

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
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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). □