



## CONNECTING THE DOTS: ADAMIC COVENANT

Glenn Roberts got his nickname from his pitching prowess in American Legion Baseball. But *"Fireball" Roberts* sadly lived up to his name in 1964 at the Charlotte Motor Speedway. It was one of NASCAR's worst crashes. The race had just begun. It was the 7<sup>th</sup> lap – with 393 more to go. The drivers were settling in, finding their rhythm. *Roberts was a popular driver, in the prime of his career.* He was running in the middle of the pack.

But as the cars moved through Turn Two a collision occurred between Ned Jarrett and Junior Johnson. Glenn Roberts tried to avoid a pile up. His car spun out of control and slammed against the retaining wall. The impact punctured a hole in Robert's gas tank. When the race car rolled over it burst into flames. It was the worst inferno the sport has ever seen. By the time Fireball Roberts was pulled from his car burns covered 80% of his body. Six weeks later a 35 year-old Roberts died from complications. Today, Fireball Roberts is buried in Daytona just behind Turn Three.

Major changes in the sport resulted from Glenn Roberts' death... *Fire-retardant safety-suits became standard... Onboard extinguishing systems were upgraded... Rubber fuel cells replaced metal gas tanks...* Following the crash NASCAR implemented a whole new set of terms and requirements. *Post-crash* NASCAR looked a lot different than *pre-crash* NASCAR. The sad demise of Fireball Roberts altered racing forever.

Well, this morning I want talk about *another crash* in *another race*. **Fireball Adam** spun out of control and went up in flames. And his crash permanently altered the **human race**. Adam and Eve sinned, and their rebellion against God subjected all of creation to decay and death. God created the first man from the dust, and it's to the dust we return. Now when anybody anywhere is buried it's a reminder of *Adam's crash*.

As I said last week, NASCAR racing intensifies in the turns. Cars bunch up. Drivers jockey for position. A NASCAR race is won or lost in the turns. Last week we compared the Bible to a stock car race... *The starting line* is the genesis of the heavens and the earth. And *the first big turn* is the creation of the man and the woman. God made them in His image – *male and female* – and plopped them down in a Garden called Eden. God gave Adam dominion over all He created. I mean, his first job was CEO! He had authority. He co-ruled with God.

Adam and Eve were the *perfect couple*, in a *perfect world*, eating *perfect fruit*, enjoying a *perfect relationship*. This was the *perfect gig*... “Adam never had to hear about how much money Eve’s daddy made, and Eve never had to hear about how good Adam’s mom could cook.” And they both lived together naked and unashamed. In other words, the first couple had nothing to hide – no hang-ups. They were so *unselfish* they were oblivious to *themselves*. They were naked and didn’t realize their nakedness. Adam and Eve had quite the hook-up!

And here’s the kicker... *Adam walked with God in the cool of the day!* God and Adam had this cool relationship. They took walks together. They hung out together. *This was the reason mankind was created*... The Bible tells us, “**God is love.**” But love always needs an object. Thus, God created the man and woman for fellowship. God wanted to *love and be loved - know and be known - serve and be served*... a real relationship.

But here’s what we learned last week, God doesn’t just desire any ole relationship with us – He always has a specific type of relationship in mind. He thinks through the arrangement He wants with His people. This includes terms, conditions, and promises. It sets out expectations and boundaries. God provides roles for those involved in the agreement. God desires a relationship with man, but it’s always a certain kind of relationship. And the arrangement God orders is called **a covenant**.

Last week we talked about God’s initial *covenant* with mankind... **The Edenic Covenant**... named after the garden Adam and Eve called home. It was a basic, simple agreement... *God creates paradise... God gives paradise to Adam and Eve... God allows them to enjoy and rule over paradise*... All God asks in return is for the man and woman to love Him.

*That’s a reasonable request*... But for love to be meaningful it has to be voluntary. A love that’s assumed is no love at all. Love has to choose. So God told Adam and Eve they could eat of every tree in the garden, except one. The lone tree with the forbidden fruit was “**the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**” And man’s restraint – his obedience to God – his faith in God’s request - was his way of telling God that He was loved.

But guess what sometimes happens in the turns? *Cars and people go crash!* **Fireball Adam crashed.** He and his wife chose *not to trust God*. They bit the fruit and rolled the car. And all of life went up in flames.

On April 26, 1986 the worst nuclear accident the world has ever seen took place in the Chernobyl region of the old Soviet Union. A fire occurred in Reactor #4 which released 190 tons of highly radioactive debris into the atmosphere. Today, 25 years later effects of the tragedy are still evident. *Particularly among the children born in the Contamination Zone.* **The Children of Chernobyl** are now a humanitarian concern all over the world. Pictures of these children are heart-wrenching... *Empty eye-sockets, bloated legs, club feet, misshaped heads - all sorts of painful, physical deformities.* Look at these children and you realize something went horribly wrong. *This was not by design... This could not have been God’s plan*... Radiation poisoning is the sole explanation. It’s the only thing that would make sense of the human wreckage - the warped and twisted bodies. And when you look at the world today... the pain, the heartache, the distortion, the perversion - you get the same impression. This is not right! Something terribly twisted has happened in our collective past. Without Genesis 3 there’d be no adequate explanation. Sin poisoned the original creation. We’re all living our lives in the Contamination Zone.

I've heard it put, "Adam bombed. It was the first *Adam bomb* and its fallout contaminated everything God created." It's true! Our world is no longer what God meant it to be. Life went haywire. A wrench was thrown in the gears. And it's the Bible that provides the victims with an explanation.

Genesis 3 is the biblical account of the fall of man – *Adam's crash*. And how that one *crash and burn* changed the entire human race, and life on earth since. After Glenn Robert's disaster, NASCAR re-organized their sport. Likewise after Adam's crash, God drew up a new covenant. Remember **God never gives up on a relationship with man**, but *His answer to our sin is always a covenant*. It's always a *loving, grace-filled, faith-based covenant* that comes to our rescue. And Adam is no exception. Let's turn to **Genesis 3** and look at **The Adamic Covenant**. We'll recap the initial sin, and then spend time probing its far-reaching ramifications.

Remember chapter 3 records *the origin of human sin*, but sin existed beforehand. An angelic revolt erupted in heaven. Lucifer or Satan let pride fill his heart. He tried to steal glory from God. A third of the angels joined in. Legend has it, Lucifer caught wind of God's plan to create humans from the dust, and assign the angels our valet service. This was an assault on Satan's pride. *He'd never cater to dust mites*. So to avoid the humiliation he tried to stop God's plan. Last week we read about *the war over creation*. But that battle continues. Satan couldn't stop creation, so now he tries to spoil it. This cosmic revolt that reached to the halls of heaven now spills over to the earth. Satan appears in the garden to tempt Adam and Eve...

And Satan's strategy is along two lines... He tempts Eve to doubt **God's Word** – then doubt **God's love...** Twice the NT states, "**Eve was deceived.**" Women are more verbal than men. They like conversation. But Eve spoke to the wrong person. She goes toe to toe with a skilled manipulator, and once you start negotiating with Satan, you're as good as trapped. Eve bites - Adam follows - and the rest is history. Suffice it to say, the original sin wasn't sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll. Eve wanted to be "**like God**"... but **like God apart from God**, not *under God*. She lusted for autonomy. She sought wisdom, but wisdom without God.

The end of verse 6 says of Eve, "**She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate...**" Eve was deceived, but Adam sinned willfully. And in the instant his teeth pierced that fruit's skin the universe was never the same. In Genesis 2:17, God had warned Adam if he ate the forbidden fruit he would "**surely die.**" And die he did. Death entered the human sphere. Spiritually, the man and woman died instantly. Sin caused a breach between them and God. Something died inside Adam. The warmth of God's Spirit was suddenly replaced *by a coldness, an alienation, an emptiness, a selfishness*. They died spiritually that day.

But physically they also began to die. It culminates under a tombstone, but death began when Adam sinned. At that moment his body started to slowly deteriorate. "*Entropy*" or decay began to take a toll on mankind. And not only did entropy take hold of humanity. It impacted the whole universe. Romans 8:20 puts it, "**the creation was subjected to futility.**" Randomness invaded God's orderly creation. Sin marred God's perfect world. Malfunctions became commonplace. Nature spun out of control.

The Hebrews have a word to describe the perfect state of God's original creation, "**Shalom**" or "**peace.**" When Jesus returns He'll restore creation to this perfection. And Jesus will be called the "**Prince of Shalom**" – or peace. But the fall of man *shattered Shalom*. Before the fall, all of nature was synced with God. Sin is now the bug in the program – the virus in the hard drive that keeps us out-of-sync.

In essence, *Mother Nature* no longer cooperates with *God the Father*. The gentle rain that waters your yard – can sometimes flood a city. The light breeze that raises a kite - can rip the roof and siding off your house. Mother Nature has developed a severe case of PMS. Sin has defiled God's perfect world. The world we live in is no longer as God intended. When a tornado rips apart a street - or cells mutate into a cancer - or a car slides over a guardrail - *don't blame it on God!* It was man who rejected God's warning, and struck out on his own. Man thought he could shape a better world. The havoc we see today is the result of our own insanity.

The immediate effect of sin showed up first in the man and woman. As soon as they bit the fruit, **"The eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked..."** Sin brought self-awareness. Prior to sin, Adam and Eve were *God-centered* and *others-centered*. Now they're *self-centered*. Sin makes life all about me... Eve gained her enlightenment – *her eyes were opened*. But the knowledge shattered her innocence. Now independent from God she felt *inadequate* and *ashamed*. This once graceful and beautiful lady was now a bag of *insecurities*.

In verse 7 Adam and Eve try to remedy their situation. **"They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings..."** Instead of admit their sin, and run to God, and throw themselves on His mercies – *they hide*. Adam and Eve launch the first **"cover up."** They sew together fig leaves and make green, leafy Speedos. *It was the original fruit of the looms*. I've heard it said, **"After she sinned Eve became the only woman in history to say, 'I haven't got a thing to wear' - and it actually be true."** Adam and Eve try to cover their selfishness, and rid themselves of their insecurities - but the plan backfires. I've heard fig leaves are itchy - which means their efforts made them more self-obsessed, rather than less.

In fact, you could say the rest of human history is all about **fig leaves**. Everything man does from this point forward is a way for us to absolve our guilt - shore up our self-doubts - feel good about ourselves again. From here on man will *polish his vanity*, and *stroke his ego*, and *pursue his ambitions*, and *show-off his accomplishments* as a form of fig leaves. **Even religion itself is a form of fig leaves.** *Good works, charitable deeds, sacred rituals, self-righteousness* is man's attempts to cover his sin. Religion is our invention. We'll discover God's solution is *a covenant*.

Verse 8 is so sad, **"And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden."** This would be funny if it were not so tragic... the President and the First Lady of Creation are hiding in the bushes - scratching like crazy. I like this cartoon... It's an autumn day. Leaves are falling to the ground. And Eve is scolding Adam, **"Will you please pick up your clothes?"** Wow how life changed for Adam... He's gone from hanging out with a naked babe to being nagged by the same woman to pick up his clothes.

**"Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where are you?'"** Please understand this isn't the voice of an angry mobster banging on your door, seeking revenge, **"Where are ya! I'm going getcha..."** This isn't the *Godfather*. This is *God the Father*. To read God's question accurately you have to read it like a heartbroken dad seeking his lost and wayward child... **"Where are you? I love you! Please come home!"**

God calls lovingly... But men, you need to notice who God calls out... Though Eve sinned first, God wants to talk to the man, **"Adam... where are you?"** God holds Adam responsible. **The buck stops with the buck.** Every man wants to be the head of his house – the king of his castle – but men, a serious responsibility comes with that authority and honor.

Too many men are like Adam. Notice, *where is Adam when Eve bites the fruit?* Verse 6 tells us, “Her husband with her...” Eve is under attack. The deception is on, and Adam is an apathetic bystander. He does nada! Adam fails to lead – to protect his wife. He never intervenes in the conversation between Eve and Satan – *and we’re still paying for it today.*

This is the sin of scores of “so-called men” – even Christian men. Here is today’s greatest social problem - **men are failing their families.** They pay a mortgage and buy groceries, but they leave spiritual leadership to their wives. *This was Adam’s error...* and guys, if it brought down the entire human family, it’ll have a negative affect on your family.

Here’s what happened to the first marriage. The man failed to lead. The woman usurped his authority. And Satan stepped in to wreak havoc. And the same scenario has been repeated countless times. Some Christian men think just because they’re moral guys – *they don’t get drunk, or use drugs, or cheat on their wives* – they must be pleasing to God - not hardly. A husband and father needs to be aware of what’s going on spiritually in his family. *Be a spiritual leader, not an apathetic Adam.*

And notice Adam’s excuses. Verse 10, “So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.” And (God) said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?” Adam’s first response to sin was to **hide**, now he **hurls**. He plays *the blame game*. Adam says to God, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” Adam is so arrogant he not only blames his sin on Eve, but he also blames God for Eve. He says to God, “the woman whom You gave me...” It’s your fault God for giving me this unruly woman.

I’m ashamed to say it, but there’ve times when I’ve done the same. *I’ll lose my cool* with Kathy and blamed her for my sin, “Oh, she makes me so mad!” Understand, what a wife does is no excuse for a husband’s temper. God holds the man responsible. A leader doesn’t make excuses.

“And the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” Eve blames the snake. Eve uses the old Flip Wilson line that use to get so many laughs, “The devil made me do it...” *But God doesn’t laugh at Eve, or us...* We’ve all sinned, and the first step to overcoming sin is to stop blaming it on our spouse, or kids, or boss, or church, or the economy, or the devil... God in His grace wants to forgive us, but first we have to come out of the bushes - *stop hiding and stop hurling* - and own what we’ve done.

Notice what happens next... “The man blames the woman, the woman blames the snake, and the snake doesn’t have a leg to stand on...” Verse 14, “So the LORD God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.” First, God curses the snake. He’s destined for belly-flops. The snake will now slither... Here’s the origin of the expression, “bite the dust.” God says, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman...” This is the part of verse 15 that’s easiest to interpret... *Most women are afraid of most snakes.* There’s hostility between snakes and women.

But God will also put enmity, or hostility, “between your (the serpent’s) seed and her (the woman’s) Seed...” The “seed (or sperm) of the woman” is bizarre terminology. Nowhere does the seed belong to the woman. This verse speaks of a unique birth – a supernatural birth.

Notice the next line, “He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” Here God makes a covenant. He initiates a means of restoring order to a fallen world, and of redeeming sinful man to a relationship with Him. Genesis 3:15 is one of the most strategic verses in all the Bible. It’s known as the *proto-evangelicum*. It’s the first mention of the Gospel.

When Adam sinned, he effectively gave Satan sway over creation. But *the woman’s seed* will strip him of the authority he stole from Adam, and end the war with Satan. A promised Champion will deliver the knock-out. This phrase “*the seed of the woman*” ultimately points to Jesus – the virgin born Son of God. On the cross Satan bruised Jesus’ heel – *a non-fatal blow*. Jesus rose the three days later. But on the cross Jesus crushed Satan’s head - or stripped him of his authority. The devil now has no power over the believer in Jesus. Like the serpent, the devil *bit the dust*.

It’s intriguing why Jesus had to be born of “*the seed of the woman*.” Romans 5:12 tells us, “Through one man sin entered the world...” The Bible teaches that everyone born of Adam inherits Adam’s sin. Psalm 51:5 puts it, “I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.” We’re all born with a sinful, “*Adamic*” nature. Our natural tendency is to rebel and go our own way. Our internal compass points to “I” – not “God.”

There’s an old rock and roll song by George Thorogood and the Destroyers, “On the day I was born, the nurses all gathered 'round - and they gazed in wide wonder, at the joy they had found. The head nurse spoke up, and she said leave this one alone. She could tell right away, that I was bad to the bone.” Every human born to Adam is *bad to the bone*. Here’s the point, through Adam, sin gets passed down. Sin is a trait inherited from dad not mom. This is why Jesus is called “*the seed of the woman*.” Since He was virgin born He was born sinless. Thus, *Jesus died in our place for our sin*. He was *good to the bone*.

Romans 5:19 reads, “As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.” We inherit *sin* from Adam. But inherit *a right standing with God* in Jesus. In Adam we’re *born* in sin. In Jesus we’re *born again* to righteousness.

I’ve talked to people who resent this idea of mankind’s original sin. *Why should I suffer for Adam’s sin? Why can’t I decide my own fate? Be careful what you wish for...* I doubt if any of us could do any better than Adam and Eve. We also would’ve sinned. And here’s the catch – if your own sin condemns you - your own righteousness has to save you. God in His wisdom *condemned us in Adam*, so He could *save us in Jesus*.

In verse 16 the consequences of Adam’s sin reach deep into *our* lives... God judges the woman and her roll in the revolt. He assigns her punishment. “*I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children...*” Mom, imagine what could’ve been! God’s original design called for “*pain-free contractions*.” “*No pain, all gain*.” Sadly, that ended with the first delivery. Eve’s sin brought labor pains. A wrench was thrown into the gears of family and human reproduction. Here is the source of *infertility*, and *miscarriages*, and *C-sections*.

But the woman's sentence was two-fold... God also tells Eve, "Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." She's sentenced to *labor pains*, and *laboring with a pain*. Realize, God's order for the home pre-dated the Fall. The *Edenic Covenant* made the husband leader in the home. The wife was to follow. But now Eve's husband is a sinner. She's suddenly saddled with the tough task of submitting to an imperfect authority – a mistake-prone leader.

And from here on family life will get much more complicated. A power struggle ensues. A woman desires the intimacy of marriage, *but she no longer trusts her husband*. Rather than follow him, she perfects ways to control him. This discourages the man from stepping up to lead... This causes a vicious, heart-breaking cycle. Realize the issues plaguing your marriage - *as do the solutions* - trace back all the way to Eden!

In verse 17 God judges the man, Adam, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field." Adam's work changes... Before the fall, he got hungry and all he had to do is pick a globe of fruit. Now he has to plant and grow food in the fields. Prior to the curse, food and work were unrelated. Food had nothing to do with a paycheck. God provided all the food the man and woman needed. Adam worked for fun. *This changed at the fall...*

Since Adam chose independence from God, he could start by growing his own food – earning his own living... And while he's tilling the ground he's going to encounter constant obstacles... "thorns and thistles." Suddenly, work becomes *work*. It goes from a *breeze* to a *burden*.

Verse 19 tells us, "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return." Before man's sin work was *no sweat* - but *no more*. From now on man will never get out of his job a reward equal to what he puts in. He's taken from the dirt and works himself back into the ground. Every time a man *clocks-in* he leaves a little something of himself on the job, until he's literally worked to death. *And this is the plight of every man...*

In his book, "Working," Studs Terkel writes of "*the thorns and thistles...*" "Work is about violence - to the spirit as well as to the body. It's about ulcers as well as accidents... shouting matches as well as fistfights... Above all it's about daily humiliations. To just survive the day is triumph enough for the walking wounded... It is about a search for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for wonder rather than apathy, for *a sort of life* rather than *a Monday through Friday sort of dying*." Wow, Terkel's description of work as "a Monday through Friday sort of dying" is right out of Genesis. You never get out of it all that you put into it.

Some guys I know bounce from job to job. They never settle down vocationally. They're always looking for the perfect job... *that doesn't exist!* We've had people join the church staff, and expect a bed of roses. They don't realize every *occupation* - every *corporation* - has thorns and thistles. All careers and jobs have obstacles that irritate and aggravate.

God sees to it that *women have pain in labor* and *men labor in pain*. It's interesting, when a mom chooses to work outside the home she gets *double the trouble*... She bears the *family curse* and the *work curse*. Ironically, modern society has revamped family life to liberate women, but all its done is burden them down further. Mothers have been convinced they need a career to be fulfilled. In reality, all they get is a double curse.

It is amazing though, how the ancient covenant God made with Adam so thoroughly shapes our lives today... *from nature, to home, to work.* The curse God put on man's original sin shows up every day in a million ways. *When the car breaks down – or the kid throws up – or you have a fight with your spouse... when thorns and thistles, and labor pains make your life harder...* let it serve to remind you, this world is not as God intended.

The Covenant God made with Adam had two purposes. It serves as a reminder of our sin and fall, but it also provides us hope for our salvation. I like verse 20 *“And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.”* The name “Eve” means “life-giver.” Adam took very seriously God's promise to Eve that through *“her seed”* salvation would come... *that “the seed of the woman” would crush the serpent's head.* Sin came by Eve. But Adam believes life will come by Eve as well.

Verse 21, *“Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.”* God didn't like their fig leaves so He dressed them in leather. Animal skins necessitated the death of an animal – *a sacrifice.* God told Adam, *“You shall surely die.”* The wages of sin is death. For sin to be forgiven there's a price to be paid. There has to be a sacrifice.

Here's how God intends to *remove our guilt, and alleviate our fears, and resolve our insecurities, and restore our willingness to trust...* it's through the cross of Jesus. He now covers us with righteousness. He takes away our nakedness, and vulnerability, and shame. In Christ we're accepted. But it all happens through *a covenant.* *And there's more to come...*