.

Romans 8:18-25 (ESV)

The Whole Creation Groans

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope

21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?

25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Perhaps no other passage in the entire Bible has been used more to support the notion that the entire Creation was cursed at the time of the Fall than these verses in Romans 8. Many have used these verses to suggest that geologic evidence is tainted and we cannot use it accurately to determine earth history. Some say this passage suggests the ushering in of the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics. There is no doubt that Paul here portrays a sad state for the Creation in that it was subjected to futility against its own will. But does this passage actually refer back to the Fall in Genesis 3? Is the reference back to Adam direct, or possibly indirect? We will spend a good amount of time breaking these verses apart to get to Paul's true intentions.

First let us look at the context. In Romans 8, Paul is discussing the difference between a mind set on the flesh and one set on the Spirit. All who are led by the Spirit are called sons of God (v. 14). If we are children of God, we suffer with Christ (God's Son), that we might be glorified with Him (v. 17). But Paul is convinced that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed to us (v. 18). The word for suffering here is *pathema*, which is a special word primarily used for the sufferings of Christ and the Christians who join in the sufferings of Christ.

Paul switches subjects then in verse 19 to the *ktisis* (creature, creation). It is this *ktisis* that anxiously awaits the revealing of the sons of God. But what is the *ktisis*? *Ktisis* is used 19 times

in the NT. The ESV translates as “creation” 16 times, “creature” 2 times, and “institution” in 1Pet. 2:13. The KJV, however, translates as “creation” 6 times, “creature” 11 times, “building” 1 time, and “ordinance” in 1Pet. 2:13. The two versions agree in only 8 out of the 18 instances outside of 1Pet. 2:13. The word is used 4 times in our passage in Romans 8, but only once do the two translations agree (v. 22). Why the discrepancy? It should be obvious that there is some interpretation involved in choosing “creation” or “creature”. Context will be our guide.

This *ktisis* is anxiously awaiting the revealing (*apokalupsis*), which refers back to the revealing (*apokalupsis*) in verse 18. This is the revealing of the sons of God in glory. Remember the sons of God are those who are led by the Spirit (v. 14). These sons of God will be revealed in glory when Christ is revealed in His glory (Col. 3:4) at His coming. That begs a question which Paul addresses next. Why is the *ktisis* anxiously awaiting the revealing of the sons of God in glory? The answer is three-fold.

First because the *ktisis* was subjected to futility (v. 20). Second, it is in bondage to corruption (v. 21). Finally, it is groaning in the pains of childbirth (v. 22). It is these three reasons given by Paul that have been the root of fierce debate over the fallen state of Creation. Do these comments indicate that the Creation is cursed as many claim? First of all, it is significant to understand that the word “God” is not mentioned except as the object in the prepositional phrase “sons of God” although He is the probable antecedent of the “Him” in verse 20. It is also noteworthy that neither Adam, Eve nor the serpent (the three characters in the Fall/Curse narrative in Genesis 3) are mentioned directly or indirectly in this entire passage. So what do these three present conditions of the *ktisis* tell us?

In verse 20 we read that the *ktisis* was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it. It is pretty well accepted that the “Him” refers to God. Rather than the typical third person personal pronoun *autos*, the accusative definite article *ton* is used. While this usage is more common in the nominative, it is most likely a good translation although possibly the NIV renders it best with “the one” depicting a relative pronoun. The NET and NCV insert the actual word “God” here which is wrong. The NLT paraphrases the whole as “subjected to God’s curse” which is interpretive and very misleading even though that is the interpretation favored by most YECs. Neither “God” (*theos*) nor “curse” (*katara* or *anathema*) are used in this passage.

In any case “the One” (i.e. God) subjected the *ktisis*. The word for “subjected” is *hypotasso* and it is used 38 times in the NT. The other 8 uses of *hypotasso* in the active voice have God or Christ as its subject. It stands to reason then that God is the subject here as well. According to TDNT, in the compulsory sense (as is the case here by the presense of *ouch ekousa* (not willingly)), the word carries the meaning of “either power or conquest on the one side or lack of freedom on the other” (TDNT, vol. 8 p. 41). The context tells us that it is the latter here. The *ktisis* had its freedom taken away when it was subjected to futility.

The word for futility here is *mataiotes*. It is used 3 times in the NT and 54 times in the LXX. In addition to verse 20 here, it is also used by Paul in Eph. 4:17 and Peter in 2Pet. 2:18. The ESV translates both Pauline uses as “futility” and in 2 Peter they render “folly”. The older English versions translate *mataiotes* in Rom. 8:20 as “vanity”. The NIV “frustration” and the NCV “useless” miss the mark and the NLT’s use of “curse” may be misleading. Does this passage

actually say that the *ktisis* was subjected to God's Curse? We need to look at the semantic range of *mataiotes* and note its other occurrences.

In Eph. 4:17 Paul urges Christians to not walk as the Gentiles do in the *mataiotes* of their minds. He defines this in the next verses as being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of their ignorance and their hard hearts. They have become callous and given over to impurity. The *mataiotes* in this case refers to the sinful thoughts and deeds of the unbeliever. In 2Pet. 2:18 Peter also uses the term to describe unbelievers who speak words of *mataiotes* enticing others by fleshly desires and sensuality, promising freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption (*douloi tes phthoras*: interestingly the same phrase as in Rom. 8:21). In both of these other uses, *mataiotes* refers to a debased condition of the mind of the unbeliever with a warning given to Christians to walk in an opposite manner.

Of the 54 uses in the LXX, 39 are found in the Book of Ecclesiastes. The other 15 occurrences are in the Psalms and Proverbs. In Ecclesiastes, the ESV renders *mataiotes* "vanity" or the adjectival "vain" almost unanimously. In the Psalms there is a wider range of words used in the translation. It may be helpful to explore the vanities of Ecclesiastes to see how Solomon in all his wisdom used the word to describe the things he studied.

- Vanity as a summary with no referent	8 times
- Everything that is done under the sun	2 times
- Filling the heart with pleasure and chasing desires	3 times
- The fate of the fool and the wise are the same	2 times
- The fool inherits the fruit of the labor of the wise	5 times
- The hard work of the wise	1 time
- The collecting and gathering of the sinner	1 time
- The fate of man and beast are the same	1 time
- The endless rivalry between a man and his neighbor	1 time
- The unhappiness of the people with a wise king	1 time
- The increasing of dreams and words	2 times
- The dissatisfaction with money for the one who loves money	1 time
- That a good man does not have a proper burial	1 time
- The [few] years of life	6 times
- The laughter of a fool	1 time
- That the evil deeds of the wicked are soon forgotten	1 time
- That bad things happen to good people (and vice versa)	2 times

There is one commonality as we peruse this list of King Solomon's vanities: they all pertain to human activity. None of the 39 uses of *mataiotes* in Ecclesiastes refer to the natural world and how it operates. The same is true in the other uses in Psalms and Proverbs. I believe this is significant and, coupled with the other two passages in the NT where the word is used, it appears that Paul's use here would suggest that the *ktisis* was subject to the shortcomings and futility of man rather than itself being the recipient of a direct curse. In other words we could say that the curse upon mankind has made the *ktisis* anxiously long for the day when that curse would be lifted. Not because it has been cursed, but because man cannot fulfill his purpose of taking dominion over the *ktisis* as is the proper function.

Next in verse 21 we read that the *ktisis* will be set free from its slavery to corruption (Gr. *tes douleias tes phthoras*). For *phthora*, the NRSV and NIV render “decay” instead of “corruption”. The word itself is used 7 other times in the NT, but is part of a larger family of similar words. In general it means a destruction or corruption of something. To use the word decay is misleading as some have taken this to mean the institution of the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics where everything is certain to undergo physical breakdown and decay. It should be clear that that is not what Paul has in mind here. In 2Pet. 2:19 we find the similar phrase *douloi...tes phthoras* (slaves of corruption), speaking of the unsaved who would entice believers. Two other significant passages containing the word are 2Pet. 1:4 where it says that through Christ we have escaped from the *phthora* that is in the world because of sinful desires and in 2Cor. 11:3 where Paul says that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent we may be “led astray” (*phtheiro*) from Christ. These are significant not only because Genesis 3 is directly referenced but because it states that *phthora* was in the world prior to the Curse (i.e. through Satan). Eve had the sinful desire before she sinned (Gen. 3:6). It is therefore not a product of sin. However it is a quick path to sin, and now a product of the Curse is our bondage (*doulos*) to this corruption. Indeed after the Fall, *phthora* had multiplied exponentially on the earth. By Noah’s time we see that the land is filled with corruption (the verbal form *phtheiro*) (Gen. 6:11). In verse 12 God looked on the land and saw that it was filled with corruption (*kataphtheiro*) for all flesh had corrupted (*kataphtheiro*) their way on the land. In an interesting use of wordplay, God then tells Noah in verse 13 that He will destroy (*kataphtheiro*) the land because of them.

To summarize the use of *phthora* and its related words, this most often refers to a warped or corrupted state of the human mind to which we have become slaves after the Fall in Genesis 3. In another passage that refers to Adam, Paul says in 1Cor. 15:42-49 that our bodies are corrupt (*phthora*), but when they are raised they will be incorruptible (*aphtharsia*). It is sown a natural body but raised a spiritual body in power. This resurrection is made possible through our life-giver, Jesus Christ. So then, *phthora* relates to the corruption we have become slaves to since the Fall. Paul speaks of a time when we will no longer be slaves to corruption, and it is this time for which the *ktisis* anxiously awaits. There is no hint in any portion of Scripture that this is a reference to some introduction of physical decay or some deviation from the way the previously perfect Creation operates. That is an interpretation not based on Scripture.

The third condition of the *ktisis* mentioned in Romans 8:22 is that it has been groaning in the pains of childbirth until now. At first reading this may conjure up memories of Genesis 3 where to Eve God says “I will greatly increase your pain in childbirth” (Gen. 3:16). But we should note that two different Greek words are used for “pain”. Paul uses the words *sustenazo* and *sunodino* for “groaning” and “pains in childbirth”. The two words are used only here in the Bible. Collectively they indicate a groaning and travailing in suffering (metaphorically as in a woman sighing during childbirth). The LXX translates *lupe* for the “pain” Eve was to expect during childbearing. That speaks of more of an emotional pain or sorrow than it does a physical one. The word *stenazo* is used in Romans 8:23 and is a related word to *sustenazo*. *Stenazo* is used 5 other times in the NT and carries a meaning of a sighing as a result of oppression from which a man longs to be set free according to TDNT (vol. 7, p.601). This is directly seen in verse 23 where Paul says we “groan” (*stenazo*) as we eagerly await the redemption of our bodies. Our bodies were cursed with death at the Fall (Gen. 2:17; 3:19). Our beings are full of vanity and

corruption from which we sigh in agony, waiting to be set free from this bondage. Paul likens this to the suffering and sighing of the *ktisis*. The word group clearly relates this groaning to human beings in its other usage, and not to any other species or natural process.

To summarize the unfortunate triune state of the *ktisis*, Paul says it was subject to futility (*mataiotes*), it is in bondage to corruption (*phthora*) and it is suffering and groaning (*sustenazo*) as a woman in childbirth. These three terms are used exclusively in describing human activity and emotion in the other uses in Scripture. None of the three terms have any direct tie to the account of the Fall and Curse in Genesis 3 as many have suggested. It is only indirectly at best that the parallel can be seen with the Curse, and only when viewed as a result of fallen man being unable to fulfill his original duty of taking dominion over the Creation. It is because of fallen man and his futility that the *ktisis* has been subject to futility. It is because of fallen man and his corruption that the *ktisis* is in bondage to corruption. And it is because of fallen man and his groaning that the *ktisis* experiences groaning. It is clear that the *ktisis* experiences these things only because of man, not because of a direct curse from God. Nowhere in either Genesis 3 or this passage in Romans 8 do we find any Scriptural evidence that the *ktisis* itself is cursed.

Now we get to the issue of “what is the *ktisis*?” Though the terms apply strictly to human beings and their fallen state, it is clear that the *ktisis* is not a “creature” or human as the KJV translates. When Paul writes in verse 23, he is speaking of human beings. Therefore the previous verses describing the *ktisis* use analogical language to relate it to the condition we are in as we wait for freedom from this bondage from the Fall. The *ktisis* is not a person, but the Creation personified. This is so we can understand our condition and understand what it is doing to the Creation. We are fallen and the Creation longs for the day when we will be set free at the revealing of the sons of God in glory.

Just as Creation eagerly awaits that day, so we too eagerly await with perseverance (v. 25). This is our hope and this is our salvation (v. 24). It is a mistake to conclude that these verses speak of a cursed Creation. The Creation is still good (1Tim. 4:4), it just longs for the day when we will finally take dominion as we were originally commanded (Gen. 1:28). If Creation is cursed it is only cursed with having to patiently bear us and our futility and corruption until Christ comes and frees us both.

Dan Leiphart
2009