

What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?

Eve Conception

Part 1

(Genesis 3:16-17 & 1 Timothy 2:15)

One of the most important points that are often forgotten when reading the events that occurred in the Garden of Eden is how much God loves humanity, and that His love for humanity began with His love for Adam and Eve. God created them and He loved them. He didn't want them to suffer, or fail, or hurt in any way, but He did give them the ability to choose their own path (We will discuss free-will and all the responsibilities and challenges that accompany it in future lessons). For today's lesson we want to focus on the consequences that happened as an outcome of sin; especially as those consequences relate to Eve.

To fully understand the conversation between God and Eve we must return to the story we discussed before about a child getting near a hot stove. A loving parent can say, "Don't get near the stove because it is hot and it will burn you." However, when a child gets too close and gets burned no one says, "Oh, how mean!! That parent burned the child!!" No. No one says that, because everyone understands it was the actions of the child that caused him or her to get burned. The same is true with Adam and Eve. They were warned about the dangers of the Tree of The Knowledge of Good and Evil, but they chose to ignore God's warning and enter into a one-sided discussion with the enemy.

When God talks with Eve He is instructing Eve about the consequences of her actions just as a parent would the child who was burned on the stove. The parents would advise them how the child will need to go to the hospital and have the burn washed, disinfected, ointment applied, and possibly a bandage too. Then the parents will tell the child about the daily follow up that will occur until the burn is healed. The parents tell the child not as a threat or punishment but they are instructing the child on what to expect since the burn has happened. This is what God is doing in the Garden with Eve.

So, again, God is instructing a child that He loves about the consequences that must now unfold because of her actions.

God Explains to Eve there will be:

1. Sorrow in Conception

God tells Eve that He will multiply her *sorrow* and *conception*. The word "sorrow" in the Hebrew is actually: עַצְבָּן **itstsabon** [eyes-sa-von] and means pain, hardship, toil/labor/work.

The Hebrew word for conception is הֵרָן **heron** [hey-rron] or sometimes seen as הֵרָיוֹן **herayon** and is it actually speaking, not only about pregnancy, but about the full experience of childbearing. God is saying that through her experience with her children she *will know* deep suffering.

What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?

2. Shall bring forth children

To “bring forth children” is speaking about giving birth. God is saying children will be born through an excruciating process. Getting pregnant will require effort, staying pregnant will require dedication and patience, and giving birth will be painful. There will be suffering, there will be anguish, there will be effort and work needed to bring forth a life into this sinful world!!! Why? Remember: God explained that He was going to place hatred between Satan and the woman and her off-spring/children. It is through a child, who will be born of a woman, that one day things will be set right and healing and restoration will occur. This is a promise to the woman, Eve, the wrong her sin set in motion will not triumph for ever. The child we know will be the Messiah, God in human flesh, come to earth to save humanity.

What Eve and all Women Will Learn From Childbirth:

Through childbirth a woman experiences on a smaller level the pain and suffering of God with His creation. Each woman who gives birth has the experience of agony that can't be described in words—it can only be felt—felt on such a level as to keep her in love with that child regardless of the things it will do or not do for an entire lifetime. A woman's body changes to accommodate the small life that is preparing to enter the world. For months she dreams of giving birth. She has visions of that child and what he or she will look like, what they will become; she is consumed with preparing everything for their arrival. When that child is born she bares the marks on her body: the stretch marks, the tearing of flesh, the breaking of water, the loss of blood. In sorrow she conceives and brings forth a child. A woman will do all of this, she will pay this tremendous price all the while knowing that as she is bringing forth her child—one day—her child will die. She may die before, he or she dies, but nevertheless she knows the end fate of that child, regardless of how successful he or she may be, is ultimately death!!! **This is a small scale crucifixion.**

Now, let me be clear, I am not saying that childbirth, in anyway, is similar to the crucifixion in the properties of forgiveness of sins. There is only One who can cleanse us from sin and that is Jesus, the invisible God, made flesh. However, what I am saying is that God chose to allow Eve and women after her, to experience on a smaller scale His great sorrow and love for humanity.

Paul writes to Timothy, even though the woman was deceived in the transgression (sin), “Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing” (1 Timothy 2:14-15). Again, this is not meaning those women who have babies are automatically saved or that giving birth is somehow a supernatural saving act of God *for* women! We know this because of what Paul says next, “*if* they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety” (1 Timothy 2:15). So, let me be clear, childbirth is not a free pass into heaven for women!

So, what is Paul saying? More importantly **what is God saying??** Let's work through it.

What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?

Though this pain is a result of *The Fall* of humanity in what will appear to be a curse—it will become a link for women to the eternal God!!! The eternal God is revealing to women a part of Himself that will be uniquely known to her, alone, and it is this link—this experience—of birthing through pain that will allow her to remember God, return to Him, and be restored. The woman's sin was one through ignorance; God will help her understand, and He will allow her body to be a vessel through which understanding can come. So, through this she doesn't have to be deceived again.

One of the saddest statements I ever heard was the words uttered by Jeffery Dahmer's mother. She said with tears about her son who had been a psycho killer and had just been beaten to death in prison by other inmates: "to the world he was a monster, and the world is glad he is dead, but to me, he was my son, and I loved him." These words are haunting words spoken as only a mother could utter. Why? How can a mother love in the face of such pain and disappointment? Why will a mother still fight for her child, infant or grown, even when everyone else has long since given up?

Child birth is a small scale crucifixion!!!! It is her sorrow, this very price she has paid, and her own pain that makes her so diligent in loving that child. When everyone else is ready to give up on the child—she *still* hopes, she *still* reaches, she *still* loves. In woman, God **placed the potential experience** of His heart, the heart of the Father, who waits for His prodigal son to return home, regardless to where that child has been or what that child has done.

Again, Eve was deceived. She didn't willingly sin. She didn't know what she was doing. In the process of rebuilding her faith in God and in helping her off-spring to know God...Eve will experience on a smaller scale the love God holds for His *entire* creation. She will bare it for her small child, but **God will bear it for the entire world!!!**

Earthly fathers participate in the creation of their son or daughter and they recognize themselves in their children but it is the mother who will suffer for months as her body and hormones change and everything about her life is turned upside down. She is the one who suffers the months prior to birth, she is the one who agonizes and bears the scars on her body of the delivery for the rest of her life. In this one act, the woman is reunited with God in an experience as **to give her a glimpse into the very heart of God** for *her* and *all* of humanity. The price she will be required to pay is tremendous, but it is necessary because it will bond her to that small child in a way that even *all the evil of this world cannot destroy!* Just like the love God has for every soul that enters this world. It is through her suffering in the birthing process that she will become willing to endure and work with that child for years to come; rather than want to return it as quickly as possible when challenges come and that child begins to be difficult; there is no exchange policy for children!! It for this reason, Paul wrote that women shall be saved in childbearing (1 Timothy 2:15). It is with Eve, with woman, that God chose to bear His broken heart and broken flesh that she (woman) might come to understand His nature and His love for them and all humanity. Though she had been deceived—she through this process will have the opportunity to be deceived NO more!! Through this process she can

What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?

become clear on WHO God is and His GREAT love for humanity and for her!!! It has been said that, “No one prays like a woman!” or “That no one loves like a mother loves.” Again, I believe this is because the Almighty allowed the curse that sin dealt out to Eve (women) to be transformed into a potential awaking to point her back toward God. In Eve’s deepest falling point, God gave her a way to experience the brokenness that places her in a position to understand God and His brokenness for humanity.

It is through childbirth that her heart will become soften to the love of God. It is through her pain that she will cry out to God for help and direction. It is through her suffering she will come to understand God’s unfailing love for her and her children. It is through her own personal agony that she will come to understand the price of sin and the cost for redemption. God is, also, declaring in the Garden, though sin has marred His creation and suffering has now entered the human and world experience that it is through her, woman that the ultimate child, one day, will be born and she will call His name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.

Any good parent understands that when a child is found in error that the consequence must respond to the child’s error or the connection between the punishment and the wrong will not be made for the child. God, being the greatest parent, knows that the same is true for fallen humanity. Therefore, the consequences in the Garden speak of healing; these are pronouncements or the foretelling of promises for deliverance and hope: it is not the casting off of fallen man from a vengeful and angry God!! Instead, it is God still reaching, still loving, and not giving up on humanity!!!

Eve didn’t understand God’s love; **therefore, she could be deceived.** So, it is through the childbearing experience that Eve will come to understand the love God has for humanity and her heart can break open to Him.

If you are still not convinced that there is a connection between the crucifixion and childbirth. Let’s pause and take a look at John 16:17-22. Jesus is speaking about his soon departure and death (which will be his crucifixion). He explains to His disciples that they will be sorrowful. Here Jesus likens their suffering to that of a woman who is in the pain of childbirth (v21). However, what follows the birthing pains is joy and Jesus tells them the same will be true for them once He is restored to them; it is then they will have a greater understanding. This travailing experience, Jesus’ death (His crucifixion) and the pain His disciples will feel is likened unto the pains a woman feels when bringing forth a child. It is through this process that Jesus will in essence give birth to His Church. It is through this pain that the disciples will grow into the great men of God we will come to know them as. It is, also, through this pain, this suffering that was given to women that her potential for understanding the heart of God will unfold in her life and she can express it outward not only to her small child, but to her community and world.

In conclusion, though both Adam and Eve sinned, Eve’s transgression was because she was deceived. One of the ways deception will be erased will be through childbirth (1 Timothy 2:14).

What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?

However, full-blown sin entered the world through Adam's act of disobedience (Romans 5:12). Since death was the final consequence of sin it would require death to overcome or conquer it!! Since sin and *death* entered through a man (1st Adam) it would require a man (last Adam) to die (we will cover this more in detail when we discuss Adam's Perspective. We will also cover Romans 5:12-21 at that time). For now, it is enough to understand that Eve's sin was one resulting through deception; childbirth would be one of the ways such deception could be eradicated in the hearts of women *willing* to listen to this life changing experience.

Next time, we will discuss, how the role of childbirth still speaks to the church today; especially as it works within the church as an example of God's great love.