

December 4, 2011 by Steve Brandon



The Big Picture - Fall

Genesis 3 - Malachi 4

We are in a short series entitled, "The Big Picture." My aim is to preach through the entire Bible in four sermons, that we might not miss the forest for the trees. The outline that we are using for this short series consists of four words: Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration. Again, these words aren't new to me. Many have used them to outline the story of the Bible. All you need to do is search online for "Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration" online, and you will find many who have identified with this broad outline of the Bible.

The Bible begins with the Creation account. God, through His infinite power, made a good world. Everything in it was good. The plants were good. The animals were good. Man, woman, and marriage were good. But, Adam and Eve fell into sin. They ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The effects of that sin are still felt by all of us today. It brought death into the world. It brought pain and suffering into the world.

But, all the pain and suffering cries out that something is dreadfully wrong. We need someone to come and fix the world. It's broken. It's not like God made it to be. That's where the story of the Bible flows. It flows into the redemption of Jesus Christ. God sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. As John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." And this redemption is available to all who believe. So, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and know the freedom that faith in Him brings!

But, the redemption isn't merely a redemption of our lives, so that we can enjoy life better in the here and now. It is that, but it's more. Our redemption is the first-fruits of what is to come. The resurrection of Jesus Christ paved the way for to be with Him in His eternal kingdom which will be in the New Heavens and the New Earth. This is the restoration -- when God's people are finally together with God in God's place. It's told in the last two chapters of the Bible. God reigning among His people with no sin, no sorrow, no sickness. A peaceful world where King Jesus reigns and His people are gladly submitting to His rule. That's the story of the Bible: Creation, Fall, Redemption, Reconciliation.

And again, I mentioned last week (but it bears repeating) that the story of the Bible (in the big picture) is the story of each of our lives. God is our creator. But, we all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). We need a redeemer. When we believe in Jesus, we are redeemed, forgiven all of our sin. By faith, we anticipate the day when we will be restored with Him, someday in the new heaven and the new earth.

Today, our focus is upon "The Fall". The account of the fall takes place in Genesis, chapter 3. Though I am going to start in Genesis 3, my text this morning goes all the way through Malachi, chapter 4, which marks the end of the Old Testament -- some 800 pages in my Bible. It's the largest text that I have ever attempted to preach. But don't worry, we aren't going to read the entire thing.

So, in reality, my message this morning is summarizing the Old Testament. But, it is also reminding us of the gospel! May we rejoice in it this morning.

Each week, I have some pastor friends with whom I email. In the middle of the week, we email each other with the text and title of what we plan to preach on Sunday morning, so that we can pray for each other in our ministry of the word. This week, I put forth my title, "The Big Picture - Fall." And then, I put forth my text, "Genesis 3 - Malachi 4." Then, I wrote a little note to my praying friends, "I win the prize for the largest text. Pray for me."

So, we begin in Genesis 3. This is, perhaps, the saddest story in the Bible. Adam was placed in the garden of Eden. He was given everything that he needed. His food was provided for him. His wife was provided for him. His work was satisfying to him. I love the picture that Colin Smith paints of life in the garden, ...

Imagine life in Eden, the place God gave the first man and woman. Adam's work was fulfilling and fascinating. He enjoys the companionship of his wife and the company of God. When he is hungry, he reaches up and picks his food from the trees. His whole life is one of blessing and joy. ^[1]

This is the picture of a place that was "very good." But, that all changed in Genesis, chapter 3. It's a simple story. It's a simple story of temptation.

Genesis 3:1

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"

God was so good to Adam. He gave to him everything he could ever want. There was nothing more that he would ever need. But, the

serpent came and attacked the goodness of God. "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'" (verse 2). This is a flat-out lie. God had not said that! God had said, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely" (2:16). There was only one restriction! But, rather than seeing God as a God of grace and abundance, the serpent painted God as a restrictive God -- one who didn't want you to enjoy yourself. I trust that you see that this is an attack upon the goodness of God.

Eve's response wasn't perfect. She missed it just a little bit.

Genesis 3:2-3

The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'"

When God commanded Adam about eating, He instructed Adam to "eat freely." But, Eve merely says, "we may eat." She missed the feel of the overflowing generosity of God. Furthermore, God didn't say anything about not touching the tree. It was probably a wise move to keep away from the tree. But, God didn't say this. Though Eve wasn't perfect, overall, Eve got the thrust of God's word: don't eat from that tree. Yet, once the door of doubt was opened a crack, Satan stormed in with the attack:

Genesis 3:4-5

The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Again, the goodness of God is attacked. Satan gave Eve a reason to think that God didn't have their best in mind. "He doesn't want you to eat, because you will be like God! He doesn't want any competition! He wants to keep you poor and ignorant." And then, Satan brings forth the classic lure of temptation, ...

Genesis 3:6

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

The temptation started with a look. Then, it progressed to a desire. Then, the sin was committed. One simple bite from one simple fruit, and how great was the crash.

This past summer, our family vacationed at Rocky Mountain National Park. One of the most awesome things that we saw in the park was the alluvial fan, which was caused by a man-made dam that gave way at Lawn Lake. Lawn Lake was a man-made lake at Rocky Mountain National Park. When the dam gave way, "220 million US gallons (830,000 m³) of water resulted in a flash flood that killed three people camping in the park and caused \$31 million in damage to the town of Estes Park, Colorado and other downstream areas." [\[2\]](#)

The dam broke nearly 30 years ago, and yet the debris left from those moments is still visible downstream. Large boulders were everywhere downstream. It was a great display of power. We had a great time climbing up the boulders on the side of the rapids.

When investigators went back to determine the cause of the failure of the dam, they determined that "a deterioration of lead caulking on the joint between the outlet pipe and the gate valve [led] to internal erosion of the earth-fill dam." [\[3\]](#) Deteriorating caulk caused \$31 million of damage!

The same is true of the fall of man. One small bite from one simple fruit caused untold damage to this earth for generations and generations and generations. Consider what Paul said in Romans, chapter 5: "through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Rom 5:12). The sin of Adam brought evil into the world. The sin of Adam brought death into the world. You will die; I will die; all because of Adam's sin!

Furthermore, it wasn't merely sin and death that resulted. Our condemnation came also. "Through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men" (Romans 5:18). "Through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (Romans 5:19). Because of Adam's sin, we were made sinners as well. Because of Adam's sin, condemnation has come upon us all.

I want for us to feel the weight of this. Adam's sin brought sin to all of us. Adam's sin brought death to all of us. Adam's sin brought condemnation to us all. This is the context of the Old Testament. It's a story of a creation gone astray.

Notice the curses that God gave immediately after the fall, ...

Genesis 3:7-13

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Oh, how things have changed. Before sin entered the world, there was no shame. The man and the woman were not ashamed of each other. The man and the woman were not ashamed of God. And now, they find themselves hiding from God.

Their blaming game also comes from their sin. They weren't owning up to their sin. Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the serpent. And God saw through it all! He cursed them all -- first the serpent, then the woman, then the man.

Genesis 3:14-15

The LORD God said to the serpent,
"Because you have done this,
Cursed are you more than all cattle,
And more than every beast of the field;
On your belly you will go,
And dust you will eat
All the days of your life;
And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel."

There's a reason why snakes crawl on their bellies. There's a reason why "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12). It is because the devil was our first enemy. Let's continue on, ...

Genesis 3:16

To the woman He said,
"I will greatly multiply
Your pain in childbirth,
In pain you will bring forth children;
Yet your desire will be for your husband,
And he will rule over you."

Pain in childbirth. Pain in marriage. Both are as a result of the fall. Wherever there is a bad marriage, and wherever a husband rules over his wife rather than loving her like Christ loved the church, you can trace it all back to the fall and to the curse that God pronounced against Eve.

Genesis 3:17-19

Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it';
Cursed is the ground because of you;
In toil you will eat of it
All the days of your life.
"Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;
And you will eat the plants of the field;
By the sweat of your face
You will eat bread,
Till you return to the ground,
Because from it you were taken;
For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

Here you see that the sin of Adam affected far more than the human race. It affected the earth. Before the fall, there were no thorns. Before the fall, there were no thistles. But now, the farming profession has been made much more difficult. But, it's not only farming. We live in a world of deterioration. We need paint because of the fall. We need repairmen because of the fall. We have antiques because of the fall. We need to rebuild constantly because of the fall.

I quoted from Romans 8 last week, but it bears repeating again: "For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now" (Romans 8:22). The sin of Adam and Eve affected everything on the planet. We have been driven away from the presence of the Lord.

Genesis 3:20-24

Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living. The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"— therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

We may long to get back to the garden of Eden, but we can't. Through the sin of Adam, we have walked through a one-way door that has taken us to the world of sin that the Old Testament describes. And it's a devastating world. It's going to take something else to bring us back into Paradise. This is the whole point of my message next week, "Redemption." This is the aim of my message in two weeks: "Restoration." Jesus has come to bring us back home! And just as it was our doing to get out, so it is His doing that will bring us back in.

We got the hint back in verse 15, "He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." Satan will crush the heel, but Christ will crush the head. Satan will deliver a flesh wound, but Christ will deal a mortal blow. Satan did give Jesus a flesh wound -- Jesus was crucified. But, Jesus conquered the grave and delivered the death blow to Satan. "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:55-57).

I already quoted from Romans chapter 5 earlier in my message, but I only quoted half of some of the verses. Let me quote the whole thing. Note the two men, the two acts, and the two results.

Romans 5:15-19

If by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from the one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

Let's turn our attention now to thinking about how bad the fall was. Often, you can't tell how bad things were until you assess the damage in the aftermath of the storm. So, let's examine the damage done by the fall. Now, we will begin to pick up some speed through the text.

In Genesis 4, we see Cain killing his brother Abel. Genesis 4:8 says, "It came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him." That's only one generation removed from the garden! And we already have a murder taking place.

In Genesis 5, we see massive death. In fact, that's the point of the genealogies:

In Genesis 5:5 - "Adam, ... and he died."

In Genesis 5:8 - "Seth, ... and he died."

In Genesis 5:11, "Enosh, ... and he died."

In Genesis 5:14, "Kenan, ... and he died."

In Genesis 5:17, "Mahalalel, ... and he died."

In Genesis 5:20, "Jared, ... and he died."

In Genesis 5:27, "Methuselah, ... and he died."

In Genesis 5:28, "Lamech, ... and he died."

Because of Adam's sin, death has entered the world! But, look in chapter 6 for how bad it became.

Genesis 6:5

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Note the breadth of sin. The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth. The idea here is that God looked at the sinfulness of man at a broad level and saw that sin covered the earth. Note the depth of sin. "Every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Note the descriptions of sin. It's not merely that our hearts are evil. It's not merely that our thoughts are evil. It's that "every intent" of our thoughts is evil. It's not that our thoughts are partly good. It's that our thoughts are "only evil." It's not that our thoughts are evil some of the time. It's that our thoughts are "evil" continually. Such is the depth of our sin.

The sin of the human race was so bad that "the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in his heart" (Genesis 6:6). And the rest of chapters 6, 7, and 8 tell of the flood that came upon the earth and destroyed every living thing, except for Noah, Mrs. Noah, and their three sons and their wives along with the animals that they took aboard the ark.

Essentially, God was starting over. But, it's not as if our hearts have changed. Genesis 8:21 tells us, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth." The rest of the Old Testament contains illustration after illustration after illustration of the wickedness of the heart of men.

Think about the sin in Genesis, ...

In chapter 11, we see the sin of pride, as those on the earth sought to build the tower of Babel.

In chapter 12, we see Abraham lying.

In chapter 16, we see Abraham being unfaithful in his marriage, entering into Hagar.

In chapter 19, we see the wickedness of homosexuality, which culminates in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

In chapter 25, we see Jacob stealing the birthright from Esau, as he took advantage of Esau's weakness.

In chapter 27, we see Jacob stealing the blessing from Esau through manipulation.

In chapter 29, we see the treachery of Laban, who gives Leah to Jacob, rather than Rachael, for whom he had worked for 7 years.
In chapter 32, we see family strife between Jacob and Esau.
In chapter 34, we see Shechem defiling Dinah, and the slaughter of Shechem that came about as a result.
In chapter 37, we see jealousy in the family, which prompts the sons of Jacob to sell Joseph into slavery, and cover it up for decades.
In chapter 38, we see Judah lying with a prostitute.

That's the sin that abounds in the Bible, before we even get out of the first book of the Bible. Something is dreadfully wrong. We need somebody to come and fix it.

Now, one of the ways that sin exhibits itself throughout the Old Testament is in the failed attempts of people to serve the Lord. And this is where you really begin to see the sinfulness of the human heart, which has been affected by the fall. When people of privilege, who know what the Lord requires and who pledge their obedience to the Lord -- when they fall from following the Lord, it's an indication of the effects of the fall. How deep sin is within us.

Let's look at Exodus, chapter 24. In this chapter, we find Moses returning from the presence of the Lord upon Mount Sinai. He has returned with the Ten Commandments and other laws in hand. He presents the law to the people.

Exodus 24:3-9

Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!" Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. Then he arose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. He sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD. Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and the other half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

On that day, Israel entered into a covenant with the LORD, to walk in His ways, but they broke their end of the bargain some 40 days later. Turn over to Exodus, chapter 32. Moses was again on Mount Sinai in the presence of the Lord. But, the people were anxious.

Exodus 32:1-10

Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, "Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." Aaron said to them, "Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. He took this from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf; and they said, "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." Now when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD." So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Go down at once, for your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshiped it and have sacrificed to it and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!'" The LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people. Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation."

God was ready to start all over again with Moses, much as he did with Abraham. But, Moses would refuse to have it. And so, God endured for a generation.

This is a cycle that repeats itself. Turn over to Joshua, chapter 24. This jumps forward some 40 years until Israel had come into the promised land (which was filled with sin and unbelief). Anyway, we find Joshua recounting God's faithfulness to Israel in giving them a land for themselves. Let's begin in verse 13, where we get a summary of all that God did, ...

Joshua 24:13-28

I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and cities which you had not built, and you have lived in them; you are eating of vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.'

Then Joshua turned to the people and said, ...

"Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." The people answered and said, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; for the LORD our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and who did these great signs in our sight and preserved us through all the way in which we went and among all the peoples through whose midst we passed. The LORD drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who lived in the land. We also will serve

the LORD, for He is our God."

Then Joshua said to the people, "You will not be able to serve the LORD, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgression or your sins. If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has done good to you." The people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the LORD."

Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen for yourselves the LORD, to serve Him." And they said, "We are witnesses."

"Now therefore, put away the foreign gods which are in your midst, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel."

The people said to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our God and we will obey His voice."

So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God; and he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. Joshua said to all the people, "Behold, this stone shall be for a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us; thus it shall be for a witness against you, so that you do not deny your God." Then Joshua dismissed the people, each to his inheritance.

And things were well during the days of Joshua. But, after Joshua died, the next generation drifted. Turn over to Judges, chapter 2. The story picks up right where we left off.

Judges 2:6-19

When Joshua had dismissed the people, the sons of Israel went each to his inheritance to possess the land. The people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the LORD which He had done for Israel. Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of one hundred and ten. And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel.

Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals, and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the LORD to anger. So they forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtaroath. The anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around them, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had spoken and as the LORD had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed.

Then the LORD raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them. Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they played the harlot after other gods and bowed themselves down to them. They turned aside quickly from the way in which their fathers had walked in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do as their fathers. When the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed and afflicted them. But it came about when the judge died, that they would turn back and act more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them and bow down to them; they did not abandon their practices or their stubborn ways.

This was Israel, the people of God! They were idol worshipers. They "did not abandon their practices or their stubborn ways" (Judges 2:19). Let us not kid ourselves concerning our sin. We will sing a hymn after my message - Come Thou Fount -- its words speak the truth that we are, "Prone to wander". Let us not be Pharisees who are too stubborn to abandon our ways.

This is the cycle of the judges. Israel was in distress, so they cried out to the Lord for help. God raised up a judge to deliver them. But, when the judge died, Israel was worse than before. This cycle repeated itself for 400 years, until Israel asked for a king.

Turn over to 1 Samuel. Let's pick up the story in chapter 8, ...

1 Samuel 8:1-9

And it came about when Samuel was old that he appointed his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judging in Beersheba. His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice.

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; and they said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations."

But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD. The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day—in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them."

The rest of chapter 8 is filled with warnings concerning the oppression that a king would bring. Did you notice the key phrase? "They have rejected Me from being king over them" (1 Sam. 8:7). Astonishing! This is the God who promised His loyalty to Abraham and His descendants. This is the God who proved His loyalty over and over and over again. And they rejected Him. They were sinning against knowledge.

So, Israel entered into the kingdom stage of their nation. Saul was a disaster. David was a great king! But, Solomon becomes yet another lesson of the fall of man. Turn over to 1 Kings. God gave Solomon wisdom that was unsurpassed in all the world.

1 Kings 4:29-31

Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was known in all the surrounding nations.

God gave Solomon riches that were unsurpassed in all the world (1 Kings 10:23). In Solomon's day, the riches of Israel were so much that silver was as common as stones in Jerusalem (1 Kings 10:27). And yet, how did Solomon respond to the incredible blessing of God?

1 Kings 11:1-8

Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel, "You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you, for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods." Solomon held fast to these in love. He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away. For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites. Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father had done. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

This is incredible! He who knew the consequences of infidelity to his marriage, had 700 wives! The wisest man who ever lived became an idolater. It's a testimony to our fallen hearts.

Well, as a result of Solomon's sin, the kingdom was divided into two nations. Israel was in the north, following Jeroboam. Judah was in the south, following Rehoboam. And of the 20 kings in the north, all of them were wicked idolaters. And of the 20 kings in the south (if you count Athaliah), less than half of them can even be considered to be godly kings, who directed Judah to worship the LORD.

Time fails us to see the effects of the fall in the Psalms. Time fails us to see the effects of the fall in the prophets. But it's all over both of these portions of Scripture. The cry of the Psalms is often lamenting over the results of sin all around us. The cry of the Prophets is to repent of your sinful ways.

But, since, my text this morning is Genesis 3 through Malachi, chapter 4, it would be good for us to spend a few moments looking at the effects of the fall in Malachi, chapter 4. This is the last book of the Old Testament. I want to look at the very last two verses of the Old Testament.

Malachi 4:5-6

"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."

If you spend but a few moments thinking about this, you will realize how far the fall of man has reached into the hearts of men. We need someone to help us. In this instance, God is sending Elijah to come and prepare the way for the Lord. One of the ways that he is going to prepare the way is to "restore the hearts" of parents and children toward one another.

In other words, that's often not the case. Parents and children often have broken relationships. I know that many of you are experiencing this right now. Either your children are estranged from you or your parents want little to do with you. What more could be a sign of our sinfulness than this? We can't even get along at home.

I found out a fact this week about polar bears. you know, those beautiful white creatures that live in the arctic circle. They are majestic beings of God's creation. Their diet mostly consists of seals, (or perhaps an occasional walrus or whale). But, there are times when the adult male bears will kill and eat their own cubs. [\[4\]](#) It's barbaric and we prefer not to even think about it. And yet, this is what happens in many families. Members of the same household bite and devour one another with their harmful words and their sinful actions (Gal 5:15). And in a fallen world, this is common place.

But, this is why Elijah came -- to prepare the way for the Messiah. We read in Galatians, ...

Galatians 4:4-5

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might

redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

The good news is this: the Messiah has come!

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on December 4, 2011 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] Colin Smith, Unlocking the Bible Story, Volume 1, p. 31

[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawn_Lake_Dam

[3] Ibid.

[4] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polar_bear