

From Eden to Calvary

By Al Felder

“¹⁴And 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 thou shalt eat all the days of thy life: ¹⁵And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. ¹⁶Unto 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. ¹⁷And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast harkened 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 shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; ¹⁸Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; ¹⁹In 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.” (Genesis 3:14-19)

What a tragedy we read about here in the Word of God! Prior to this event, we find that the world was a paradise and God had given Adam and Eve dominion over all the earth. At this time, all of man's needs were supplied for him. He did not know the pain of death, and he lived in close contact with God. His relationship with God depended on faith and obedience. God gave Adam a command and he expected him to obey. When he chose to disobey God, Adam essentially removed God's standard and made one of his own. As a result, God's paradise became a place of pain, suffering, and death.

If this were the end of the story it would be tragic indeed, but within these verses we find a promise given by God. It is the promise of a redeemer. God foretold of a descendant of the woman who would deliver a crushing blow to the serpent and defeat him. We know of this redeemer as Christ the Son of God. His mission to redeem man led Him to the cruel cross of Calvary. Thus we have two very important periods of man's history, Eden and Calvary. For just a little while we would like to consider the significance of these events.

There are a number of things that I find interesting as we look at the events of Eden. First of all, the Bible teaches that it was the woman who was deceived by Satan. *“And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”* (1 Timothy 2:14) Now I don't know about you, but I find this to be extremely sad. The woman whom God created to be a helper who is meet for the man ended up leading him into sin.

I'm sure that we can all think of a time in our life where our actions had a negative effect on someone else. It makes you feel bad doesn't it? Once you realize that something you did led someone else to sin. It's certainly not a good feeling. I can only image how Eve felt as the realization of her actions began to set in. Yet, we find within this account God's great

mercy. Yes, the woman was deceived, but it would be through the woman's seed that redemption would be made possible.

Second, I find it interesting that prior to sin, there was no death in the world. ¹⁶*And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: ¹⁷But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*" (Genesis 2:16, 17) The phrase "thou shalt surely die" literally means dying thou shalt die. In other words, once Adam and Eve sinned they began to die.

Notice what God said after he addressed the serpent, the woman, and Adam. ²²*And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and shalt take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: ²³Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.*" (Genesis 3:22, 23) God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden so they would not be able to eat from the tree of life and continue to live.

In the New Testament we find that death is an enemy. ²⁵*For He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*" (1 Corinthians 15:25, 26) Death is an enemy because it is not natural. Originally death did not exist within God's creation, it was brought in as a consequence of sin.

Why did God make death a consequence of man's sin? Well, as a result of sin man is now in a state of rebellion against God. Could you imagine an eternity in that state? Without death, Adam and every person that has ever walked the face of this earth would still be living an eternal life of separation from God due to sin.

Without death there can be no redemption. *"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."* (Hebrews 9:22) In order for sins to be remitted there must be shedding of blood. This involves the death of the sacrifice. Under the Old Testament this involved the many animal sacrifices that were a type of Christ. They pointed forward to His redeeming work and provided a temporary solution to man's problem, but they were insufficient to provide the complete remedy for sin.

Notice the following verses from the book of Hebrews:

⁵*Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared for me: ⁶In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. ⁷Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do they will O God. ⁸Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; ⁹Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God, He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. ¹⁰By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*" (Hebrews 10:5-10)

Under the Law of Moses there was an endless line of animal sacrifices. Year after year thousands of animals were sacrificed and they were all inadequate. All they could do was roll the sins forward to the next year, but each year there was a remembrance of sin and the sacrifices had to be made again. Also, the priest making the sacrifice had to make one for himself as well because he too was guilty of sin. All of these things were insufficient and temporary.

Why couldn't the blood of bulls and goats take away sins? The Bible gives us that answer within our passage from Hebrews. In order for sins to be remitted it was necessary for a man who had perfectly obeyed God to willingly give his life as a sacrifice for others. As we read in the Bible this was something that no man could do because all had sinned. Thus, Christ came into this world. He took upon Himself the form of a man. He experienced life as we do. He was tempted and tried, but He did not sin. Finally, He offered Himself as a sacrifice that whosoever will might be redeemed. *"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."* (Hebrews 5:9) He made a way for all those who will obey Him.

Third, as we consider these two periods in man's history, we find something very important regarding Adam and Christ. *"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come."* (Romans 5:14) The Bible states that Adam was a figure or type of Christ. A type is a person, place, or thing in the Old Testament that points forward to something superior in the New Testament. It is the equivalent of looking at a person's shadow verses looking at the actual person. One is superior to the other.

Adam, the Bible states, was a type of Christ. There were some things about Adam that pointed forward to Christ. They were a representation of the glorious work that would be done by Christ. There are a few of these typical aspects between Adam and Christ that we would like to recognize at this time.

Both Adam and Christ had a supernatural beginning. *"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."* (Genesis 2:7) God made Adam from the dust of the ground. *"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost."* (Matthew 1:18) Christ was born unto a virgin fulfilling the promise that God had made in regard to the seed of the woman defeating the devil.

Adam is the head of the physical family of man and Christ is the head of the spiritual family.

⁴⁵*And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.* ⁴⁶*Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.* ⁴⁷*The first man is of the earth: the second man is the Lord from*

heaven. ⁴⁸As is the earthly, such are they also that are earthly: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” (1 Corinthians 15:45-48)

As we consider this point we must be careful not to go further than what the scriptures teach. Basically, the Bible presents two ways as represented by Adam and Christ. One is a way that leads to death and one is a way that leads to life. The Bible does not teach that man is born a sinner because of Adam any more than it teaches that all men are saved because of Christ.

All men share the consequence of Adam’s sin, life in a world tainted by sin and physical death. Guilt, on the other hand, is a different matter. *“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”* (Ezekiel 18:20) Nothing in the comparison of Adam and Christ implies that we are guilty of sin because of Adam any more than it implies that we are automatically made righteous because of Christ. Both Adam and Christ are representatives of two ways and we must choose which one we will follow.

Adam slept an unnatural sleep, his side was opened, and from this he received a bride. ²¹*“And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; ²²And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.”* (Genesis 2:21, 22) Christ too slept an unnatural sleep (death), had His side opened (pierced with a spear while on the cross), and from this he received a bride. *“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”* (Acts 20:28) Just as Adam had one bride, Christ has one bride, the Church.

The Bible teaches that Christ is the head of the Church and that it is His body. ²²*“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to be the church, ²³Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.”* (Ephesians 1:22, 23) If the Church is the body of Christ as the scriptures teach, a logical question would be how many bodies does Christ have? *“There is one body.”* (Ephesians 4:4) The Bible makes it plain that there is one body and one Church.

Many people put down on the Church and say that it isn’t important. Such an idea did not come from the word of God. As we read a little while ago, the scriptures teach that Christ purchased the Church with His blood. Also, it is only in the Church that one can be reconciled to God. *“And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.”* (Ephesians 2:16) What is that one body? It is the Church as we have already pointed out. Whoever teaches that there is more than one Church or that the Church is unimportant is not teaching the Bible.

Finally, Adam disobeyed God, but Christ was obedient. Through Adam sin was brought into the world along with all of its consequences. The main consequence dealt with is death as

we have discussed throughout this lesson. Christ brings life. *“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”* (1 Corinthians 15:22) The context of this verse is dealing with the resurrection of the dead. Because of sin entering into the world through Adam, all men die a physical death. Because of the resurrection of Christ, all men will be resurrected from the dead. This, as the Bible teaches, will take place at the end when God judges all.

The Biblical comparison of Eden and Calvary is a comparison of two ways. *“¹³Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: ¹⁴Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”* (Matthew 7:13, 14) The question that remains for you today is which one will you chose? Will you chose the way of Adam or of Christ?