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THE PRICE, Part Two

Jeffery D. Woodhams

A person's response to the questions posed by an authority are significant indicators of what is going on in his heart. I'm going to start today with two stories from this week about people who have attempted to hide the truth.

Perhaps you've heard about a couple who posted pictures of themselves on the Internet recently, pictures which were taken at an exclusive state dinner event in the White House. People began to question how they had gotten into the event. Their story to friends and acquaintances and a cable television show that was following them was that they had been invited to the dinner; and subsequently they have maintained that position. However, they have not produced an invitation, and the emails they turned over to journalists for scrutiny "proving" that they were invited actually show that they actually were attempting to get an invitation that never materialized. Although they have been willing to talk to the media for a price, they have refused to testify at a Senate hearing on the matter.¹ Unwillingness to answer questions before the authorities is a very bad sign. If they had a legitimate invitation, why not show up and answer the questions?

In other news, the Climate Research Unit at the University of East Anglia that has for many years steered the world's primary body regarding climate policy, the IPCC. It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the CRU. However, someone, possibly a whistle blower within the organization, exposed scientific fraud within the CRU by leaking documents, emails, and computer code for the CRU's climate simulations. This esteemed group of scientists apparently did all they could to skew data, deny Freedom of Information Act requests, and destroy evidence contrary to their position that man is causing the earth to overheat. In one email, a scientist is quoted as saying, "I would like to see the climate change happen so the science could be proved right."² The news media have revealed their complicity in this fraud as well: MSNBC, ABC, and CBS have all refused to report on the fraud,³ even though they've had plenty of time to talk about Tiger Woods. Politicians are still trying to move forward with climate change legislation as if this fraud hadn't been exposed and as if the scientific data were more than sufficient to justify all manner of new regulations and taxes. The *Wall Street Journal* put the issue in these terms:

The response from the defenders of Mr. Mann and his circle has been that even if they did disparage doubters and exclude contrary points of view, theirs is still the best climate science. The proof for this is circular. It's the best, we're told, because it's the most-published and most-cited—in that same peer-reviewed literature. The public has every reason to ask why they felt the need to rig the game if their science is as indisputable as they claim.⁴

1 Chad Pergram, "White House Crashers Won't Testify, Could Face Subpoenas," FOXNews.com. 2 Dec. 2009. Available at <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/12/02/white-house-crashers-wont-testify-face-subpoenas/>.

2 Seth Borenstein, "Obama Science Advisers Grilled over Hacked E-mails," Associated Press. 2 Dec. 2009. Available at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9CBFB901&show_article=1.

3 Diane Macado, "Comedy Central Scoops Network News on Climate-Gate Scandal," FOXNews.com. 2 Dec. 2009. Available at <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,578990,00.html>.

4 "Rigging a Climate 'Consensus,'" *Wall Street Journal*. 27 Nov. 2009. Available at http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703499404574559630382048494.html?mod=googlenews_wsj.

My purpose this morning is certainly not to get into politics but to show that hiding or covering up issues is a very bad sign. If we hide, if we refuse to answer questions honestly, then we are attempting to deceive others and are most likely deceiving ourselves.

After Adam and Eve sinned, they hid. God had called to Adam, and Adam had responded and made a partial admission; but a partial admission is not enough. God wants the full truth.

God knows the heart. Here He draws the truth out of Adam so that Adam can see it and recognize it for himself. As God draws a response from Adam regarding his actions, we find that Adam has, in his own mind, turned the blame for his actions on Eve and ultimately to God Himself. Let's return to Genesis 3 and look at verses 11 and 12:

And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

Adam responds by passing the blame to the woman. Sure, she'd eaten first; but Adam had knowingly eaten as well. A simple "Yes" would have been the best answer. Adam, however, doesn't want to own the problem fully. He passes the blame on to his wife.

In doing so, however, he also passes the blame along to God: "The woman *whom thou gavest* to be with me." What an insult! He's really saying two things here: first, God has some blame in this, and second, Adam would have been better off without the woman. He regrets that God made her and gave her to be with him.

Do you see how sin destroys? It entered into and warped the relationship of the man and his wife. He had followed her into sin out of love for her; but in this statement, he shows that his heart now rejects her because of that very sin. He had committed the sin thinking it would keep them together; but it actually has the opposite effect! They become *separated*.

There is a lesson here for all of us. Sin cannot accomplish anything good, as it often promises to do. Young people today are told over and over again in movies and music that true love incorporates sinful acts; that true love is enhanced by lust. I mean, I can't watch cartoons with my kids without seeing commercials for other shows in which teenagers are lip wrestling. Nothing could be further from the truth, because sin disrupts true love.

So, Adam effectively says, "It's the woman's fault that I ate; in fact, you should never have given her to be with me." You may think it's a little extreme to blame God for problems in life, but if you think about it, what are we doing whenever we complain? When we grumble and grouse and carry on, we're really saying, "God, what You have given me isn't very good." God takes that seriously! You can read Exodus through Deuteronomy about the dealings He had with the children in of Israel in the desert when they grumbled. You can read what Paul has to say about grumblers in Romans 1:21:

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Also see II Timothy 3:2-4:

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers,

disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

That's quite a list of offenses, and *unthankfulness* is right there in the middle. Adam, in his newly sinful condition, discovered how to grumble against God's vast goodness, and against the very things God Himself had declared to be *very good*.

Let's continue:

And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

In a sense, Eve was right: the serpent *did* beguile her. The serpent told her something that was not true. However, that fact cannot excuse her. She did know God's truth and she strayed from it. She has no one to blame but herself. We might say something along these lines: "Well, okay, I did that; but it's not really my fault. I couldn't help it!" We sort of see the opposite argument from Adam here: whereas Adam had blamed God, Eve blamed the serpent. In one case, God's goodness wasn't good enough; in the other, the serpent's temptation was just too strong. And so again we see ourselves in this passage: we'll blame God, blame the devil, blame anyone--except ourselves!

God's judgment is four-fold because there are four parties involved in the sin.

And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: (Gen. 3:14).

First, God speaks to the serpent. Francis Schaeffer says,

First, he speaks to the serpent who has been used by Satan: "And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above [*from among*] all cattle, and above [*from among*] every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life" (v. 14). As we shall see, all nature becomes abnormal yet the serpent is singled out in a special way "from among all cattle."⁵

I don't want to spend too much time discussing this verse, but some issues need to be addressed. First, God did physically alter the serpent as a part of the Curse. It is impossible to imagine now what the original serpent was like; but the descendants that we see today are still crawling, still testing the dust with their tongues. Elsewhere in the Bible, crawling shows degradation (Lev. 11:42) and the eating of dust shows despair (Micah 7:17). Even though the serpent was a dumb brute used by Satan, its cursed form is meant to remind us of the effects of sin. John Chrysostom remarked, "*Just as a loving father when punishing the murderer of his son, might snap in two the sword or dagger with which the murder had been committed.*"⁶

Second, God speaks to Satan in verse 15. We'll come back to this in another sermon. This statement deserves all kinds of special attention.

Third, God speaks to the woman.

⁵ Francis Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984), p. 93.

⁶ For these thoughts and for a fuller explanation, see "What about the Snake in the Garden of Eden?" by Mike Kruger. Available at <http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs/268.asp>.

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee (Gen. 3:16).

The curse pronounced to the woman is two-fold. Her sorrow will be multiplied as her fertility is increased. She will have many, many children; and children infected with the taint of sin, living in a world of death, will bring sorrow. If there had been no curse, she would have gone on living forever and she would probably have had very few children over the course of time. All of her children would have lived perfect lives in perfect health. But now her life span is shortened; she must have many children in order to populate the world against the advances of age and death. She will die, and her many, many children will die. While her children live, she will see in them the same rebellion that she introduced into this world; she will see in them the sickness and death that she introduced to a perfect universe. Oh, what a heaviness, what a grief, is an erring child or a sick child to the heart of a mother!

But there is more. In a world of sin, there must be a social order. Someone must be in charge at every level of organization, from family to city to nation. In a world tainted by sin, there can be no pure democracy, no anarchy, no ideal form of Communism (The adage “From each according to his ability; to each according to his need” just doesn’t work in a sinful world). God’s chosen order in the family is that the man will be the leader. That doesn’t mean God established some kind of slavery or servitude of the woman and the dominance of unaccountable man; not at all! What we actually find in the Bible is that the man leads the woman based on his self-sacrificing love for her, “even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Ephesians 5:25). In a sin tainted world, we can expect that this marriage relationship will be stretched and strained and broken; but we can know what God’s pattern is, and we will find our lives richer and fuller if we will abide by it.

When God pronounced to Adam and Eve the penalties of the curse, He took a moment to establish order in the family unit. The order is that the man is the leader--not the woman, and not the children. What we are seeing more and more these days is that both the father and the mother abdicate leadership in the home. The *children* will rule if the parents don’t, and when that happens, when we step outside of God’s pattern, we will be miserable. The parents are miserable and the children are miserable. There’s room for much, much more discussion on this subject, but no time for it today!

That brings us to the fourth pronouncement from God, this time to the man:

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow [“toil” is a better word here] shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Because of man’s sin, as indicated by the phrase “for thy sake,” the world becomes abnormal. Whereas there was *work* before the Fall, work which was dignified, significant, and perfectly suitable to human enjoyment, now there will be *toil*. Gathering food and providing a living will become heavy labor; and the man will bear much of the force of this curse. That’s not to say women won’t work, haven’t worked, shouldn’t work, can’t work, or anything like that; nor is it diminishing the importance of the woman’s work; it’s just pointing to the fact that in an agricultural society it should generally fall on the men to do the heavy lifting. A woman who would forcibly take the man’s role here would be putting herself under a double curse--her own as well as the man’s. It’s not forbidden but it doesn’t seem like a very good idea to me.

But the fact is, *work* wouldn't be *toil* except for the fact that the world is abnormal. The greatest abnormality of all, though, is reserved to the end. I turn again to Francis Schaeffer:

The results are twofold. First, man shall have his food (and all else) by the sweat of his brow. Second, there is an end to this--and end which is not a release. The end is the greatest abnormality in the external world--the dissolution of the total man. A time will come at the end of each man's life when he physically dies and the unity of man--the unity of body and soul--is torn asunder... This is the second kind of death brought about by the Fall, the first being immediate separation from fellowship with God and the third being eternal death as men are judged in their rebellion and separated from God forever.⁷

We can see that because of sin, we live in an abnormal world. The world isn't as it should be. Some people look at the evil in this world and say, "There is so much suffering that there can't possibly be a good Being responsible for this universe." But that statement in itself recognizes the fact of evil; and we can only recognize evil if there is also something good to which to compare. In other words, we recognize that things are *not* right because we instinctively know that *there must be a right way for things to be*. The Fall is the only answer to this dilemma. Yes, there is evil in this world. The world is not as it *should* be. It's abnormal.

Schaeffer rightly points out four levels of separation that result from the Fall. First, man is separated from God. We do not have the fellowship with Him that we are intended to have, and therefore we do not fulfill the purpose for which we are created--to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength and mind. Second, man is separated from himself. We have fears and self-deceit; we try to pass blame that belongs to us; and at death, our souls are separated from our bodies until the resurrection. Third, man is separated from other men and women. You see it right here in this account: sin came between the man and his wife, as we discussed. Soon it will separate brother from brother, as Cain kills Able. We see in the chapters after that a separation of the godly line and the ungodly line of humanity; and then we see more separation at Babel. Down through the years, this separation of man from man has caused untold suffering through warfare, slavery, betrayals, and all manner of evil. Finally we see the separation of man from nature. Man was made to be sovereign over nature, but now it is not so. While there is much in the natural world that is still very beautiful, there are also many threats: poisons, savagery, and even germs. The ground does not yield all it should without hard labor.⁸

An old preacher once said, "Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay." The prices of sin in this original Fall are tremendous: toil, pain, many levels of separation, and three kinds of death: separation from fellowship with God in the present, separation from the physical body in the future, and absolute separation from God for all eternity. The universe itself is now twisted and abnormal, not how God originally made it in its "very good" state.

For all that, man is still man, made in God's image. Yes, the image is twisted and marred now, but man is still significant and valuable in the eyes and heart of God. God Himself will redeem mankind by taking on Himself of the curse of death. That is why we must come back to verse 15 later, because in that verse we see a glimmer of hope, the first promise of a Redeemer--the first mention of the first Christmas.

⁷ Schaeffer, p. 97.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 98-100.