



The Story of Salvation

Chapter 2 - Humans Shift Their Trust



Genesis 3-4:15

Adam and Eve were happy in every respect. They had the image of God; a blissful abode; dominion over all creatures; a clear and fully enlightened understanding; shared blessed communion with God; entire absence of anything that may be called an evil; no bodily ailment; etc. This was the truly happy condition of man in the Garden.

Then one day a voice spoke to Adam and Eve, probably from among the branches of the tree of knowledge. It was the devil in the form of a serpent. The hour of testing had come. “Has God said that you shall not eat of any tree in the garden,” the devil asked Eve. “Can it be that God has held back something from you? Is there an experience that He does not want you to share with Him?” The devil wanted to make Adam and Eve suspicious of God so they would begin to think Him unreasonable and to mistrust Him. Eve’s answer shows how well he succeeded in tempting.

“Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat,” Eve answered. And then she added, “Of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God has said, ‘You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” The addition, “Neither shall you touch it...” was an invention of Eve. She falsified God’s command. It signaled that she had come to the conclusion that the plain and simple Word of God was insufficient.

When the devil told her that by eating of the tree she would become as wise as God, knowing good and evil, Eve was not able to resist. She no longer trusted God who alone could help her. She ate of the fruit and gave it to her husband and he ate.

What began as community in the garden breaks by a shift in trust away from God and to a shifty serpent’s voice.

THE BITTER FRUIT

The result was startling. A change took place within Adam and Eve. Now they saw that the devil had most miserably deceived them. They had not become like God. Instead they became conscious of sin and shame.

They saw they were naked and were ashamed and sewed together fig leaves and covered themselves. They became afraid of God and hid from Him. When God called, Adam answered that he was afraid and hid, for he was naked. He was not honest enough to confess that he had eaten of the forbidden fruit. When asked directly, he blamed both his wife and God. He said, “The woman You gave to be with me gave the fruit to me and I ate it.” Adam blames God for having fallen into sin, because God gave him a helpmeet that tempted him to transgress God’s commandment. Then Eve blamed the serpent. Neither of the two confesses their guilt. It was a sorry showing of evil thoughts, selfishness, ingratitude, dishonesty, and excuses. Behind it all was mistrust of their heavenly Father.

Like Adam and Eve we, all of us, are ever too prone to put the blame for our deviation from the right path on others, and even upon God, (“It’s my nature—I can’t help it.”) to offer all kinds of excuses, to gloss over our faults, and to try to hide our sin.

A SAVIOR IS PROMISED

God's judgment followed swiftly. He cursed the serpent, the devil's tool, and then added an unexpected word. God said, "*I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.*"

The *woman's seed is Christ* and the serpent's seed is sin, death, and the devil. The devil had succeeded in leading man away from God and bringing him under his own power. But that was not the end. God had His plan ready for saving man. He would send a Savior. Between Him and the devil there would be relentless warfare. It would be the central struggle of history. In this struggle the devil would bring pain and suffering upon the creation and creatures of God, and upon the Savior. Yet, the Savior would destroy the devil's power over man. Calvary and the cross were already dimly visible and the rays of Easter morning were beginning to brighten the dark horizon of man's future. It was the first gospel message.

Then God turned to Adam and Eve. Eve's glory and joy of motherhood would be cursed with pain and grief. "In pain you shall bring forth children," God said to her. The bearing, caring for, and rearing of children, which in the state of innocence would have been a source of delight, was now to abound in sorrows, burdens, and sacrifices. (Yet, even after the Fall children are a gift of God, a blessing—Psalm 127:3-5; 128:3-4). Furthermore, because she was the first one to be deceived (1 Timothy 2:14), she was to be in subjection to her husband. She was, from now on, to regard him as her lord (1 Peter 3:6, Ephesians 5:22-24,33).

Thorns and thistles make Adam's work as bread winner toilsome and hard. "By the sweat of your face shall you work for the bread you eat, till you return unto the ground; dust you are and unto dust shall you return," God said to Adam. In Paradise it had been a pleasure to work. Now it became hard and tedious, burdensome, and oppressive. Man was sentenced to a life of wearisome toil.

So also sin cursed the relationship between man and woman and the creation. Man would become lazy in his dominion over the creation and over Eve. Thus Eve would seek to usurp the role of the man and rule over him. Sin extended its curses into every part of human life, even to the point of death. Since the Fall, death holds dominion over man.

THE FIRST SACRIFICE

God made coats of skins for Adam and Eve, and clothed them. The skins evidently came from animals that had been killed as sin offerings. The animal took the place of the sinner, the blood blotted out the sin and made God's forgiveness possible.

The sin offering pointed forward to Christ and to the work He was to do for our salvation. God began to prepare man for the coming of Christ as soon as sin made His coming necessary.

THE FLAMING SWORD

God drove Adam and Eve out of the garden and an angel with a flaming sword barred the way to the tree of life. The fruit of the tree of life would have protected them from old age and death; God had said that it would and He could not go back on His word.

It is difficult even to imagine what life on earth would have been if sinful man could remain forever physically healthy and vigorous. The conditions at the time of the flood indicate the unspeakable horrors that would have been the result.

The story the Bible reveals to us two important things. The one is about man's sin and how it ruins his life and happiness. The other—the bulk of the story—is about God's love for His lost children and His work to save them. The story makes it plain that sin has made man evil. Man is in open rebellion against God.

BROTHER KILLS BROTHER

By Adam sin came into the world. Parents need but take due cognizance of the faults and evil inclinations of their children to be convinced that their children, being “born of the flesh” [John 3:6a]—that is, receiving the parents sinful nature—also “are flesh”—that is, sinful “children of wrath by nature” [Ephesians 2:3]—and thus sin is the dreadful heirloom from parent to child. Even in Adam’s family sin soon showed its hideous face.

The first recorded event after Adam’s and Eve’s expulsion from the garden foreshadowed the future and all hope in the future generation’s ability to right their parent’s wrongs is quickly dashed. Their sons, Cain and Abel, each brought God a thank offering. Each sacrificed of the products he raised. Abel sacrificed the firstlings of the flock and the fat thereof. It was the best he had. It is not said that Cain used his choicest grain. The omission is significant. Abel believed that God loved him, took care of him, and was his savior from sin and all evil. So his sacrifice was an expression of gratitude and love. Cain’s relation to God was different. He did not love God. His was not a sacrifice of love and gratitude. It was merely a ceremony. Naturally he did not use his best grain. When God showed that He was pleased with Abel’s sacrifice, but not with Cain’s, Cain became so jealous of his brother and so full of hatred that he killed Abel.

In the garden God told Adam that if he ate of the tree of knowledge he would surely die. But the grief over Cain’s act must have seemed even more unbearable than death. We may be sure that when the father gathered in his arms the body of his son Abel, killed by his brother Cain, Adam would rather have been dead himself. And what agonies must have pierced Eve’s heart as a mother. The wages of sin is death, as St. Paul said thousands of years later (Romans 6:23).

As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household

The Second Article

Redemption

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

What does this mean? I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord,

who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death,

that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,

just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

This is most certainly true.

Luther. (2017). [*Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation*](#) (p. 17). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

Prayer: O Lord, we, too, are sinners like our first parents, Adam and Eve. We have often listened to the devil and been disobedient, lazy, unkind, or wicked in other ways. We have done many things that You did not want us to do. Forgive all the wrong we have done. According to Your tender mercy cover our sins with the righteousness of Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, so that we need not be ashamed in Your sight. And in our daily conflict with sin and evil, be our strength, just as you have taught us to pray: **Our Father, who art in heaven...**

Reading for the Next Bible Class 5 May 2021:

➔ Genesis Chapters 6-11

➔ Fifth Commandment & The Close of the Commandments from the Small Catechism

“In the Shattered Bliss of Eden”



1 In the shat - tered bliss of E - den Dawned the
 2 Days and months and years un - fold - ing Clear - ly
 3 What these sac - ri - fic - es prom - ised From a
 4 Lamb of God, once slain for sin - ners, Host, who



day of sac - ri - fice, As our pri - mal par - ents
 showed what sin had wrought: Fall - en Ad - am's chil - dren
 God who sought to bless, Came at last— a sec - ond
 spreads this meal di - vine, Here You pledge our sins are



shud - dered— Sin had caused this dread - ful price!
 learn - ing Les - sons fall - en par - ents taught.
 Ad - am— Priest and King of Righ - teous - ness:
 cov - ered, Pledge re - ceived in bread and wine:



Faith em - barked with this dis - cern - ment: On - ly
 All these sac - ri - fi - cial of - f'nings Crest - ed
 Son of God, in - car - nate Sav - ior, Son of
 “Take and eat; this is My bod - y, Giv - en



God can cov - er sin, As He took their leaf - y
 as a crim - son flood: Pa - tri - archs and priests a -
 Man, both Christ and Lord, Who in na - ked shame would
 on the cross for you. Take and drink; this cup of



gar - ments And He clothed their shame with skin.
 ton - ing For their sins with cleans - ing blood.
 of - fer On the cross His blood out - poured.
 bless - ing Is My blood poured out for you.”

5 Taste and see the bliss of heaven
 Known by saints around the throne,
 Where the Lamb, in closest union,
 Lives to love and feed His own.
 From His riven side forever
 Flows the purest stream of love,
 Love that robes us with the raiment
 Worn by all who feast above.

6 Gone the bliss of Eden's garden,
 Gone the age of sacrifice;
 Ours the time of grace and favor,
 Ours the call to paradise!
 Ever, Lord, impress upon us:
 Only You can cover sin—
 Take our worthless, self-made garments;
 Clothe our shame and cleanse within.

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