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# GENESIS: IT ALL STARTS HERE

## *TEAMS AND THEIR CAPTAINS*

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### **GENESIS 3:14-24**

**“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.”**

### INTRODUCTION

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Are there really only 2 kinds of people in the world? Well, you may be surprised that the Bible actually says there are. It might not be what you would think, but the Bible divides everyone into two categories, and it does so right from the beginning. The hard truth is that there is no middle ground or third way, but the gracious reality is that God does not pick teams based on a person’s ability, intelligence, or even goodness. So, what are the teams, and who are the captains? This is the stuff of Genesis.

## SETTING THE STAGE

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If you were ever a child, at some point you probably participated in the dreaded “game” before the game – picking teams. Usually, the two biggest kids or the two worst enemies or the two loudest trash talkers would start off as team captains, and everyone else would line up to be weighed and measured. One by one, the kids would be selected by the captains and placed on each team. It was always embarrassing for the last few selections – especially the very last – because the smart captain will choose the best teammates available. Therefore, the captain’s last selections would be the individuals he/she believed would contribute least to the team effort.

The teams we see take shape on the pages of Scripture are not like this at all. The captains are vaguely named immediately upon the introduction of conflict, and the game proceeds with many unlikely turns. Additionally, the teams are selected, not by skill or contribution, but by God’s sheer grace. Furthermore, the captain of the “good guy” team does all the work, while His teammates benefit.

## MESSAGE OUTLINE:

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- (1) #? CONSEQUENCES OF SIN**
- (2) SELECTING CAPTAINS**
- (3) PICKING TEAMS**
- (4) TRUSTING & FOLLOWING THE CAPTAIN**

## EXPOSITION:

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### **(1) #? CONSEQUENCES OF SIN**

- Spiritual Death
  - We saw this in the “Trajectory of Sin” last week.
    - Humanity no longer lives at peace with God, in a state of joy-filled gratitude. Instead, in shame and guilt, fallen humanity naturally dreads God, covers up sin, runs from God, and blames others for his/her plight.
- Relational Strife
  - 16b – To the woman, “*Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.*”

- The term “desire” here is used in Gen. 4:7 as well, referring to sin’s desire to rule over Cain. The concept here is as we see in many a marital relationship. The wife has a natural tendency to want to take the leadership role away from her husband – either by manipulation or by direct opposition – and the husband has a natural tendency to “rule” over his wife – either with a tyrannical temper or a passive aggressive approach.<sup>1</sup>
- Pain and Suffering in God-given Roles
  - 16a – To the woman, *“I will surely multiply your pain in **childbearing**; in pain you shall **bring forth children**...”*
    - This phrase has been the topic of much theological discussion. For the interested party, I suggest a more thorough investigation.<sup>2</sup>
    - I lean towards there being more here than just physical pain during the moments of childbirth. Just as the curse of the man is a figurative and all-encompassing negative, so too (in my view) is the curse specifically proclaimed over the woman. Therefore, I contend that this includes everything about the woman’s role as mother. Just as sinful woman is not naturally inclined towards glad submission as a wife, she also naturally experiences pain and anguish in relationship with her children. Children will hurt their mothers (physically, emotionally, etc.), and children will be hurt by others, which brings pain to the heart of their mothers.
  - 17b-19a – To the man, *“**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**...”*
    - Work is not a bad thing, and “working” and “keeping” the garden was man’s role before the Fall (Gen. 2:15). The curse is not work itself, but the effort and results of work.
      - After man’s Fall into sin, God cursed man’s efforts to work (work will not be a natural joy) and the results of man’s work (the effort given to a task will not generally produce a proportionate result).

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<sup>1</sup> Challies’ article: <http://www.challies.com/articles/her-desire-his-rule>

<sup>2</sup> MacArthur’s message: <http://www.gty.org/resources/sermons/90-243/the-curse-on-the-woman-part-1>

- Physical Death
  - 19b – *“for you are dust, and **to dust you shall return**”*
    - Humanity is mortal, and sin is the cause of death.
      - Simply put, God delivered on His word – He said, “Don’t eat of this one tree or you will die” (Gen. 2:17).
- Acquainted with Evil
  - 22 – *“man has become like one of us in **knowing good and evil**”*
    - Humanity is now familiar with evil.
      - While Adam and Eve knew “good” before they sinned, they were naïve to “evil.” But, after they sinned, they became well acquainted with evil. In fact, humanity quickly descended into an evil heap soon after sin began to run rampant among people (Gen. 6:5-6).
      - Though God restrains evil to a certain degree today (by the power of His Spirit and by the use of His law), humans are still familiar with and at home in sin (Rom. 3:10-18).
- Exclusion from the blessing of God
  - 24 – *“He [God] **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**”*
    - This separation from God’s blessing is a demonstration of utter judgment from God.
    - One day, it will not merely be a “flaming sword” that separates people from the blessing of God, it will be a “lake of fire” (Rev. 20:11-15).

## (2) SELECTING CAPTAINS

- Genesis 3:15 – To the serpent of old, God said, *“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between **your offspring (or seed) and her offspring (or seed)**; **he [her offspring/seed] shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.**”*
  - There is much that might be said about the “enmity” that God placed between the “woman” and the serpent. This is a demolition of the

attempted alliance (between Satan and humans [Gen. 3:1-6]), and the origins of mortal strife cause by demonic forces.

○ The “offspring” of the woman

- The reader of Scripture may anticipate the arrival of this “offspring” as he/she continues reading through Genesis, but each potential candidate fails time and again.
  - Cain is born to Eve, but he murders his brother and is cursed of God.
  - Noah is the one man among all humanity that God saves (along with his three sons and their wives) from worldwide judgment, but Noah is drunk and naked soon after his rescue.
  - God selects Abram/Abraham, and promises to make him “great,” but Abram/Abraham lies, disobeys God, argues with God, and fails on multiple occasions.
  - Isaac comes along and seems to move along pretty well, but even he attempts to thwart God’s plan for blessing his younger son (Jacob) rather than his older (Esau).
  - As the Old Testament goes on, there are rare reminders (by way of prophetic word and typological example) of the “offspring” who will bring victory, but the promise of God is nearly completely forgotten... and then!
- Matthew cites Isaiah 7:14, and says that Jesus Christ is the “*son*” who is “*born of a woman/virgin*” (Matt. 1:23).
- Paul said, “*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman...*” (Ga 4:4).
- The author of Hebrews tells us that Christ was born a human so that, through His death, He would destroy the devil (Heb. 2:14).
- Paul said God “crushed” Satan underfoot through the person and work of Jesus Christ (Rom. 16:20).
- The “offspring” of the woman is JESUS CHRIST

- The “offspring” of the “serpent”
  - This “offspring” also builds over the course of the narrative and culminates in a final adversary.
    - Individuals seek to oppose God’s chosen servants (Egypt’s Pharaoh against the Hebrew people, King Saul and Goliath against David)
    - There are nations and groups who seek to destroy God’s people throughout the Old Testament.
    - At certain points, the devil seems to attack in a more direct way.
      - Herod tried to kill Jesus as a child (Matt. 2:16), and Judas betrayed Christ later on (Jn. 13:2).
    - Ultimately, the “serpent” of old is the opposing team captain.
      - Jesus said that people do not want to hear and believe Him because they are willfully following the devil (Jn. 8:43-44).
    - Just as was mentioned above, Jesus Christ ultimately defeats and casts out the “serpent” (Rev. 20:10).

### **(3) PICKING TEAMS**

- Teams Emerge right from the start
  - Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:3-11)
    - After Abel offered God his best, Cain murdered Abel in a jealous rage (4:4).
  - Cain’s descendant, Lamech, and Seth’s son, Enosh (Gen. 4:23-26)
    - Lamech was a violent polygamist, and Enosh was associated with the *“time people began to call upon the name of the LORD”* (4:26).
  - All humans alive at that time and Noah (Gen. 6:5-8)
    - 6:5 – *“The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”*

- 6:8 – “*But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.*”
  - Ham, Shem, and Japheth (Gen. 9:20-27)
    - Ham further exposed the “*nakedness*” of his father (Noah), but Shem and Japheth sought to cover him (9:23).
      - Noah blessed Shem and Japheth, but cursed Ham and his son, Canaan (9:25-26).
  - Isaac and Ishmael (Gen. 16:1-16, 21:1-21)
    - Isaac received the promise/covenant of God (Gen. 17:19).
    - Ishmael was ordained to be a “*wild donkey of a man*” with “*everyone’s hand against him*” (Gen. 16:11-12).
- Teams continue to add families and groups
  - Canaan’s family and Nahor’s family (Gen. 11:22-26, 24:7-10)
    - Isaac was forbidden from taking a wife from the “Canaanites,” who became a cursed people in Genesis 9:26-27. Instead, he took his wife from the people of Nahor, who were Abraham’s relatives – named after his grandfather.
  - Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25:19-23)
    - God declared that these two brothers would eventually become “nations” that would war against each other, and God’s blessing fell to Jacob, not Esau.
      - Throughout much of Israel’s history they were indeed at war with Edom and/or the Edomites (2 Sam. 8, 14; 1 Kings 14; 2 Kings 14; Ps. 137), who were named for Esau, aka “Edom” (Gen. 25:30).
  - Joseph/Moses/Hebrews and Egyptians (Exodus 1-15)
    - Genesis ends with the death of Joseph and a reminder of the promise God made to Abraham (Gen. 50:22-26).
      - The Hebrew people would be slaves for 400 years, but they would eventually leave slavery with the spoils of their captors – and God would do it all.

- Exodus begins with a reminder about who came into Egypt with Joseph and a literary turning point – *“Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph”* (Ex. 1:8).
- An Ultimate Banner for each Team
  - (1) Blessed Team / Children of God
  - (2) Cursed Team / Children of the devil/wrath/flesh/sin
    - All humans are the *“offspring”* of God (Acts 17:28), in the sense that all humanity is created in the *“image and likeness of God”* (Gen. 1:26-27).
    - However, there is a distinct division between God’s blessed people and those God curses.
      - God said that He would “bless” those who “blessed” Abraham and “curse” those who “dishonor” him (Gen. 12:3).
      - God passes the same kind of “blessing” and “cursing” down to Abraham’s son and grandson, Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 26:3-4, 27:29).
      - God gave His moral law, ceremonial law, and civil law to His peculiar people in the Old Testament, and these are full of blessings and cursing (Joshua 8:34).
      - God judged people throughout the Old Testament by sending a prophet to proclaim a “curse” upon them (2 Sam. 16:7; 2 Chron. 34:24; Jer. 11:3), and God visited His people in kindness and favor by sending a prophet to proclaim a “blessing” upon them (Isa. 61:9; Jer. 31:23; Zech. 8:13).
      - Ultimately, we see that God divides the “blessed” team from the “cursed” team on the basis of His gracious gift of Christ.
        - Romans 5:18 – *“as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life...”*
      - God adopts some sinners as sons (John 1:12-13), and condemns other sinners as enemies (John 3:16-19).
      - Blessed Children of God & Cursed Children of wrath
        - Ephesians 2:1-5, 19 – *“2 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of*

*this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, **like the rest of mankind.** 4 **But God, being rich in mercy,** because of the great love with which **he loved us,** 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ... 19 So then you are **no longer strangers and aliens,** but you are fellow citizens with the saints and **members of the household of God...**”*

- Finally, those whose names are not on the team roster (Lamb’s book of life) are thrown into the “lake of fire” (Rev. 20:15), and those who wear the “name of God” upon them will reign with Him forevermore (Rev. 22:4-5).

#### **(4) TRUSTING & FOLLOWING THE CAPTAIN**

- Jesus is the Captain of the team, and we must trust in and follow Him.
  - Jesus said, “*14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd...*” (Jn 10:14–16).
  - And elsewhere Jesus said, “*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life...*” (Jn 8:12).
- Jesus isn’t just someone we add to our lives.
- If we live like we are our own team captain, then we are showing who we really follow.
- Whose team do you play for?

## LORD'S SUPPER

\*Invite ushers to begin distributing the elements

- One of the ways we are reminded of God's promise to save sinners and our inclusion in Christ as our Savior (team captain) is by participating in the Lord's Supper.
  - We are identifying with Christ
  - We are passively receiving from Christ
  - We are being nourished by Christ
    - The Apostle Paul said, *"For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'*

*In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).*

\*Communion elements ingested corporately

## MY PRAYERS

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- May God help us to trust in Christ as our Head, Captain, and Lord
- May God help us to understand the all-inclusive nature of following Christ
- May God help us to rest in Christ's gracious work on our behalf