

The Story of Hope #3

The Birth of Death

Ezekiel 28:1-17, Isaiah 14:12-15, Genesis 3:1-13

"Story of Hope" Sections 4-6

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Just a few hundred yards away from my parents house in Westwood California is an absolutely beautiful lake called Walker Lake. It is filled with all different kinds of fish, birds, and wildlife. At least it was, until the night of September 12th, 2015. That is when a drain valve was left open, completely draining the lake. It was a horrific scene as thousands of fish and water creatures lost their lives, and countless other creatures lost their homes. Seeing this incredibly beautiful place fade into a mud pit of death and decay is similar to what we will see in our study today. We will see the key themes of **God, Man, Sin and Death**, in this section of our story.

We pick up the story with everything in perfect balance and harmony. No pain or trouble or tears, and then something terrible happens. There are some details we don't know, but here is what God has revealed to us. Just like creation, this part of the story starts in heaven with an absolutely magnificent angel, Lucifer. He was one of, if not the most beautiful, wise and powerful angels God ever created. (Eze 28:12-19; Isa 14:12-15) Not only was he matchless in beauty, but God gave him authority over God's holy mountain, and heavenly sanctuaries. But Lucifer became proud of his position and wisdom and beauty, and his desire for power and authority grew until his heart desired to sit on God's throne and rule in God's place. As a result of his rebellion, Lucifer was thrown out of heaven, down to earth, along with a third of all the created angels, the ones who joined him in his rebellion against their creator. Sometime after this heavenly rebellion, Lucifer, in his hatred of God, devised a scheme to try to destroy God's creation. He entered the special garden that God had planted for his most precious creation. He knew that God had stated one law for humankind to obey, so that is right what he went after.

Lucifer, using his control over a serpent, approached the woman God had created with some seemingly harmless questions regarding what God had actually said. (Gen. 3:1-6) In the first act of human disobedience, the woman was deceived into doubting God's word. She took the fruit of the tree and ate it, giving some to her husband who ate as well. At this moment, everything broke. The perfect harmony and joy they had been created in, and had lived in, was gone. In its place was shame and guilt and fear. There had been no need for clothing due to the perfect weather, and there was never a thought of being ashamed of any body parts, but immediately both man and woman "knew they were naked" and filled with shame and embarrassment, they tried to cover themselves up with fig leaves. Then they heard God, their perfectly loving creator, walking through the garden. They used to LOVE that sound, but now, they felt sick knowing that they had disobeyed, so they hid. Nothing like this had ever happened before. They didn't know what to do! God called them out of hiding and they admitted they had disobeyed, but not without trying to pass the blame to someone else. The man blamed the woman and God, and the woman blamed the serpent for deceiving her. Regardless, the damage was done. They had violated God's trust and His word and the consequence was death, as promised in Genesis 2:16-17.

We need to understand that "death" refers to more than absence of life here. It is more along the lines of separation from the source of life, God. The man and woman experience the death in two

distinct ways. First, they now are dying physically. Their bodies are beginning to decay slowly but surely, and eventually they will return to the dust from which they came. Secondly, they are dead spiritually. Their disobedience has severed their spiritual connection with their creator. He is perfect and holy and can't have a spiritual life giving relationship with mankind any longer. They have violated his commands and must receive the consequences.

The death that entered the world on that day will have many different repercussions for mankind. God had created the earth and all that is in it, for man to rule and have perfect authority over. With mankind's disobedience, the entire earth will come under the effects of this "sin". We will see more and more the effects, as the story continues to unfold and nothing is left unscathed. The water is all draining out, and unimaginable things are going to begin to happen.

As we ponder this seemingly hopeless section of the story, there are some absolutely fundamental truths that emerge:

We are Adam's children. We are all descendants of Adam, and therefore we have his now disobedient nature passed down to us. We all have sinned against our loving creator and we know it! We aren't able to follow God's law perfectly, it isn't even in our nature to do so! We naturally want to lie, cheat, punch and grab. Just raise a couple kids if you aren't convinced! Ever since Adam's sin, all mankind has come into the world with the same two distinct "deaths". As soon as we begin life, we begin to die. I know that seems a little morbid, but it is the unavoidable truth. We also come into the world severed from the spiritual life God created us to enjoy. By God's mercy and grace, He provides a way to repair that severed connection, which we will see in the coming sections of the story. After all, it is "The Story of HOPE"! We are also Adam's children in how we deal with our broken sinfulness. We try to cover it up and fix it ourselves, hoping no one will notice. As we will see, this doesn't work for Adam's nakedness, and it won't ever work for us. Not only do we try to cover and fix our sin ourselves, but we actually use the things God created for our good, to try to protect us from our death condition. Adam used the very trees God created for his benefit to hide him from God. We use relationships, material goods, pursuit of pleasure and many other things to try to hide from our actual condition. We like Adam, have to choose to come to our creator. We, like Adam, need to come out of hiding.

God comes to His disobedient children. We saw so clearly before, that God wants to be with us. We are his most precious creation. We see the same truth even more clearly as Adam and Eve disobeyed God's one command. God knew exactly what had happened, and yet God didn't leave them. He didn't simply walk away to try again with another earth. He came to them, giving them a chance to respond. The exact same truth applies to us today. Sometimes we feel like the least important and least lovable thing on the earth, wanting to just hide away from everyone. But God is moving toward us, and wants us to come and talk with Him, and listen to what He has to say to us, instead of the lies that we would believe: "I am too broken" "I am too worthless" "I've messed up too many times" "No one could love me". These lies all fade away when we open our hearts to the creator's voice. He made you and He loves you more than you can imagine. He has come looking for us and we need to respond.