

Genesis 3:20-24: Consequences For God And Man

Sin Separates From God

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It does not take a long study to determine that the churches of God differ from other Christian churches on several points, not just one. For instance, there is the Sabbath. We keep a different day of worship than anybody else out there in nominal Christianity. And, of course, we go even further. We keep the holy days—the annual Sabbaths—too, which most people do not keep. Everybody thinks we are Jewish because we keep the Saturday Sabbath and the ‘Jewish’ holy days.

Of course, there is the fact that we do not keep Christmas and Easter. I could also add in there Valentine’s Day and Halloween, which also have ‘Christian’ backgrounds to them—‘Saint Valentine’s Day’ and ‘All Hallows’ Eve’ co-opted by the church in the Middle Ages or the Dark Ages (earlier than that) as Christian festivals. So we do not do that.

A little bit of digging finds that we do not believe that God is a trinity. We do not believe that the Holy Spirit is a person. We believe that the Holy Spirit *is*, but we do not believe that it is a separate person, three-in-one with the Father and the Son.

We do not believe that once we die, we go to either heaven or to hell. Most people probably think they are going to go to hell because of the life they have led.

We do not believe that we have an immortal soul, like the Christian churches of this world do, nor do we believe that this is the only day of salvation. You have all these churches out there scurrying to make sure that everybody in all seven continents hears the name of Jesus so that they will have an opportunity for salvation. Now for those who are called, this is *the* day of salvation, but it is not necessarily the day of salvation for everyone. Each has a day of salvation of his own in God’s own time.

And, of course, we do not believe in the doctrine of eternal security—that once we are saved by the blood of Christ we are always saved and we get a free pass for the rest of our lives. We do not believe that. We believe that one must continue in God’s way of life and show repentance and growth in character and produce fruit, and that God will work with us along the way and give us salvation.

There are other things beside that. I have just hit many of the big ones.

Our differences from other Christians set us apart. It really makes us look different. Many would say that it makes us look weird, and many shy away from us because they do not want to look weird either in the eyes of the world. So they reject us. Some of them say, “You’re heretics. You don’t believe the doctrines of the church.” Others say that we are a cult. When Mr. Armstrong was around, it was always “That Jim Jones-like figure, Herbert Armstrong, who was going to take us all down into South America, in the jungle somewhere, and feed us Kool-Aid.” It is not that way at all. We know from the inside that it is much different from that because we believe that we stand on solid biblical ground on these doctrines where we differ from other Christians.

I want to take some time to explain one of these doctrinal differences that has something to do with the ground I am going to cover later on. This doctrine is one that most churches teach, especially the

Protestant churches, but we do not agree with it completely—there are parts of it that we do agree with, but we go in different directions at a certain point—and that is the doctrine of Original Sin. For one thing, Adam's sin was not the original sin; it was the sin of Satan the Devil (who knows how long before) that set the stage for Adam's sin. But, for them, the explanation begins with Adam's sin, so that is where we will begin as well.

I am going to follow the Westminster Larger Catechism and how they explain this to their young people—the people just coming into the church—so we can take this step-by-step and see where we agree and where we disagree.

The Westminster Larger Catechism is a Calvinist document. It is used by a lot of Presbyterian and Covenanter churches. So it is very much a Calvinist approach. I am going to start with one of the answers, which is basically the answer to 'What is the Fall?' or 'How did it all happen?'

Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, through the temptation of Satan, transgressed the commandment of God in eating the forbidden fruit; and thereby fell from the estate of innocence wherein they were created.

So far so good. We would agree with that. That is what the Bible shows. God made the man and the woman. They were pure and innocent. And while they were alone in the Garden, Satan found them in the guise of a serpent and talked to them, and they fell from that state of innocence by eating the forbidden fruit. So that tracks pretty well with what the Bible says.

The next question in the catechism is 'Did all mankind fall in that first transgression?' So here is the answer:

The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.

We can agree with that in terms of the fact that there is a common biblical motif that says that an ancestor can act for his posterity. This is even used in the New Testament. In Hebrews 7, Paul argues that when Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek, Aaron (sons of Levi) essentially gave tithes to Melchizedek by being in the loins of Abraham.

What this is does is—and this is the argument that Paul eventually gets to—because Aaron's priesthood came after Melchizedek's, and through Abraham Aaron's priesthood gave tithes to Melchizedek, Melchizedek's priesthood is greater than Aaron's priesthood because the lesser always gives that sort of tribute to the greater.

Here we have one of these things where Abraham and Levi—or Aaron—was separated by almost ten generations. So Levi was not actually there—or Aaron was not there (even another generation or two on)—but he was symbolically there because he would eventually come from Abraham. So there is this idea, theme, motif in the Bible that an ancestor acts for his posterity.

So, from that point of view, we can agree with what it says here that we fell with Adam in that first transgression because he was our representative. As a matter of fact, *he and Eve were mankind* and

they both sinned. But Adam was the one that was not deceived, so to him was attributed the transgression. All of us sinned in Adam because if we were there, faced with the same choices, we would have done the same thing.

So we can agree with original sin in that way, that Adam, being our representative, did what a typical man or woman would have done anyway. We would all have sinned in the same way that Adam sinned. At least, naturally, we do not have any smarts or advantages that Adam did not have. As a matter of fact, he was smarter than us; he was pure and healthy; he was new; he had all his brain working where we do not; and he was much more qualified to make that decision than we would have been—and he made the wrong decision. So humanity was put under sin in that way by his sin.

The next question: ‘Into what estate did the Fall bring mankind?’ The answer is:

The Fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

That is true—it did. It made mankind sinful, and it is a state that we have not kicked even yet.

The catechism goes on to define that state this way:

As bereft of man’s original righteousness and as corrupt, making humanity “utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually; which is commonly called original sin, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions.”

Calvinists call this the doctrine of total depravity. If I can put it in my own words, “Man is altogether wicked and every inclination is to do evil.” You are bad. Evil. There is nothing good in you.

We believe, because the Bible says so in Jeremiah 17:9, that the heart is desperately wicked, and we believe, because the Bible says so in Romans 3:23, that all men have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Those are givens. But that does not discount that man is a mixture of good and evil.

The Calvinists here have made us so bad that it is almost like we are totally irredeemable and incorrigible. But we have to remember the quality of the fruit that they ate. Notice what the Bible says, that they took the forbidden fruit which was from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. So it is not that we became totally evil, totally depraved, but we do good as well as evil—we are a mixture.

Jesus calls us evil. He does that in Matthew 7 where He is talking about ask, seek, knock. But in the same breath He says we can give good gifts to our children. So we are evil, but we have the ability to do some good.

In Romans 2:14, Paul says that apart from God, even the Gentiles follow a moral code in their consciences. They know the laws—the way Paul put it. It is there. It is a part of them that they do not kill, they do not steal, they do not lie. They know that those things are bad. And so they make their own laws against those things. They understand that people, in order to get along, to live in a community, have to abide by certain rules, certain moral laws so that they will keep on living.

If your every inclination was to do evil, and everybody else’s inclination was to do evil all the time—we were wholly corrupt, there was no good in us whatsoever—we would live in hell on earth, if we

were even alive. So our nature is not necessarily as depraved as the Calvinists put it. There is ability for us to do some good. Because we are flesh, we are inclined to be selfish and we tend toward the evil end of the spectrum.

But if you look at mankind, those who have never heard the way of God run the spectrum. There are Hitlers on one end and there are Mother Teresas on the other end. They are all carnally either good, neutral, bad, or evil. Now they all tend toward evil. But even Hitler was fond of children and puppies.

So we are cut off from God when we sin, and we have a nature that is on the evil end of the spectrum. But it is not quite so bad as the Calvinists tend to put it. In my study of Calvin over the years, I have come to understand him to have been just a harsh man—at least the way he came across in his doctrine.

Did you note that when I talked about the state of man, the last thing that was stated there is that all transgressions come or proceed from original sin? It says this state “is commonly called original sin, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions.” That is an interesting thing. All of our sins proceed from what Adam did, and I guess you could see there could be a connection there. The reason for this assertion appears in the answer to the next question.

Original sin is conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity by natural generation, so as all that proceed from them in that way are conceived and born in sin.

We are starting to get to a part of the Doctrine of Original Sin that we have some problems with. What this means (the language is a little bit archaic), what they said there, if you did not really pick it up, is that the taint of sin descends to us through blood, or genes, or some sort of biological process. That is what “natural generation” means. By the coming of a man and a woman together—an egg and a sperm—and nine months later a baby comes out, he is stained already by sin.

You would think, “Where did they get this?” Was somebody just sitting up on a mountain somewhere and dreaming this up? But, no, they actually have scriptures that they back it up with. It was kind of interesting when I was studying this how few scriptures they had to back up a lot of these assertions. But I want to go through five scriptures that they use for this.

Let us start in Genesis 6. This is where they get that man is totally evil. We will just pick the one verse out. Remember, Genesis 6 is where God looks down and sees men are just totally evil and He says “I’ve got to send a flood.” And this is what they pick out there.

Genesis 6:5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Did you notice there where it said that everybody was born in sin? No, it is not there. It does say that at this particular time, before the Flood, people’s minds were so totally corrupt that all they wanted to do was sin. They were out there to do evil.

But if we would go to the New Testament, Jesus said that that was an unusual time and it will not get that way again until right before the end. He says as it was in the days of Noah, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. So our own Savior tells us that the state of man is not like this all the time. There are some times when the state of man is not wholly corrupt and all they want to do is evil continually. There are times when men are better than at other times, at least in their outward

behavior, and so this was a low point in man's depravity and it was very bad. But it does not say that we have original sin, not in the way they put it.

Let us go to the book of Job. They always accuse us of proof-texting, and it is amazing how many proof texts they use. Remember, they said that 'original sin is conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity by natural generation.' That is the point they are trying to prove and these are the scriptures that they give for that.

Job 14:4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one!

So, since Adam and Eve sinned, I guess that made them unclean, then there could be no clean thing brought out, and I guess they are saying that the unclean thing that is brought out is the child. Pretty sketchy, if you ask me. Of course, they just picked this right out of the context.

Job 15:14 What is man, that he could be pure? And he who is born of a woman, that he could be righteous?

I understand that. That is a true thing. But this does not say that they were born sinful. All it says is that a person born into this world is going to be a sinner. That is just the way it is. It does not say they were born in sin or that they were even conceived in sin.

Now the next one is trickier. Let us go to Psalm 51—David's psalm of repentance. He is coming before God asking for forgiveness—he wants to be white as snow—and he is explaining to God what life is like.

Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.

That sounds like original sin, does it not? It seems like it is the clincher. But that is not what that verse says. It does say "I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me," but this does not say that David was sinful.

What the first part says is that when he was born, his entire world was sinful. The environment was sinful. He was brought forth into a world of sin, a world of iniquity.

The second part says that his mother was a sinner when she conceived him. It does not say that he was a sinner, or that he had sinned. All it says is that she was a sinner, but it does not say that she transmitted that sin to him. It was just her state at the time of his conception.

So this does not say what they think it says or they want to *make it say*. It is a bit tricky here, I know; it almost says that, but it does not really. That is what they read into it.

This one, I thought, was the funniest of the three that they chose to prove—John 3. This is the born-again chapter. They use verse 5.

John 3:5-6 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Proves it, does it not? All it says is that a human being produces after its kind and a fleshly person (meaning a carnal person; a person made of physical matter) is going to produce a being that is also physical and made of flesh. I just thought that one was silly. I had a good laugh inside.

So none of these verses say that we are inherently sinful at birth or at our conception. They read into it, but it is not there. Now after you stop laughing at all these, they finally give you Romans 5:12 as the lynchpin for their argument, but it is a rusty lynchpin. It will not hold.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.

Death spread to everyone through the sin of Adam. What we want to look at here are the words “because all sinned.” This was a very foundational scripture when the church fathers, whoever they were, came up with the doctrine of original sin. This was centuries ago, way back in the dim recesses of Christianity back in the third century or so. Guess what Bible they were using at the time. Do you think they were using the New King James? Doubt it?

As a matter of fact, the Bible that was in use at the time, they had even, at this point, gotten away from using the Greek and many of them were using the Latin translation. And the Latin has been known to not have been a good translation, and it comes out right here in Romans 5:12.

That phrase “because all sinned” is actually a modern correction of the Latin text because the Latin text did not say that. “Because all sinned” is fine; “inasmuch as all sinned” is also a very good translation because that is what the Greek says (it is *enho* meaning ‘because’ or ‘inasmuch’). So that is good.

But the Latin translator, for some reason, did not translate it that way as ‘because.’ I do not know why. I wonder if there was some inspiration there—not of the godly kind—to make this change. The Latin translator wrote in there, not ‘because all sinned,’ which would mean that they followed his example, but he wrote in there ‘in whom all sinned.’ And that changes the meaning—that we all sinned in Adam, and so we are all tainted by that sin by natural generation.

Notice what the *New Interpreters’ Dictionary of the Bible* says about this:

That translation provided a scriptural basis for a conception of original sin automatically transmitted to all Adam’s descendants. Paul does not articulate such a theory.

That commentator is absolutely correct. That is not what Paul was getting at.

There are other ways to look at this and to show that it is not right. We could go through Ezekiel 18. That is the chapter that talks about “the soul that sins shall die.” The entire theme of that chapter is that God does not impute sin to anyone other than the person who committed it. It is not transferable from one person to another.

So if the father is a sinner but the son is righteous, the father will die in his sins but the son will get his reward. And if his son ends up being a sinner, that does not make the man in the middle there—

the son—a bad person; it does not rub off on him. But the grandson will certainly have to pay for his sins. So there is no transferring of sin in those three generations there. The father, the son, and the grandchild do not share sin.

Now the consequences of sin might be shared. The original man's sins might affect down the line because it is just the consequence of his sins. Bad things happen when people sin, but the guilt itself does not transfer. It is a fairly simple idea to understand and it just cuts the understanding of original sin, as they put it out there, right at its knees. It just does not stand after that.

Finally, this doctrine of original sin forces these theologians to do mental theological gymnastics because they have to make an exception for Jesus—because Jesus was born without sin. Sin never touched Him until God put the sins of the world on Him. So how do you account for that?

Well, then you have to mess with Mary and say she had an immaculate conception and she was sinless too, and make her a part of the godhead pretty much and pray to her because she is so special. You see what they are doing there, they are finding that “Oh, this doesn't fit. What are we going to do?” And so they have to go around and make some changes and say “Well, Jesus is an exception.”

It is awfully more consistent to believe that all men are born with a neutral nature inclined toward sin due to the fact that we are fleshly, and our carnality tends to satisfy itself. I mean, we start out as little babies, crying, being fed, and clothed. We want all these things done to ourselves and that just continues on through life where we expect the sun to shine on us at all times. So the sin that we do is because we are fleshly. It is not because we have inherited it from anybody in our past, even going back to Adam and Eve.

Let us not discount the fact that Satan is shown in Ephesians 2 to be broadcasting his evil spirit, his way of doing things, to the whole world and our mental and spiritual faculties are tuned into that from an early age. Not only that, we come out of the womb, as David was remarking there in Psalm 51, into a world of sin. Our mothers and fathers have sin, our sisters and brothers have sin, our teachers have sin, our friends on the playground have sin; and it rubs off because pretty soon we sin, too. It is not a matter of inheritance; it is a matter of just the way we are.

Like I said originally, if we were all there in the Garden, faced with the same choices that Adam had, we would have done the same. So we are all guilty, we have all sinned, but it is not because it is in our blood. It is not because we have any kind of original sin in us. It is because Satan is out there, it is a sinful world, and because we are made of flesh; and all that works together to make us sinful people.

When we finished the last sermon, with the pronouncement of God's judgment oracle on Adam saying that he would be there in the field working and toiling all his life and die in the traces essentially, right there in the middle of the row, and have to be buried and go back to the soil, humanity stood at that point at the foundation of this sinful world, a world marked by pain and struggle, travail and contention, and futility and destruction and death. That is what Adam and Eve had to look forward to after what God had said would be the consequences of sin upon them.

But it was not all bad. God had also spoken of offspring and He had spoken of a Savior, One that would crush the head of Satan, and this, amidst all that bad news, offered a little bit of hope. There was something good to live for amidst all that. There was a ray of sunshine under the clouds.

So today we are going to finish Genesis 3. We are going to see the final consequences of sin as they play out in this chapter, and we are going to see hope shine through.

Genesis 3:20 [After hearing what God had to say about his sins] Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

At first, this appears to be a non sequitur ('non sequitur' in Latin means 'does not follow'). So this does not seem to follow what is said before. God says, "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" and Adam turns around and says, "I am going to call you Eve because you are the mother of all living."

But it is not really a non sequitur because what it shows is that Adam was thinking.

Adam was not just taking this pronouncement from God and being shell-shocked. I think he was obviously hurt. He knew that this pronouncement was a very terrible thing, and that he would have to go through a great deal of struggle and toil, and that he would die. But he was thinking too about what had been said. What did God say?

In all of these pronouncements, there was something else that was not quite so bad, and he reached out and caught that and grabbed on to that idea as a bit of hope. God had thrown them a rope: They were not going to die—not yet.

What he is referring to here is what God had said in Genesis 3:15-16. In one of the verses, God said that the woman's seed would bruise the head of the serpent, and then in the second verse (verse 16), it says that "in pain you shall bring forth children" (plural).

So there was not just going to be one, but there were at least going to be two kids. They were going to be parents. They were going to live. It was going to take a while—God was not going to immediately pass sentence and they were going to die, not right there. There was hope. They were going to live for a while. There was going to be little Cain and little Abel—because it was plural. There was life.

And so he turns to the woman and says, "I'm going to give you a title. Did you hear what God said? You're going to be a mother. You're going to have kids. So I'm going to call you 'Eve' because that means you're the mother of all living. Everybody is going to come from you—whether it is two, thirty-five, or however many. Who knows how long we'll live, but we will have kids. We'll enjoy them while we have the time." So he gives the woman a title and it eventually becomes her personal name.

We call her Eve, and that is not wrong, but it is not what the Hebrew actually calls her (Eve is a lot better than what the Hebrew says). In the Hebrew it is *chava* and that sounds similar to the Hebrew word for 'life' which is *chaya*. So people think that that is the connection there, that he was giving her this name which means 'life bringer' or 'living' or something along that line. The Greek term would be *zoe*. But we did not get it in Greek, we got it in Hebrew; and then it came through Greek because they just transliterated it and it became *heua* and then Latin got a hold of it and it became *heva*; and then the Germanic languages got a hold of it and dropped the 'h' and it became *eva* or 'eve.' So that is how we got the name 'Eve.'

But the emphasis should be on ‘mother’ because that is the real sense of the name, that from her would come all that will live. She was the life-giver among humanity—she is the life-spring, we might say.

So Adam gave her that name in hope, yes, and even in faith in God’s Word, because God had said there was going to be a Savior and He was going to be the Seed of the woman since she was going to have a kid, and then He said that she would have children. So he was going to rely on that. He has faith in God’s Word that He will actually bring that to pass. He clings to this fact that God said that she would bring forth children; and, like I said, it would at least be two.

Not only that—not only would they have the kids—but the Savior probably would not be ready to kill the serpent till he is big. So maybe fifteen, twenty years until he is big enough to hold a club so he can crush the serpent’s head (maybe he was looking at this physically; I am sure he was). He was thinking “Okay, we’ve got a generation here to live. She’s not only going to bear them, but we’ll raise them too.” So he was thinking “God has given us hope for life that this is going to go longer than it seems.”

Because, you know, when God had said “Do not take of the tree,” He said, “In the day you eat thereof, you shall surely die.” I am sure that put the fear of God in them, literally, that they were going to die right away. But then God says this other thing that they were going to have kids and that takes a little time. So there is hope. There is life coming.

They knew death would come because God had promised that too (“In the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die”). God’s days must be different from our days. That means that they would begin the process of death from that point on. It was going to happen. They knew that death would come. It would hang over their whole lives. They would not know when it was going to come, but it was postponed for now. Death would come later.

Also we know that Adam did not die until 930 years later. He got to see lots of kids, grandkids, great grandkids, great great grandkids, and however many ‘greats’ there were. How many generations can you put up into 930 years?

When God had promised them kids, He was not kidding. Maybe millions that he could have seen—kids and grandkids and great grandkids and all those. So he was hanging on to a real hope there—a hope in life.

So we understand that under God, even in judgment, there is hope for life. Just pick up the principle that is there in Ecclesiastes 9.

Ecclesiastes 9:4 But for him who is joined to all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

Much better to be alive. Things can happen when you are alive. Solomon goes on to say that when you are in the grave, nothing happens. There is no device, no knowledge. You cannot think. You cannot talk. Nothing happens. You are dead. You go to the dust. There is nothing in death that is worth anything except to pay for sin. And so, being alive is good because when you are alive, things can change.

Along with looking forward to the woman's seed being the Savior (meaning, where there is life there is hope, while there is a chance of change, along with his looking forward to the Savior—that the Savior would come from the woman), what it shows is a type of the spiritual process that plays out even more profoundly in our Christian lives. Adam was going through all this physically and he was looking at physical life and physical children, meaning physical growth, but we have to look at this in terms of spiritual growth, spiritual life, and this plays out in our lives.

We know that our Redeemer lives—that is what Job said in Job 19:25—and we have the promise of the resurrection. We have the promise of life ahead of us. We know that forgiveness is there for us through Jesus Christ. We know that He wants to give us salvation and bring us into His Family because He wants brothers and sisters. The Father wants sons and daughters. So there is this holding out of hope of things coming into the future, of not only continued life, but *better* life. As Jesus said, He came to bring life more abundantly.

So there is this idea that we see here in Genesis 3 where these ideas are already beginning to come out in the text, that when we sin, in the same way as with Adam, God in mercy does not strike us down immediately—He gives us more life, He gives us time. What does He want to see?

Repentance. He wants us to see us changed to learn the lessons from the sins that we do. He postpones the penalty for us, just as He postponed the penalty for Adam, to give us time to repent. What this means is our turning back to God and our seeking His pardon allows Him to commute the sentence of eternal death through Christ's blood. That is how it works for us.

We know, just as Adam died after 930 years, all men must die. We *must* die. It says that very plainly in Hebrews 9:27 it is given to men once to die and after this the judgment. So we are all going to die, whether our sins are forgiven or not. That is just the way it is with human beings. The body wears out. God did not make us to be eternally physical. Physical people will die. But if we remain in Christ, then we have the promise of eternal life.

Let us go to John 11. This is the raising of Lazarus and something He says to Martha.

John 11:24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

She had the faith that there was going to be a resurrection and that Lazarus would be in it, but she did not really understand quite well enough. So Jesus says:

John 11:25-26 "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this? [It is a question for us.]"

Do you believe that though you die in this physical body, that you will never die in the resurrection? Do you believe that Christ's resurrection makes this possible for us?

Let us go to I Peter 1 where he states something very similar.

I Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

That is what is in store for us. Adam was looking forward to a physical life and children, but we are looking forward to something far grander. But God follows the same process. He gives us life, He gives us time to repent and get all the things that we need to do in this life before we die, and for us that is to grow in character and to be more like Him and His Son.

Let us go back to Genesis 3. That is pretty much enough on the idea that he called her Eve and why he did so. And this one seems to be an afterthought as well. Verse 21:

Genesis 3:21 Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.

How does this follow? It is almost as if the author is saying, “Oh man, that’s a loose end. They’re still in fig leaves. I better put them in clothes. Those fig leaves are scratchy.” So he says, ‘Whoa, God made them clothes of skins.’ But it is nothing as mundane as that. There is real meat here to understand why this is put in at this point. Adam realized that they were being left alive for a purpose, and it was not just because God was being nice; there were real lessons here. And this is one of them that God was driving home.

First, we want to notice the subject of the sentence. The subject here is ‘the Lord God.’ It is very important. What this shows here is that there is a change from verse 20 to 21. In verse 20, this was Adam and his reaction. Verse 21 is God’s reaction.

After all the pronouncement of the curses, this is what God decided to do first: The first thing He did is an act of creation. He does something personal Himself. He inserts Himself in this process. So He raises what He did to a higher plane. He could have said, “Angel #4367, make these kids some clothes.” But He did not say that. He did it Himself. He took it upon Himself to make their clothes from the very beginning of the process of killing a couple of animals, making wearable hides, and sewing them into tunics.

I do not think He got an angel to do it. I think He did it Himself as a lesson to them so that they could see that He was the prime mover in all of this. He was doing it because He wanted to help them. He was giving them a gift and He was also showing that the consequences of sin could only be corrected by His action. He had to be the One to make it happen.

What it stands for is God doing something for us on a spiritual level. And, as I said, it is something that God must do as a consequence of sin to correct the evil that is going on. If He does not do it, it does not happen. So He made them tunics of skin.

The Hebrew word for ‘tunics’ is *kuttonet*. The etymology of this word is actually interesting as it makes its way through language. Do you know what it is now in English? Cotton. Because these tunics eventually were mostly made of linen, and the word has come down to us as ‘cotton.’ But *kuttonet* means ‘coverings.’ It later became more specified as certain tunics, but the original word underneath it all is ‘a covering.’

So God made them coverings. This is the first hint that God is doing something more here than merely making them clothes. Let us go to Psalm 32. This is one of David’s psalms. Let us just pick out the first verse.

Psalm 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Psalm 85:2 You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people; You have covered all their sin. Selah

We do not need to go to all the other places where this concept is mentioned. But what we find is that sin, when it is forgiven, is said to be covered.

There is a covering for sin in the Old Testament that is not true forgiveness, but, ultimately, under Christ's blood, that covering is true forgiveness. We see this especially in the offerings on the Day of Atonement. Let us go to Leviticus 16 and pick this up. It is speaking of Aaron, the high priest.

Leviticus 16:5-10 And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering. Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house. He shall take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the Lord's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement upon it.

The important word here is 'atonement.' That is another one of those Hebrew words. This is *kaphar* and this word also means 'to cover' but it means 'to cover over.' If you remember the sermons that I did on Noah, this was the same word when God told Noah to cover the ark with pitch. It was a complete covering so nothing else can get in—no water could leak in and sink the ark. This is the same sort of covering—to cover it completely—so that it will be truly covered. And so, in making Adam and Eve coverings, God was covering their shame and guilt from sin. This looks forward to His providing atonement or propitiation for sin for us—for our sins.

If we go back to Genesis 3, we find that He made these tunics from skin, and obviously He means animal hides. He is not talking about human skin; He is talking about animals that He had to kill in order to get a skin from.

We cannot really say that this was a sacrifice. We do not know if this was anything like the sacrifices that God had Israel to do in time, although we know that Cain and Abel made sacrifices and God showed that Abel gave a lamb, which was the one that He accepted. Perhaps that is what happened here. This is where they learned about sacrifice. But there is nothing in the verse to say that is exactly what it was. But the important point in all of this is that an animal or animals had to die in order to donate their skins for these tunics.

What it means at its base is that a life was given—blood was shed—to provide a covering for them after their sin. However, Hebrews 10:4 reminds us that the blood of bulls and goats cannot really cover sin. It does not work that way because a human being is much more important than a cow or a sheep. The value is vastly different. A lesser thing cannot pay for a greater thing.

If you wanted to pay for a diamond ring with a shard of crystal, do you think the jeweler would take it? The shard of crystal might be pretty and all shiny, but it is not a diamond. The values are really far apart.

And so the blood of bulls and goats are not worthy enough to pay for a human sin. The only thing that would pay for a human sin is a human life, and the only thing that would pay for all human sin is

not only a human life but the human life of the Creator God, and that is what happened. That is what we know.

God, in covering Adam and Eve with the skin of a slain animal or two, was making a typical act looking forward to His own crucifixion. Way back here, He was setting the groundwork for understanding so that we would understand that from the very beginning this is how it had to be—that sin could only be paid for by a priceless gift of the life of the Creator God.

Not only did He tell them, in verse 15, that One would come to defeat the serpent, but here, in verse 21, He shows them how it would be accomplished. It would not be accomplished with a big brawny man striking the head of the snake. It would be accomplished by the Creator God Himself making a covering for sin through His own blood, through His own life, poured out for us.

Galatians 1:3-4 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.

I Peter 1:18-21 You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Do you know there is yet another point in Genesis 3:21? It does not just say that God made them tunics of skin. It goes on and says “and clothed them.” Is that not interesting? You might say, “Well, this is just Hebrew parallelism. They’re repeating it again for emphasis.” That may be true, but there is more to it because it not only repeats it but it raises it up a level.

The verse says not just that He made them tunics of skin, but He clothed them. The word ‘clothed’ there is *labash*. While it generally does mean ‘clothed,’ it has an important shade of meaning, and that is that the word can also suggest ‘array’ or ‘adorn.’ So not only did He cover them, He beautified them. He gave them a raiment. He gave them adornment.

Let us go to Isaiah 61 because this explains another part of the spiritual process. Because it is not good enough just for Jesus Christ to sacrifice His life. There has got to be more than that.

Isaiah 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation [this is the one I want here:], He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

So not only does He clothe them with animal skins, but He takes things one step further: He gives His life to atone for our sins and then He clothes us with His own righteousness.

I Corinthians 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

Also in Philippians 3, Paul says:

Philippians 3:8-9 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.

And so this image here, in Genesis 3:21, shows Christ not only giving His life but also giving us His righteousness, so that we can be reconciled to God, that we can come before God in a way that He will accept us pure and righteous because we have the righteousness of Jesus Christ, through His blood, covering us.

There is a lot crammed in here in just a few words; that He would, by grace, provide the way for forgiveness and justification; and by His righteousness, then, we can have life and a return to God and paradise.

But one of sin's consequences is that paradise is closed to us. Mankind, in its sinful state, cannot go back to paradise. That is what the next three verses are all about.

Genesis 3:22-24 Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"—therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

This has been the subject of many a painting and sculpture and frieze on a wall. It has captured the imagination of poets and artists down through time—because there is a longing in man to return to paradise. We want utopia. We want things to be better. We want even to have proximity, to be close to God—to the Divine. Solomon talks about God putting eternity in our hearts. There is a yearning there, a desire, for something better and long-lasting. But man continues to live in this present evil world. He continues to have to live in a society of corruption and death.

Verse 22 expresses God's reasons for expelling Adam and Eve from the Garden, and it is really simple. Although the language here is kind of difficult, the way it is put—it does not even seem like a complete sentence—but I think Jamieson, Fausset, & Browne gives us a pretty good idea of what the Hebrew means, especially in this first part where it says: "Behold, the man has become like one of Us" (and really it should probably be taken as an exclamation). So it is an exclamation of the disastrous effects of sin. It is like God saying, "This is horrible that man has descended to this state. When he had it all, he was like Us, and now look where he's fallen! Isn't it too bad? Isn't this terrible? And the disaster is that he has come to learn about good and evil through sin."

God wanted man at some point to learn the knowledge of good and evil, but he wanted mankind to learn it at His feet, however *God* would have taught it—and, of course, God would have emphasized the good and eliminated the negative. But that is not how it worked out. Man reached out for the knowledge of good and evil by himself and he did it through sin, and that just ruined everything.

Therefore God, for man's sake, to avoid an even worse disaster, has to kick Adam and Eve out of Eden and bar them from the Tree of Life. Because what could be worse than a sinful people being able to live forever, as they were, that they would be Satan all over again. So this was a mercy that

He kicked them out of the Garden of Eden. It undoubtedly felt like a punishment, but He was actually looking out for them even though it cut them off from God—and that was a mercy.

Let us go to a few scriptures. I am just going to go to the first one because the other ones say essentially the same thing.

Isaiah 59:1-3 Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perversity.

These and the other scriptures that I was going to give you all say the same thing: Our sin puts a barrier between us and God.

God is holy. He will not abide sin. He will have nothing to do with sin. And so when we sin, He turns from us because He cannot look on it. It is not just in Him to have anything to do with sin. And there can only be reconciliation then through the blood of Christ, which we have come under.

And so when we sin, we have access to Him because we have access through Christ (we have accepted Him as our Savior; we have accepted His blood as the sacrifice for our sin), and so we come before Him under His righteousness, God hears us and forgives us, and we are back reconciled with Him and in a relationship with Him. That is what happens when we seek forgiveness and repent of our sins.

But that does not happen for the rest of the world. They do not have the access to Him through the blood of Christ because they have not accepted it and it has not been offered to them.

What we see here is another one of those typical actions where God did something to show a spiritual reality that we cut ourselves off from God and all of His goodness through sin.

A note on God placing the cherubim: We find throughout the Bible cherubim are associated with God's presence or God's throne. Where the cherubim are, that is where God is. They go with Him wherever He goes. So the cherubim, here in Genesis 3 and just about everywhere else, stand for God's presence in a place. And so by kicking Adam and Eve out, they were put away from God's presence.

That they ward off all who approach is the first occurrence of the biblical motif that God is remote to man—that man cannot find Him by himself in this present sinful condition. We find it later when the high priest is the only one who could approach the mercy seat, and that only on the Day of Atonement.

That they have a sword, which is an implement of death, pictures another theme. First of all, that sin causes death, but also that you cannot look on God and live, not without an invitation.

That the sword turns every way shows that there are no secret entrances, no loopholes, no hidden keys of access to eternal life or access to God. It can only be one way and that is through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which was shown in Genesis 3:21.

So everything we see here in Genesis 3:22-24 suggests an impossibly wide gulf between sinful man and holy God because of sin. There is no possibility of a relationship with God where sin exists—not the relationship He wants. And He has only given access to Him to a very small number of people: Jesus' little flock. That is all for now. But, eventually, He will open it up to all. I mentioned 'day of salvation' before. Well, the little flock has their day now and the rest of the world will have it in the future in the resurrection.

Let us finish in Ephesians 2 where Paul kind of lays all this out in an easy-to-understand way.

Ephesians 2:1-7 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

So we can thank God for His calling, that He has begun the process in us to undo the consequences of our sins against Him and bring us into an eternal relationship with Him in His Kingdom.