

Chapter 7

Genesis 3:7-24

The Story so Far

In the beginning God established a Kingdom - God's people, living in God's place, under God's rule and blessing. However, through the influence of God's enemy (Satan) they disobeyed God. The result was a broken relationship with God and the Kingdom was ruined. God judged human beings and threw them out of His place and did not let them go back in to the Garden of Eden. The punishment was a broken relationship with God and with each other.

Objectives

- To understand God's grace and mercy
- To explain the promise of Genesis 3:15
- To understand the concept of substitution

Connections

- The parallel of grace and judgement
- God's desire to rebuild His Kingdom

Summary

Despite the rebellion of human beings, God acts in grace and mercy, promising to rebuild His Kingdom.

Grace

Grace

Grace is a beautiful word. Some Christians call their daughters by this name. Grace finds its origin and definition in God. If there were no God, there would be no grace. Grace is receiving a gift we do not deserve. In Genesis 3:7-24 God acts in grace in various ways.

Grace is receiving a gift we do not deserve.

God seeks after rebels (Genesis 3:8-11)

When Adam and Eve rebel against God's rule they become ashamed (guilty) of their nakedness so they hide from God. God told them that the day they ate from the forbidden tree they would "*surely die*". Adam and Eve are hiding in God's place because they know they deserve to die. The first act of grace is that God comes looking for them.

God gives rebels an opportunity (Genesis 3:11)

God gives Adam and Eve an opportunity to own up. He knows where they are, but He wants Adam and Eve to come out and talk. He gives them an opportunity to own up and take responsibility for their wrong actions. He wants them to admit they have rebelled against Him. The God of the Bible is a God of grace who seeks rebels and gives them the opportunity to own up.

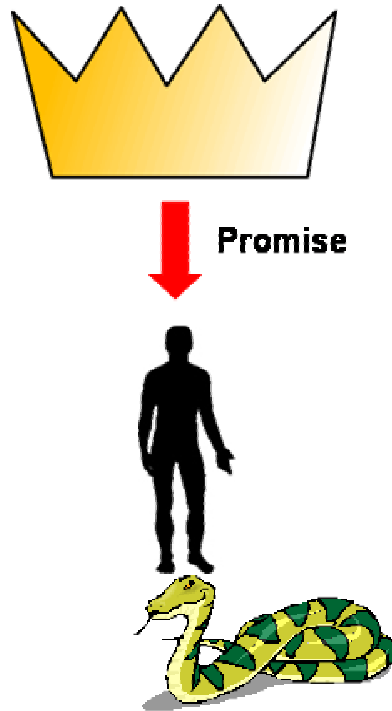
God's promise to rescue and rule (Genesis 3:15)

The themes of judgement and grace run alongside each other in the Bible. God judges Satan and promises to make war with him, but at the same time God promises to rescue human beings. In the beginning Satan caused God's people to be banished from His place. If the promised person is going to defeat the devil then human beings can also be rescued. Therefore God's judgement on Satan is also an act of grace to human beings. God gives Adam and Eve the promise of a Rescuer-Ruler.

Rebuilding God's Kingdom

Genesis 3:15 acts as the starting point for God's plan to rebuild His Kingdom. Satan has destroyed God's Kingdom. But the promised

Rescuer-Ruler will come, defeat the devil and restore God's Kingdom. The rest of the Bible is about the promised Rescuer-Ruler who will restore God's Kingdom. God's long-term project is to have a Kingdom again where His people live in His place, under His rule and blessing.



The story of the Bible is about the coming Rescuer-Ruler who will restore God's Kingdom.

God is committed to His creation and His people (Genesis 3:20)

God promised that if Adam and Eve disobeyed His rule then they would surely die – spiritually and physically. We have seen how they died spiritually on that day. Their loving relationship with God was broken. But Adam and Eve did not die physically on that day. In fact, Eve will become the mother of all the living. God is allowing life on earth to continue. He has the right to destroy their lives. This shows God's commitment to His creation and His people. It also shows His commitment to bring the promised Rescuer-Ruler through Eve's offspring. This act of commitment by God is an act of grace. God gives Adam and Eve what they do not deserve.

A broken threat?

But did God break His threat to bring death the day Adam and Eve sin? No, because we will see later that Adam and Eve both die (Genesis 5:5). Here we see God's mercy as He holds back His judgement on human beings. God is merciful to Adam and Eve, giving them an opportunity to admit their sin. Mercy is *not* receiving a punishment we deserve.

God's mercy is not receiving a punishment we deserve.

God covers the results of sin (Genesis 3:21)

When Adam and Eve become ashamed of their nakedness they try to cover up with fig leaves. What a bad effort at making clothes! But then God clothes them with skin from an animal.

Substitution

God kills an animal and makes clothes from the skin for Adam and Eve. Substitution is another theme that runs through the Bible and will become clearer as we progress. It is where the innocent dies in place of the guilty. The animal is innocent; Adam and Eve are guilty. The animal dies in the place of Adam and Eve.

Substitution in the Bible is where the innocent dies in the place of the guilty.

This animal's death covers the result of sin (guilt of nakedness). God is just and sin must be punished. But here we see God's grace. The death God brings is not to Adam and Eve (who both deserve to die) but to an animal. Adam and Eve may be clothed (and their guilt covered) because an animal dies in their place.

God wants to rescue rebels (Genesis 3:22-24)

The final act of grace from God is when He puts Adam and Eve out of the garden. But is this not an act of judgement? Yes, but it is also an act of grace. The reason God throws Adam and Eve out of the garden is so that they cannot eat from the tree of life and live forever.

How is this an act of grace? Human beings have fallen from their position as rulers of God's earth. They now have a rebellious nature against God. If they eat from the tree of life they will live *forever as rebels against God*, with a disobedient nature. But if they go out of the garden and die, then they will not have to spend forever as rebels against God. In fact, if they put their trust in the promised Rescuer-Ruler then they can be rescued from God's judgement and have the relationship with God restored. Putting Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden is an act of grace – He gives them what they do not deserve – an opportunity to be rescued.

Summary

Despite the rebellion of human beings, God acts in grace and mercy, promising to rebuild His Kingdom.



Think it through & discuss

1. Explain the words “grace” and “mercy” in your own words.
2. What is the first death in the Bible, and how is this significant?
3. Explain the concept of substitution in the Bible.
4. Why is God’s promise in Genesis 3:15 important to the story of the whole Bible?