

# THE FIRST JUDGMENT UPON SIN (PART 3): JUDGMENT UPON MAN GENESIS 03:17–19

## *Introduction*

The first man upon earth sinned, tragically sinned, and he refused to accept the responsibility for his sin. Like so many today, he blamed his wife for his sin. He accused her of leading him into sin, of causing him to sin. It is true, she did approach and entice him to sin, but Adam himself stood guilty before God. In fact, he was guilty of at least three sins. Adam failed in at least three areas.

- => First, Adam did not try to lead Eve back to God. Just think what a failing this is! He did not *even try* to lead his wife to repentance, did not even bring up the subject of her returning to God. He did not even suggest that she confess and beg God for forgiveness and restoration.
- => Second, Adam listened to Eve's enticements and persuasions. He did not stop her from talking about and presenting the forbidden fruit to him. He stood there and listened to her persuasive arguments, to her enticements and seduction. Note, this is exactly what God says: *Because you have listened to the voice of your wife*, you are to be judged (v. 17.) Adam failed — tragically failed — by listening to his wife, by not stopping her from talking about the forbidden fruit.
- => Third, Adam himself chose to eat the forbidden fruit. He blamed his wife, but Eve did not force him to eat the forbidden fruit. Adam *wilfully chose* — made a *deliberate decision* — to sin. He knew exactly what he was doing. He was not deceived; his eyes were wide open when he sinned (1 Tim 2:14). He was guilty, wilfully and deliberately guilty, of...

- rejecting God
- rebelling against God
- disobeying God
- turning away from God

Adam was, therefore, to be judged. He stood before God guilty, guilty of the most terrible sin: Adam had wilfully and deliberately turned away from God. This is the great discussion of this passage: *The First Judgment upon Sin (Part 3): Judgment upon Man*.

- I. He was condemned to live in a cursed world, a world of imperfection and corruption (v. 17).
- II. He was condemned to struggle for survival, condemned to struggle against nature for the most basic necessity of life, food (vv. 17-18).
- III. He was condemned to die (v. 19).

Note one other fact: all of the judgments upon man fell upon the woman as well. There may be one difference, an emotional and psychological difference. In *judgment two*, man may be judged to suffer the pressure of providing the food and other necessities for the

---

family more than the woman. Woman, of course, often senses the pressure of necessities, in particular if she is a single parent without a husband. But perhaps judgment two is condemning man to have a nature that suffers the pain of more pressure and stress than the woman. Man's shorter life span may be an indication of this.

### **I. *Genesis 03:17 Man, Condemned to Live in a Cursed World***

Man was condemned to live in a cursed world, a world of imperfection and corruption. The Hebrew text says: "Cursed be the ground *because of you*," "on account of you." God cursed the earth because of Adam's sin.

Why? Why would the earth have to suffer a curse when it was Adam who sinned? Very simply stated, the earth was Adam's home. Adam and the earth were *interrelated*. Adam was now imperfect, a fallen creature. God could not let imperfect Adam continue on in a perfect world. Imperfection is not compatible with, not able to live with, perfection. Imperfection and sin do not belong with perfection and righteousness. Therefore, God had to curse the earth as part of the judgment upon Adam. The earth belonged to Adam and Adam belonged to the earth; they were as closely related as they could be. Therefore, whatever fall Adam suffered, the earth had to suffer the same fall as well.

Scripture explains what happened even more in Romans 8:19-22. This is an important passage for understanding what happened. Because of its importance, the commentary of Romans 8:19-22 are being repeated here. Note what Romans says: all creation — the whole universe, not just the earth — was corrupted by sin.

Note that the creation suffers and struggles for deliverance from corruption. The word *creation* refers to everything *under* man: animal, plant and mineral. All creation is pictured as living and waiting expectantly for the day when the sons of God will be glorified. The words *earnest expectation* (apokaradokia) means to watch with the neck out-stretched and the head erect. It is a persistent, unswerving expectation, an expectation that does not give up but keeps looking until the event happens. Note three facts revealed about the universe in which man lives.

1. Creation is subject to corruption. This is clearly seen by men; and what men see is constantly confirmed by such authorities as the botanist, zoologist, geologist and astronomers of the world. All of creation, whether mineral, plant or animal, suffers just as men do. All creation suffers hurt, damage, loss, deterioration, erosion, death and decay; all creation struggles for life. It is full of *vanity* (mataios), that is, condemned to futility and frustration, unable to realize its purpose, subject to corruption. Note the two things said about creation in this verse (v. 20).
  - a. Creation was condemned to vanity — futility and frustration — by God. Creation did not willingly choose to be condemned to corruption. The world was made to be the home of man, the place where he was to live. Therefore, when man sinned, his world was doomed to suffer the consequences of sin with him. Man's world was cursed right along with him.

**Gen 3:17** “Cursed is the ground because of you.”

**Isa 24:4-6** *The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the exalted of the earth languish. The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore earth’s inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left.*

**Jer 12:4** *How long will the land lie parched and the grass in every field be withered? Because those who live in it are wicked, the animals and birds have perished.*

**Thought 1.** Just picture the enormous hurt and damage and decay that takes place in our world. Think about...

- the disease and savagery of the animal world
- the hurt and damage that so easily happens in the plant world
- the destruction and deterioration that takes place in the mineral world

Think about the earthquakes, tornadoes, storms, diseases, starvation, attacks and struggles for survival that take place. And these are only a few of the myriad happenings that show the corruption of the world.

- b. Creation has been subjected to corruption “in hope.” The news of Scripture is glorious: the situation of the world is neither hopeless nor final. Creation has the same *hope of redemption and of renovation* as man. The world was made for man; therefore, all creation will be ultimately delivered from corruption just as man will be delivered from corruption.
2. Creation will be delivered from corruption. This is the wonderful news of the glorious gospel. Note a most significant point: whatever happens to man is bound to happen to his world. Man is the summit of God’s creation; therefore, all that is under man is intertwined, interwoven and interrelated to him. Man and his world are one and the same; they are dependent upon each other. This is enormously significant: since man and his world are interrelated, it means that the world will experience whatever man experiences. When man fell, his world was bound to fall with him. But this is the glorious news as well. When man is liberated from corruption, his world will be liberated as well. God had to subject man’s world to man’s fate, but God also had to subject man’s world “in hope.” Creation will experience the glorious hope of living forever with man, of being completely and perfectly renovated. There will be a “new heavens and a new earth” (see Psa 96:11-13; 98:7-9; Isa 11:6-9; Rev 5:13).

**2 Pet 3:10-13** *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives. As you look forward to the*

*day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*

**Rev 21:1** *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. (see Heb 12:26-27).*

**Isa 65:17** *“See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.”*

**Isa 66:22** *“As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,” declares the LORD, “so will your name and descendants endure.”*

3. Creation groans in labour for deliverance. Note that *all creation* suffers together: all creation is interrelated, intertwined and interconnected. The whole universe is dependent upon its various parts for survival. The earth could not survive without the heavens, and the heavens would have no purpose apart from God’s creation of man and his earth. This does not mean that man is to be egocentric or egotistical, nor that man is the only rational being within the universe. It simply means that man and his earth are the focal point of God’s unbelievable creation, of His eternal plan and purpose in Christ. Being the centre of creation *before God* is not a truth to make man proud, but to make him humble — a truth to cause him to bow in worship and praise, appreciation and thankfulness — a truth to make him carry the gospel to the far ends of the universe if there are rational beings there. Being the summit of God’s creation is not a gift of privilege, not presently, but of enormous responsibility.

Note the word *groan* and *travail*. The picture is that of a woman giving birth. Creation experiences “birth pangs” under its struggle to survive. And note: it has been experiencing the “birth pangs” *until now*, that is, from the fall of man up until this present moment.

In conclusion, the whole scene of these four verses is that creation awaits a renovated world. Creation resents evil and struggles against decay and death. It fights for survival. It struggles against the bondage of being slaughtered or changed.

The idea expressed is that creation awaits the Day of Redemption: anxiously, expectantly, longingly and eagerly awaits for its deliverance from corruption. Creation moans and groans and cries for the unveiling of the Son of God. God cursed the earth because of man’s sin, yes, but God has also given the greatest hope imaginable to the earth — yea to the whole universe — the hope of eternal redemption.

**Rom 8:21** *In hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.*

**2 Pet 3:13** *But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*

**Rev 22:3-5** *No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city [New Jerusalem], and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.*

## **II. Genesis 03: 17c–19a Man Condemned to Struggle for Survival**

Man was condemned to struggle for survival, condemned to struggle against nature for the most basic necessities of life. Note three things about this particular judgment upon man:

1. Man was condemned to suffer *sorrow* in meeting his most basic need: food. The word *sorrow* (itstsebhon) means pain, misery, toil, arduous labour, strenuous work. Before the fall of man into sin, his labour was not a strain. He was never miserable. His work and activity were always a pleasure and joy. Both he and his world were perfect; therefore, he never experienced the pain of aching muscles, nor of mental and physical exhaustion. But not now, not after his sin. Man now has to suffer...
  - the pain of stress, pressure, tension
  - the pain of toil, labour and work
  - the pain of mental and physical fatigue

And note: he has to suffer this pain *all the days* of his life. The ground — nature itself — had been cursed because of man's sin. Consequently, man is condemned to struggle for survival, to struggle against the forces of nature for the very basic necessities of life.

2. Man was condemned to struggle against the thorns and thistles of the earth. Before man's sin and fall, the earth had produced every good fruit and plant imaginable for man. Nature was completely under control. All of man's necessities were abundantly met. But not now, not since man's sin. Nature is no longer under control. It produces thorns and thistles and all kinds of problems for man. Man always has to struggle against nature — struggle to control nature — in order to protect his most basic necessity, the very food he eats.

Imagine! Just to eat — just to meet his most basic necessity — man would have to struggle and fight to control nature itself.

Note: the idea in this particular judgment is not just thorns and thistles, not just man struggling against thorns and thistles in order to eat. The idea is that nature is no longer under control; nature is no longer going to produce plenty for man, not naturally, not orderly, not regularly. Man has been condemned to struggle against nature — against the thorns and thistles of nature — against all of nature in order to meet his most basic need, that of eating. Food — man's most basic need — is just an example of all the basic necessities he needs. Man has to struggle against nature for all his necessities — shelter, clothing and food. He could live without shelter and

clothing, but he could not live without food. Apparently, God chose to talk about the struggle for food because it was the most basic need Adam had. But, again, the point is this: nature is no longer under control, no longer perfect. Nature is, therefore, to produce both good and bad things, to be both under control and uncontrollable. Man had to straggle against nature for survival, straggle to meet his most basic needs, even his need for food.

3. Man was condemned to sweat in order to eat, in order to control nature and meet his most basic need. The point is twofold.
  - a. Man's straggle against nature is strenuous and difficult. Man has been condemned to sweat — to work hard — in order to have anything. This is true even in securing his most basic necessity, food. The struggle against the earth — against nature and its irregular and uncontrolled features — is a strenuous and difficult struggle. Man's needs, his most basic needs, are to be met by sweat, tears and toil.
  - b. Man's struggle against nature has to go on and on, to last all of his life, until he returns to the ground. Everything man has and owns — even food — is uncertain since the fall of Adam. Some happening — some quick, some uncontrolled event in nature — can snatch away everything a man has. Man is condemned to straggle for survival all the days of his life.

**Thought 1.** God's mercy is seen even in the midst of this judgment. Man's hard labour and sweat will produce results. He will be able to feed himself, to meet the necessities of life. But note: he must labour and labour diligently in order to have his necessities met.

**Gen 2:15** *The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.*

**Gen 3:17c-19a** *“Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food.*

**Eph 6:5** *Slaves [workmen], obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ.*

**Col 3:22** *Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favour, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.*

**1 Tim 6:1** *All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered.*

**Titus 2:9** *Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them.*

**1 Pet 2:18** *Slaves, [employees] submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.*

**Prov 24:30-31** *I went past the field of the sluggard, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment; thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins.*

**Eccl 10:18** *Through laziness, the rafters sag; because of idle hands, the house leaks.*

**Heb 6:12** *We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.*

### **III. Genesis 03:19b Man, Condemned to Die**

Man was condemned to die. Remember: Adam and the world were created perfect. In a perfect world, there is perfect fellowship and sharing between God and man. God must have discussed death with Adam when He warned Adam about sin and its consequence of death. God is bound to have shared with Adam what sin and death meant, its terrible tragedy and consequences. Just as we understand all about the tragedy and consequence of sin today, so Adam understood. God would not have left him in the dark even as He has not left us in the dark. Note three significant points about this judgment of death.

1. Adam himself brought death and corruption to the world. God had warned Adam: if he ate of the forbidden fruit, he would surely die (Gen 2:17). Adam turned away from God; he disobeyed and rejected God's Word.
  - => Adam set in motion the law of disobedience, of disorder and of imbalance which results in corruption.
  - => From the point of Adam's sin onward, he and all that were in the world were to experience...
    - aging                      • disorder                      • wasting away
    - deterioration            • imbalance                   • returning to dust
    - decay                      • wearing away
2. The judgment upon Adam was a judgment upon all mankind. Adam was the father of the human race. History, experience and the Bible — all three — proclaim the judgment of the earth's curse and of man's death. Adam stands as a figurehead, as a representative man, for all men (see note, Rom 5:12-14).
3. Adam was condemned to death. What does death mean? What does it mean to die? (See *Death*, Gen 2:17.) ■

## GENESIS 03:19 JESUS CHRIST — JUDGMENT

*“By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”* **Genesis 03:19**

Mathew Henry gives an excellent description of how the death of Jesus Christ answered the judgment passed upon the sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve. (*Mathew Henry’s Commentary*, Vol. 1, pp. 33-34.) Mathew Henry asks:

1. Did sin bring travailing pain into the world? Scripture declares...
  - that Christ’s death was “the travail of His soul” (Isa 53:11)
  - that the pain of death that held Him was a pain (odinai) just like the travail (odinai) of a woman (Acts 2:24). Note how the two Hebrew words are the same
2. Did sin bring subjection into the world? Christ was made “under the law,” subject to the law, for the very purpose of dying for the transgressions of the law (Gal 4:4-5).
3. Did sin bring the curse upon the world and man? Christ was made a curse for us (Ga.3:13).
4. Did sin bring thorns upon earth? Christ wore a crown of thorns for us (Mk. 15:17).
5. Did sin bring sweat into the world? Christ sweated drops of blood for us (Lk. 22:44; see Heb 12:4).
6. Did sin bring sorrow into the world? Christ was the man of sorrows. His death involved so much agony that the sorrow of His soul almost killed Him (Mt. 26:38; Mk. 14:34).
7. Did sin bring death into the world? He was obedient to death, even to the death of the cross (Phil 2:8). □

## GENESIS 02:17 DEATH

*“But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”* **Genesis 02:17**

The basic meaning of death is *separation*. Death does not mean what some people think: ceasing to exist. Death never means extinction, annihilation, non-existence or inactivity.

The Bible speaks of three deaths.

1. Physical death: the *separation* of a man’s spirit or life from the body. This is what men commonly call death. It is when a person ceases to exist on this earth and is buried (1 Cor 15:21-22; Heb 9:27).



**1 Cor 15:21-22** *For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.*

**Heb 9:27** *Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.*

2. Spiritual death: the *separation* of man's spirit from God while he is still living and walking upon earth. This death is the natural state of a man on earth without Christ. Man is seen as still in his sins and *dead* to God (Eph 2:1; 4:18; 1 Jn. 5:12).

Spiritual death speaks of a person who is dead while he still lives (1 Tim 5:6). He is a natural man living in this present world, but he is said to be dead to the Lord Jesus Christ and to God and to spiritual matters.

- a. A person who wastes his life in riotous living is spiritually dead.

**Luke 15:32** *“But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”*

- b. A person who has not partaken of Christ — allowed Christ to live within him — is spiritually dead.

**John 6:53-55** *Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.”*

- c. A person who does not have the Spirit of Christ is said to be spiritually dead.

**Rom 8:9** *You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.*

- d. A person who lives in sin is said to be spiritually dead.

**Eph 2:1** *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,*

**Col 2:13** *When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.*

- e. A person who is alienated from God is said to be spiritually dead.

**Eph 4:18-19** *They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.*

- f. A person who sleeps in sin is spiritually dead.

**Eph 5:14** *This is why it is said: “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”*

- g. A person who lives in sinful pleasure is spiritually dead, dead while he lives.

**1 Tim 5:6** *But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.*

- h. A person who does not have the Son of God is spiritually dead.

**1 John 5:12** *He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

**Rev 3:1** *“To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.”*

3. Eternal death: the *separation* of man from God’s presence forever. This is the second death, an eternal state of being dead to God (1 Cor 6:9-10; 2 Th 1:9). It is spiritual death, separation from God, that is prolonged beyond the death of the body. It is called the “second death” or eternal death.

**Rom 8:6** *The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.*

**2 Th 1:7-9** *And give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.*

**Rev 20:15** *If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. □*

# THE FIRST ACT OF DELIVERANCE OR SALVATION: MAN IS SAVED FROM LIVING FOREVER AS A SINNER IN A FALLEN WORLD

## GENESIS 03:22–24

### *Introduction*

God created man to bless him beyond all imagination (see outline and notes Gen 2:15-17). But man turned away from God and rejected Him. What was God to do? Was He to let His purpose for man be defeated? This was impossible — absolutely impossible — for He is God, and God’s purposes can never be defeated. Therefore, God did exactly what He had told man He would do if man rebelled against Him:

=> God judged man (see notes, Gen 3:14-19).

=> But God also put His purposes back on track. God worked out a way for man to still receive life and clothing, the clothing of righteousness (see notes, Gen 3:20-21).

This we have already seen and studied. But now, God still has one more problem to handle. There still remains one more thing to do. God must deliver and save man from living forever as a sinner in a fallen world. This is the discussion of this great passage: *The First Act of Deliverance or Salvation: Man Is Saved from Living Forever as a Sinner in a Fallen World*.

- I. God’s problem: man had sinned; he knew not only good, but evil (v. 22).
- II. God’s decision: man must not be allowed to live forever as a sinner in a fallen world (v. 22).
- III. God’s deliverance or salvation (vv. 23-24).

### **I. *Genesis 03:22 Man has Sinned***

God’s problem was this: man had sinned; man knew not only good, but evil. Because of evil, catastrophic consequences were to fall upon man and his world. How to save man and his world from these catastrophic consequences — how to still fulfil His eternal purpose for man and the world — was the problem facing God. Now, what does Scripture mean when it says that man knows evil? It means at least two things.

1. To know evil means that man has *personally corrupted himself*. When God first created man, man was perfect, without any flaw whatsoever. In addition, man was given a perfect environment: man was placed in a perfect world, and even more than that, he was given *the Garden of Eden*, the most beautiful and bountiful paradise he could ever imagine. Man had all the fullness of life, and he was to live forever. He was in utopia, possessing everything — all the provision, security, joy and happiness — he could ever want. And on top of this, he was given authority and dominion over
-

all the world (see *Man's Purpose on Earth*, Gen 1:28). But even more than this, within Eden man had the very presence of God. Man talked and fellowshiped with God face to face. Eden was the very picture of heaven on earth, of what the new heavens and earth will be like. When God created man, He gave man everything in perfection. Man was perfect, and his environment was perfect. But man sinned. Man...

- turned away from God
- refused to follow God
- rejected God
- disobeyed God's commandment (Word)
- rebelled against God

This is what God means by evil. Evil is...

- turning away from God
- refusing to follow God
- rejecting God
- disobeying God's commandment (Word)
- rebelling against God

This was what Adam had done, turned away from God and taken of the forbidden fruit. Adam now knew evil.

- => Adam had walked away from God; he had chosen to be alienated from God, chosen to walk throughout life on his own.
- => Adam had refused to follow the perfect way of God; he had chosen to follow his own way in life, to do his own thing.
- => Adam had rejected the life of God which is eternal life; he had chosen to no longer live with God.
- => Adam had disobeyed God's commandment (Word); he had chosen not to be sinless and perfect.
- => Adam had rebelled against God; he had chosen not to live in the perfect world and presence of God.

Adam stood before God guilty and condemned. Adam now knew evil; Adam had acted against God. He had committed terrible evil against God.

Before Adam sinned, he knew nothing about evil, nothing whatsoever. But after he sinned, he knew evil. He personally corrupted himself.

2. To know evil means that man has *personally experienced evil*. Note exactly what Scripture says:

*"The man has now become like one of us, knowing [personally] good and evil" (v. 22).*

Man is said to know evil even as God knows evil. But there is a vast difference between God's knowledge of evil and man's knowledge of evil.

- a. God knows evil because He sees evil as it lies spread out before Him. God does not know evil by experience. God does not think evil nor do evil. God knows evil only in the sense that He sees it as it happens, as it is committed by others. But how terrible

this is. Just think of the pain that cuts God's heart when evil is done, when He is rejected, disobeyed, and turned against. Every thought and act of evil cuts God's heart and causes a wretched pain beyond anything we could ever know.

How much evil does God know about? Every evil thought and act upon earth. God even sees all the ramifications — every twist and turn — of every evil thought and act. God sees and knows...

- the first flash of an evil thought that crosses our minds
- the harbouring of the evil thought
- the decision to do evil
- the first arousal of evil desire or lust
- the actual act of evil

Nothing is hid from God. God sees and knows all — every evil thought and act upon earth. This is how God knows evil, not by experience, but by seeing evil as it is spread out before Him. God sees evil as it happens, as others think and do evil. But this is not true with man.

- b. Man knows evil by personal experience. Man thinks and does evil. Man harbours evil thoughts and man commits evil acts. Man has plunged himself into evil and learned what evil is by experience.

This was the great problem God faced. Man had sinned, and he was now imperfect and corrupt. God had created man to bless him beyond all imagination, but man had turned against and rejected God. What was God to do? Was He to let His purpose for man be defeated? He could not, for He was God, and God's purposes can never be defeated. Therefore, God fulfilled His Word: He judged man and then He provided the way of salvation and deliverance for man (see note, Gen 3:21, esp. pt. 3, 4. See note, Gen 3:15.)

This we have already seen and studied. But now, God still has one more problem to handle. There still remains one more thing to do. God must save and deliver man from living forever as a sinner in a fallen world.

**Rom 3:10-18** *As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know." "There is no fear of God before their eyes."*

**Rom 3:23** *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

**1 John 1:8** *If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*

**Psa 53:3** *Everyone has turned away, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.*

**Prov 20:9** *Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin?"*

*Isa 64:6 All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.*

## II. **Genesis 03:22 Man — God — Mercy — World, Fallen**

God's decision was this: man must not be allowed to live forever as a sinner in a fallen world. Remember: the whole world was corrupted when Adam sinned (see note 1, Gen 3:17). But Adam was still in paradise, still in the Garden of Eden, still in the perfect home God had created especially for man. Note the Scripture. God knew, this fact: if He left Adam in the Garden, Adam could still eat the fruit from the tree of life and live forever (see note 4, *Tree of Life*, Gen 2:9). But this would be the most tragic thing that could have happened to both Adam and God. Adam was sinful and corrupt. God just could not allow Adam to eat of the tree of life, not after having sinned: God could not allow sinful man and evil to continue on and on forever.

=> God could not allow man to live forever as *a sinful, corrupt being*; a being who would never again know the fullness of God's presence, love, grace, provision, care, security, joy and peace; a being who would live under the curse of being judged, condemned and punished forever and ever; a being who would never have the opportunity to be saved.

=> God could not allow Himself to be cursed, rejected, disobeyed and often denied, not forever and ever, not by just any man who would choose to so react against God.

God had no choice. To save man, He made a heart-rending decision. God acted in mercy, both for Adam and for Himself: man must not be allowed to live forever as a sinner in a fallen and corrupt world. Just what God does is seen in the next note.

**Gen 6:5** *The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.* (Note how this verse and history show how wise God's decision was; see Rom 3:10-18 included in the verses above under note 1, pt. b.)

### GENESIS 03:22 GOD, TRINITY

*And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever." **Genesis 03:22***

Note that God says, "Man is become as one of us" (v. 22). Note the expression, "as [like] one of us." Several questions need to be asked about who "us" is.

=> First, who is with God — who is it that man is about to become like?

=> Second, could God be talking to angels? If so, this would put angels on a par with God Himself. Such a levelling process that puts God upon the same level or in

a class with angels is most unlikely. There is no being on a par with God, not on the same level nor in the same class as God. Thus, it is most unlikely that God is talking with angels.

⇒ Third, could this be a conversation between the persons of the Godhead, that is, the Trinity? We know from the experience of Christ that conversation does take place among the Trinity, that they discuss every major issue among themselves. This was certainly true of Christ, and it is the normal experience between persons. (See note 1, Gen 1:26.)

If this is not a conversation between the persons of the Godhead, then a question arises. At what point in history is God going to begin to teach man about Himself (that is, the Trinity, His personhood)? In answering the question, this much is known.

1. Jesus Christ is the final revelation of God. When He was upon the earth, He revealed that there is a relationship between Himself as *God the Son* and *God the Father* (see Jn. 8:18, 59; 10:27-39; 12:44-50; 17:1-26). And when He sent the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, into the world (Jn. 7:37-39), this revealed that there is a relationship existing between *God the Son* and *God the Holy Spirit* and *God the Father*. Thus, Jesus Christ revealed that three distinct persons form the Godhead...

- that each exists co-equally as One in nature, perfection and purpose

It is through Christ that man understands the truth of the Trinity. The question is, then, when did God begin to teach that *He was One*, but that *He existed in three persons*? Christ is the final revelation, but there was a span of time reaching back from Christ to a point when God first began to teach man about His personhood. Not that man could grasp in full understanding what God was revealing. Man could not, for in the grasping of all facts and truth, understanding comes by steps, progressively. Thus, the revelation of God's person and nature is bound to come progressively. But His person, just as with His nature, has to be mentioned at some point. There has to be a first time when He reveals His person, then a second time, then a third time, and so on. At what point was His person first mentioned or revealed?

2. A second fact is known. The Bible has already used the plural when referring to God: God said, "Let *us* make man in *our* image" (Gen 1:26). And then in this present passage, the plural is again used: "man is become as [like] one of *us*" (Gen 3:22). When was the plural with God first used?

Was it when Moses recorded these words? Or was Moses using some notes written by Adam or some successor? Or was he recording oral tradition? Or was he receiving direct revelation from the Spirit of God?

No one can know, not for sure. But as already stated, the revelation, the teaching of God's personhood, had to begin at some point in history. And, as with all facts and truth, it had to come progressively. Because of this, it would seem more reasonable to say that these words are a discussion between the Godhead instead of a conversation between God and angels or between God and some other being. It is just far more reasonable to say that the *progressive revelation and teaching* of God's person began from the first of creation with these discussions, with the use of the plural in these two passages. Whether they were first recorded by Moses or someone prior to Moses (Adam or a successor) is not that important. What we need to first understand is that God is discussing man's creation and expulsion from the Garden of Eden with the other two persons of the Godhead. □

### III. *Genesis 03:23–24 Deliverance — Salvation*

God's deliverance or salvation was twofold.

1. God delivered man by driving him from the Garden of Eden. Note the double reference to God sending Adam out or expelling him from the Garden. The second reference states that God *drove* Adam out of the Garden (vv. 23-24).

Remember, the Garden of Eden was paradise on earth, a picture of what the new heavens and earth will be when God recreates them. Within the Garden, man had everything — provision, security, joy and fulfilment — all in perfection. Man talked face to face with God; walked and fellowshiped with God. Man worshipped, worked, and served God in perfection. This is, most likely, the reason God had to drive Adam from the Garden. Adam did not want to leave the presence of God nor the perfection of God's paradise. Adam knew that he was being...

- separated from God
- alienated from God
- excluded from paradise
- removed from God's presence

*Isa 59:2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.* (see Ep. 4:18).

Adam knew that his sin had come between him and God, and that he must bear the judgment of his sin. He knew this, but he had experienced paradise. Consequently, he did just what any of us would do: he struggled against leaving, against going out into the world. But God knew best. God loved Adam; therefore, God could not let Adam live forever as a sinful human being. Even if He had to force Adam out of the Garden, He would. And this God did. God forced Adam — drove him — out of the Garden. God banished Adam for at least two reasons.

- a. God had to start all over with Adam: *put him on probation and under new terms*. Adam had failed the first probation, the first commandment and condition, established by God. God had told Adam that he would live forever unless he ate the forbidden



fruit. If he ate the forbidden fruit — disobeyed this one commandment and condition — he would die. Adam ate; consequently, he had to die. God's Word had to be fulfilled, for He is God. As God, whatever He says must always be done. But as God, His purposes must also be done — always. His purposes can never be defeated. Therefore, God had to work things out for good, work them out so that His purposes for man could be fulfilled. But how? How could God now save and deliver man?

There was one way: give man another chance. God had to place man in a different environment and put him on another period of probation and give him new terms. This is what God did. God drove man out of the Garden of Eden — forced him to go out into the world, out into a new environment — and God put man on probation with new terms and conditions.

=> The new conditions focused upon the *promised seed* of the woman, the Saviour of the world, that God had just promised Adam. Adam was now required to trust *the promised seed*, to focus upon the Saviour for salvation. If Adam wished to be saved and restored to perfection — if he wished to be accepted by God and given the right to live in God's presence forever — Adam had to trust *the promised seed*, trust Him so much that he would commit his life totally to the Saviour.

=> The new condition focused upon belief in and commitment to *the promised seed*, the Saviour of the world. Belief and commitment was the new term and condition of the probation period. The decision was, once again, Adam's. Just as he was put on probation — given a decision to make — in the Garden of Eden (paradise), he was once again put on probation — given a decision to make — as he walked out in the new world.

This is the first reason God drove man out from the Garden: to give him another chance, another probation period, under new terms. (See *Covenant*, Gen 2:15-17.)

b. God had to deliver and save Adam in such a way that Adam could be freed from sin, made righteous and perfected forever. There was only one way to do this: put Adam out into the world and teach him to trust and focus upon *the promised seed* of the woman — the Saviour of the world — the seed and Saviour that God had already promised to Adam and the world. (See note 6, Gen 3:15.)

How would trusting the Saviour free Adam from sin and make him righteous or perfect before God? Scripture tells us in just a few chapters ahead of this one, in Genesis 15:6. Also compare Gal 3:6.

**Gen 15:6** *Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

**Gal 3:6** *Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*

When Adam got out into the world and believed, really believed to the point of committing his life to the Saviour, God's plan was to take Adam's belief and count

it as righteousness. Adam was not righteous. Adam had already sinned. But God planned to take Adam's faith and count it as righteousness. God loved Adam this much, just as He loves us this much. If we love and honour the Saviour, *God's very own Son*, enough to believe and commit our lives to Him, then God will do anything for us. If we will just honour, love and trust His Son — the only Son God has — then God will take our faith and count it as righteousness. This was the only way Adam could be freed from sin, made righteous and perfected forever.

This was the second reason God drove man out of the Garden: to make it possible for Adam to be freed from sin and restored to perfection. God wanted Adam made righteous and perfected forever through faith in *the promised seed*, the coming Saviour.

**Thought 1.** Adam and all the other Old testament believers looked ahead to *the promised seed*, the Saviour of the world, whereas we look back to Him. They believed in the coming Saviour; we believe in the Saviour who has come. They believed in the promised Saviour; we believe in the promises of the Saviour.

**Thought 2.** God's great love for man is seen in what God did for Adam.

- => In justice, God could have put Adam in the grave right then and there, but in love God gave Adam another chance and put him on another probation under new rules.
  - => In justice, God could have driven Adam into hell, but in love He only drove him out of the Garden into the world.
  - => Injustice, God could have left Adam to live forever as a sinner in this fallen world, but in love God provided a Saviour who could save and restore Adam to perfection.
2. God delivered man by posting angelic beings, called cherubim, to guard the entrance to the tree of life (see *Cherubim*, Gen 3:24). There was the possibility that Adam and Eve might try to re-enter the Garden some day in the future. They had failed to obey God before, and now, because of their sinful nature, they would be failing and disobeying God time and again. They might even try to re-enter the Garden and do what they had done before: eat the forbidden fruit, which in this case was the tree of life. God, therefore, had to keep man away from the Garden as long as man was upon the earth. This God did by posting angelic beings to keep man out of the Garden. Adam would never try — not even dare — to enter the Garden with those magnificent and powerful beings guarding it.

There was another reason why God posted the angelic beings around the Garden. God had to teach man a much needed lesson: man's salvation — his freedom from sin and his perfection — could no longer be found in the Garden of Eden. Man could never again find his provision, security, joy and happiness — his utopia, his heaven — here upon earth. He could only find salvation and perfection in *the promised seed*, the Saviour of the world.

This was the second reason God posted the angelic cherubim to guard the Garden. Adam had to know this and he had to know it once and for all. His utopia was never again to be upon earth. His hope was to be in God's love and in God's love alone, a love so great...

- that God would send *the promised seed*, the Saviour, to the world (see note 5, Gen 3:15)
- that God would provide the clothing of righteousness for man (see note, Gen 3:21)

**John 3:16** *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

**John 10:10** *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

**John 5:24** *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

**Rom 5:8** *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

**2 Cor 5:21** *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

**Ga1 4:4-5** *But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.*

**Eph 2:4-6** *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved.*

**1 John 3:1** *How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ■*

### GENESIS 03:24 CHERUBIM

*After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. **Genesis 03:24***

The cherubim are said to be living creatures (Eze 1:5, 13-14, 19; Rev 4:6-9). Just what they are — angelic beings or some other form of being — is unknown. They are mentioned some sixty-five times in Scripture. The *living creatures* and the seraphim seem to be the same being as the cherubim. They have many of the same characteristics or traits. In our study below we shall treat them as one. However, this is not certain: the cherubim, the living creatures and the seraphim, could be different races or classes of persons in the spiritual world or dimension of being. Note this:

=> Most of the references to the cherubim have to do with the ark of the covenant. Arising from both ends of the ark were two angelic beings called cherubim. They reached over and shadowed the mercy seat. The very presence of God was supposed to sit upon the lid or top of the ark between the glory of the two cherubim.

=> There are just a few major references to the *cherubim* and the *living creatures* in Scripture that describe them in detail: Isa 6:1-3, 6; Eze 1:4-28; 10:1-22; Rev 4:6-9; 5:6, 11-14.

The Bible says the following about the cherubim and the seraphim and the living creatures: (See note, Rev 4:6-9.)

1. They are in “the likeness of a man,” yet they are vastly different from man. They have four faces and four or six wings and many other distinguishing features (see Eze 1:5-25; Rev 4:6-9).
2. Their function is several-fold.
  - a. They stand in the immediate presence of God and His glory. They surround His throne (Eze 1:25-28; Rev 4:6).
  - b. They, at least some of them, spend all their time praising God, never resting — neither during the day nor at night. Their praise is powerful in its description of God.  
**Rev 4:8** “*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.*”  
**Rev 4:9** *Whenever the living creatures give glory, honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever.*
  - c. They are always associated with God’s most holy presence, His presence represented in the Holy of Holies within the tabernacle and upon the ark of the covenant (Exo 25:18; 26:1, 31; 36:8, 35; Psa 80:1, 99).
  - d. They seem to be mediators of God’s presence in the world. They have something to do with the work of God’s Spirit (Eze 1:20, 24; Psa 18:10).
  - e. They are associated with God in mercy (Exo 25:22; 37:9).
  - f. They are associated with God’s judgment upon man (Gen 3:24). □