

Consequences:

We have already noted some of what was lost in the fall. Now to the specific judgments pronounced upon the man and woman:

3:16 – “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing”

- There is an echo here of Genesis 1:28. In Genesis 1:28 God blesses the couple and says “Be fruitful and multiply (Hebrew: *ravah*). And now in curse God says, “I will surely multiply (Hebrew: *ravah*) your pain in childbearing.”
- The contrast serves to emphasize that the childbearing was meant to be an arena of blessed enjoyment. After eating what was once meant to be such a source of blessing, becomes an arena of pain, danger, and curse.

3:16 – “Your desire shall be to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”

- The language here is difficult to interpret. Without exhaustively trying to sift the weeds, the thrust seems to have something to do with desire gone awry. Just as eating of the fruit was desiring knowledge and to be like God in the wrong sort of way, the consequence is a desire for man in the wrong sort of way – a desire to need man to satisfy one completely (not exclusive of sexual desire) and even subject him – which will only be met in return with a rule by man over her that is anything but what God had original intended.

Genesis 3:17-18 – “cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field

- Do these verses imply systematic changes to the creation – the ground being cursed and yielding thorns and thistles?
- To answer in the positive, we would have to assume that thorns and thistles did not exist before.
- The text does not imply that the pain results from changes in the inner workings of the creation. Factors that suggest this is not dealing with the natural order of things not becoming out of whack and not working the way it’s supposed to:

- “cursed is the ground” – the expression in this curse only speaks of the ground, not the whole creation. That makes sense given that this is the man’s sphere of labor since he was supposed to work the ground.
- Does not seem to imply that human sin has distorted the working of natural elements
- Fits with the context:
 - God formed the man in some dry “land” (Gen. 2:5-7), transplanted him to the garden to work it and keep it (2:15), and commissioned him and his wife to multiply and have dominion, which means to bring the blessing of Eden to the rest of the world (1:28). When the man sinned, God banished him from the garden “to work the ground from which he was taken”—a place that naturally produces “thorns and thistles.” The account never implies that “the ground” did not produce “thorns and thistles” prior to this point; it instead indicates that working the ground is to be the arena of “pain” – and this is due not to a change in the properties of the ground but to the change in humanity and to God’s providential purposes of chastisement. (Collins, Gen. 1-4, 164)

The man and the woman both now experience curse (frustration) in their primary spheres of labor. The woman with increased pain and danger in childbearing; the man is endless, painful toil in his work, never able to work enough to solve all the problems life endlessly produces, all the while feeling the constraints of time now barreling down upon him. (With our increased sensitivity to gender roles, this does not mean a woman’s only sphere is that of childbearing, nor that the man’s only place is in the marketplace to the neglect of providing emotionally for his family with his presence and active involvement. Notice the ideal woman of Proverbs 31 not only cares well for her family, but is conducting public economic transactions – and she’s quite successful in doing so!). What this means is that those aspects of life that most involve us are broken and bent (relationship between man and woman; work) and stand in need of redemption.