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# VIDEO LECTURE MODULE: BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

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## LECTURE 3: FALL

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**The John Knox Institute**  
of Higher Education

*Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide*

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# *Module*

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## **BIBLICAL THEOLOGY**

**30 LECTURES**

***ROBERT D. McCURLEY M.Div.***

**21 CHAPTERS OLD TESTAMENT · 9 CHAPTERS NEW TESTAMENT**

### *Old Testament Lectures:*

1. Introduction
2. Creation
- 3. Fall**
4. Noah
5. Abraham
6. Patriarchs I
7. Patriarchs II
8. Exodus
9. Sinai
10. Tabernacle
11. Sacrifices
12. Priesthood
13. Inheritance
14. David
15. Psalms
16. Solomon
17. Temple
18. Kingdom
19. Prophets
20. Exile
21. Restoration

### *New Testament Lectures:*

22. Incarnation
23. Atonement
24. Resurrection
25. Pentecost
26. Church
27. Union
28. Application
29. Mission
30. Glory

# Lecture 3

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## FALL

*Lecture Theme:*

By their Fall, mankind lost communion with God and came under his wrath and curse. But God entered into a covenant of grace to deliver his people from sin and to bring them salvation through Christ.

*Text:*

“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:21–22).

### TRANSCRIPT LECTURE 3

The word “gospel” means good news, the good news of salvation found in Christ alone. But you cannot understand and appreciate the good news without first grasping the bad news about sin. Let me illustrate this. If you went to see a doctor when you felt perfectly strong and healthy, and the doctor told you that he was going to immediately take you in for a surgery that would result in a long and painful recovery, you would obviously object. But what if he first told you that he had discovered you have a terrible, life threatening disease. You would be alarmed and desperate to know if there was a remedy. If he then told you that surgery would cure the disease, you would cherish that as good news.

Understanding the bad news magnifies the good news. God’s plan for redeeming His elect people is set against the back drop of the historical event of the fall of mankind recorded in Genesis 3. Though mankind was created for fellowship with God and for glorifying Him, by their fall man lost that communion and came under God’s wrath and curse. So what does man’s fallen, sinful nature include, and what are the ramifications? What is the relationship of Adam and Christ, and how does this deepen our understanding of redemption? Where do we first discover the gospel news of salvation in the Bible? Where does Christ first appear as the promised Savior to come? How does God’s Word after Adam’s first sin set the trajectory for the whole history of redemption in the Old Testament and New Testament?

In this lecture, we will discover the radical changes that come as a result of the fall of mankind and God’s provision of the first gospel promise to deliver His people from their sins. Let’s first consider together the entrance of sin. As we saw in the first lecture, God is the uncreated Creator who made all things good and created them for His own glory. God owns what He creates, including mankind. Man is therefore accountable to God and under His authority. As we will see, sin erupts in this world from rebellion against God Himself. Man is at fault, not

God. In James 1 verse 13 we read, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man."

Notice what we learn about the first temptation in Genesis 3. The devil appears on the scene in the form of a serpent, to tempt man, to break fellowship with God and to depart from a right relationship with Him through disobedience. Now this image of the serpent is carried all the way through to Revelation chapter 12 in verse 9, where we read, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world."

We are told the serpent was more subtle or cunning than any other beast. He aims to work by deceit, by crafty deception. Notice that his aim is to subvert God's authority. He attacks the word of God. In verse 1, he says, "Yea, hath God said." Throughout the history of the world, the devil aims to undermine God's holy Word and revelation to man. Specifically, he distorts and twists God's Word. We read, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1). Well, God did not say every tree of the garden. He only prohibited them from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

In this temptation, Satan is actually attacking and misrepresenting God Himself: His sovereignty, His goodness, His wisdom and His love. He is saying, in essence, God is not good to you. He does not seek your best interests, does not provide for you. He then explicitly lies; he says, "Ye shall not surely die" in verse 4. In doing so, he seeks to murder man. We see this confirmed by Jesus in His words to the Pharisees. He says, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

From the beginning we learn Satan's tactics, which he continues to employ throughout history. This is why Paul says in 2nd Corinthians 11 in verse 3, "But I fear, lest by any means as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty or cunning, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." Genesis 3 teaches us today to beware. To remain vigilant against Satan's deceptive devices. We also learn about the nature of sin. Adam and Eve responded to this temptation by disobeying God's command. Adam disbelieved God's word and believed the devil's lie. We learn here what sin is at its core: it is not being or doing what God requires. And what He requires is found in the revelation of His Word.

Sin is transgressing God's law or not conforming ourselves to it. 1st John 3:4 confirms this, "Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." There are two sides to this coin. There are sins of commission: doing what the law forbids. And there are sins of omission: not doing what God's law demands. Ultimately, because the law reflects the character of God, to violate the law is to attack God Himself. The results are catastrophic misery. All the miseries of this life are traced back to the presence of sin. As we read elsewhere, the way of the transgressor is hard.

We also learn about the curse of death. God is just. He pronounces a curse on Adam and Eve, on the earth, and on the serpent. But we will focus on the first. Man's sin results in God's curse for his disobedience, just as God had warned them. Now, you may be wondering to yourself then why doesn't Adam immediately drop dead? Well, we need to understand the kind and extent of death that this included. Note three things. It was, first of all, a spiritual death that involved the corruption of Adam's soul. In Paul's words, man is "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). He lost communion with God and can no longer do anything that pleases God. He is dead to doing good. He can only sin. We'll see more about this in the next lecture.

So first of all there's this spiritual death. Secondly, there's physical death. His body will also die. In the genealogy from Adam to Noah that is given to us in Genesis 5, we have repeated over and over and over the words, "And he died." Like the repeated gong of a bell, ringing out the death toll.

Thirdly, there was eternal death. The sentence of eternal death. His soul and his body are under the wrath and curse of God and will suffer the pains of hell for all of eternity. God reveals Himself as the infinitely just Judge. Romans 1 verse 18 says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Sin must be weighed, if you will, against the object sinned against, the one who is sinned against. The least sin is against an infinite God, and therefore it warrants an everlasting punishment.

Lastly under this first point, we see something about how Adam lost communion with God. Tragically, by their fall, mankind, all of mankind, lost communion with God. The heart of the curse is separation from God.

Man's sin brought guilt, a guilty sentence against the objective standard of God's Word. It brought defilement or pollution. The guilt and pollution brought shame. So Adam hid himself from God's presence. He covered his nakedness with fig leaves. He was now distant, alienated, at enmity with God. Shame and disgrace are the opposite of glory and honor.

Think of Paul's words in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Notice the word "glory." Furthermore, man is thrust out of God's presence. In Genesis 3 verse 24, we read of the great expulsion, "So he," that is God, "drove out the man; and he placed at the east gate of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Man is cut off from the presence of God. Later in Isaiah 59:2 we read, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

Secondly, we must consider the long-term consequences of sin, and this brings us to the Covenant of Works. We learned in the previous lecture that God had entered into a Covenant of Works with Adam before the fall. So Adam's sin takes place in the context of a covenant, a covenant relationship with God. You'll notice that Genesis 1, 2 and 3 do not use the word "covenant," but all the elements of a covenant are present. And later on, it is referred to as a covenant, for example in Hosea 6:7 where the word "man" can also be translated as "Adam." And this shouldn't surprise us because God's covenant with David in 2nd Samuel 7 does not use the word either, but it does later on in chapter 23 of that book.

We saw last time that God's stipulation, His requirement, was obedience to God's command. The blessing of the promise of life was held out in the tree of life upon condition of obedience, and the threat of the curse of death for disobedience. In sinning, Adam broke the covenant and reaped the curse of the covenant. So, the Covenant of Works was shattered by Adam, as representative of his posterity. But we need to explore further Adam's significance because that is essential for understanding the rest of the theology of the Bible, including the place of Christ.

I want to consider, for a few moments, a few truths that we learn later on in the Bible because these points are important for our understanding of the place of Adam in the history of redemption. These points provide building blocks for understanding the development of the theology of the Bible. First of all, Adam did not just sin for himself. He sinned as the representative, as a federal head of the whole human race. What Adam did was for himself and all of his posterity. That means Adam's first sin had consequences for the history of humanity. Scripture teaches that the guilt of Adam's first sin passed down to his posterity. Romans 5 verses 12–19 talk about this, but we cannot consider that passage in detail here.

The question is 'how is the guilt of Adam's first sin passed to his posterity?' The answer is a very important theological concept called "imputation." You'll see Paul use this word, imputation, a few times in Romans 4, so you need to know it. Imputation is a legal term meaning "to attribute to," or "to credit to one's account," "to reckon." So, the guilt of Adam's first sin was imputed to his posterity. It was credited to their account, and the recipients are morally accountable for it. In Adam, that is in union with Adam as our federal head, all men sinned. Therefore, the effects of the curse, namely death, fall upon all men.

The theology of imputation is important for other reasons. You'll discover three imputations in the Bible, all of which are related to the heart of the gospel. The first is the one that we're considering here, the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity. The second one is the imputation of the sins of God's elect people to Christ. And then thirdly, we have the imputation Christ's righteousness to His elect people. In 2nd Corinthians 5 verse 21 it says, "For he hath made him," that is Christ, "to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

If you think that the imputation of Adam's first sin to us seems unfair, then you must say the same thing about the imputation of sin to Christ, and Christ's righteousness to His people. Furthermore, we learn that the sin and corruption that is found in Adam has come to all men, as descending from him by ordinary generation. We are all born in the state of sin, and that sinful nature is the source of all of our actual sins or transgressions. So consider for a moment the question, "Are we sinners because we sinned, or do we sin because we are sinners?" The answer is the latter. We sin because we are sinners. We're born with a sinful nature.

Lastly, under the second point, we need to consider the relationship of Adam to Christ. As we've already seen, our relationship to Adam bears very important implications for the Christian's relationship to Christ. We

read in 1st Corinthians 15 verses 21 to 22, “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Just as Adam represented his seed, so Christ represents His chosen people. Christ not only undoes what Adam did wrong. So, Adam began in a state of perfection, and he fell from that estate into a position of demerit. Christ not only comes to redeem His people from that, raising them back up, if you will, to the position of Adam before the fall. He does do that.

But Christ also goes on to do what Adam failed to do. Meeting the demands of personal, perfect obedience on behalf of His people. So whereas Adam should have obeyed and been raised to eternal life, he disobeyed and fell. Christ comes, raises not only back up to the position of Adam, but does for us what Adam failed to do. Thus, enabling us to inherit the promise of eternal life. We have the beginnings of preparation for Christ here and the provision of justification by faith in Christ, which we’ll consider more fully toward the end of this course.

Thirdly, we need to consider the first gospel promise. This brings us to the point of the first gospel promise. Perhaps you have seen the sun go down and darkness descends. But then one lone star appears in the sky, shining against the backdrop of that black sky. This is what happens in Genesis 3 verse 15 where we see the very first gospel promise after the fall, a promise that will be fulfilled in Christ. It says, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise their head, and thou shall bruise his heel.” So here is Christ again, in Genesis 3, this time as represented as the Savior.

A Puritan, John Owen, noted that Genesis 3:15 provides “in embryo the whole doctrine of salvation for sinners.” So it is the first light, if you will, on the new horizon of God’s grace. We’ll highlight four things under this point.

First of all, this promise is the seed of the Covenant of Grace. We’ve noted that Adam broke the first covenant, the Covenant of Works. We also noted that due to the distance between God and man, the Lord must condescend to relate to man by way of a covenant. So now a new covenant is necessary, a covenant that addresses the new context of man’s fall into a state of sin. Theologians call this the Covenant of Grace, through which God provides for the salvation of His people.

And we find this first seed of the Covenant of Grace right here in Genesis 3:15. Notice that once again God takes the initiative in establishing the covenant on His end. We see God seeking Adam out; then we hear, “And I will put enmity.” That’s the Lord. Through the remainder of the Bible, we will watch this seed of the Covenant of Grace take root and go down. God will unfold and expand His revelation of the Covenant of Grace through the remainder of the history of redemption. Our understanding of the one, the single Covenant of Grace will become clearer and clearer through God’s covenant with Noah, and then Abraham, and then Moses, and David until it comes to its fullest expression in the new covenant. See, there is a dominant continuity that is traced from Genesis 3:15 all the way through to Revelations 22, revealing God’s plan of redemption through His Covenant of Grace. We only see a glimmer of light here in Genesis 3:15, but God will build on this in our future studies as you will see.

Shorter Catechism question 20 summarizes these truths. It says, “God having, out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity elected some to everlasting life did enter into a Covenant of Grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.” This will result in the restoration of fellowship with God. Christ would crush the head of the serpent. In the words of Colossians 2:15, “And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

But in the process, Christ’s heel would be bruised. This is a reference to His work upon the cross. Christ would be made curse. Christ would take the place of His people and subject Himself to death and to judgment and to the wrath of God. This original curse provides the background for God’s coming salvation, the salvation of His people through Christ. In Galatians 3 verse 13 it says, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made cursed for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.”

We see a subtle pointer to this in Genesis 3 verse 21, “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them.” God removed man’s attempt to cover his own shame, and God clothed them with His own provision. Now skins, of course, imply the death of animals. The shedding of blood and sacrifice was necessary to cover their guilt and shame. This is confirmed by the divinely approved sacrifices in the very next chapter, chapter 4. As we read in Hebrews 2 verses 14 and 15, “that through death he might destroy him

that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

We also have to trace this promise, the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent further because it also provides us with a charter of the Church. Genesis 3:15, the first gospel promise, also provides this charter for the Church. Notice that there are three contrasts in this verse. First of all, the contrast between the serpent and the woman. That ended the alliance that led to mankind’s fall and brought about the restoration of fellowship with God. And of course, fellowship with God brings enmity with sin and Satan.

The second contrast is Christ and Satan. Christ, of course, is the woman’s seed who would crush the serpent’s head, while the serpent shall bruise his heel. But thirdly, there is a contrast between the church, the woman’s seed, and the world, Satan’s seed. This represents a great division. The rest of Genesis draws lines of distinction between the woman’s faithful seed and the serpent’s rebellious seed, separating the lines, if you will, of Seth and Cain, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau. The seed of the woman ultimately, of course, leads to Christ. This also sets the context of enmity and war between the church, under Christ, and the world, under Satan’s dominion, traced all the way through redemptive history. Fellowship with God requires separation from fellowship with sin, the world, and the devil.

In 2nd Corinthians 6 verse 14 we read, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” You must understand the theology provided in Genesis 3 to make sense of the rest of the history of redemption. This is, after all, a charter for Christ’s Church. Compare Genesis 3:15 to 1st John 3 verse 8 and verse 10: “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” It goes on, “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.” You see the relationship between Christ and the Church and the devil and the world.

So, we see that the promise of Christ in Genesis 3:15 extends to the triumph of Christ’s people over the devil. Paul draws on this in Romans 16 in verse 20, where he tells the Romans, “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.” He’s drawing on that passage in Genesis 3, and you see this further in places like Revelation 12.

We also need to consider where this leads. So, finally we can trace the grand reversal of the curse to the end of time, where it is transformed into a blessing. In other words, this points us to heaven where there will be no more curse, but rather permanent fellowship for God’s people with their Lord.

And so, from Genesis 3 where we see the pronouncement of the curse, we’re led to the Cross where we see Christ bearing the curse and sins of His people and removing that enmity with God and restoring fellowship with the Lord. And that, in turn, leads ultimately to the consummation in heaven itself. In Revelation chapter 22 verses 3 and 4 it says, “And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.”

In heaven, there is no more sin. And therefore, there is no more suffering, no death, no pains and no miseries. In Revelation 21 verse 4 it says, “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain: for the former things are passed away.” In heaven, God’s people rejoice in the restoration of permanent, sinless fellowship with God that exceeds all that was known in the Garden of Eden.

You can see how in all of these lectures we are tying the theological threads together, and we’re tracing these themes through the Scripture as a whole. In the next lecture, we will explore how God builds on these themes during the time of Noah.