

Genesis 3:20-24

21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. 22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: 23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Commentary

21 “*Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.*” The first bloodshed in God’s perfect creation was because of the sin of man. This may be seen in a sense as the first sacrifice since the result was the covering of Adam and Eve. This is symbolic of the blood of the lamb shed from the foundation of the world. Some teach that the shed of blood is not a necessity and that God merely took skins from animals that had passed for natural reasons. This is merely the imagination of man and an attempt to deny the necessity of the shedding of blood for the remission of sin. As we have learned in previous lessons there is no indication whatsoever that death existed before the fall. Concerning man we know this is the truth and the New Testament testifies that death entered by one man, Adam. Likewise life entered by one man, Christ. In the creation account God creates no carnivores and there is no reason for an animal to die other than from old age and this too seems not to be a possibility before the fall.

Adam and Eve’s sin was not being naked it was disobeying God. At this time there is none to observe their nakedness but them and their shame was that their true self was now displayed before each other and God, not that they didn’t have clothes on. Sin causes shame and while we may find places to hang this shame on such as their nakedness, the shame is in the soul, which is always naked before an all-seeing God. I rather see this covering as a necessity for the world they will now live in and a land that is against them. God from the beginning has provided that which man needs. They would need protection from the sun and rain to come (it doesn’t rain for a few hundred years). Clothing became a necessity of life not for moral reasons.

22 “*And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:*” This is a very interesting verse with a couple of key things we need to make particular note of. God speaks of Himself in the plural which is a definite reference to the Godhead or as we call it the Trinity.

“*Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.*” Some teach this is a mockery by God because man was deceived and now is like God and knows good and evil according to what Satan said to him. I believe we can take it more literally and from what we do know that Adam knew no sin, thus evil prior to the fall. Adam and Eve now knew there was evil and were ashamed of their nakedness. Many of the sinful attitudes of man flow from this initial shame of our first father. Shame or self-esteem is a driving force in what men do toward others and how they view themselves before God. Created in perfection in communion with God, Adam suddenly is able to see himself for the fallen creature he is, with no Savior or other way to redeem himself. His answer was to hide from God. The Bible shows to us the futility of this silly effort to hide from the Creator of all things. Even that which is in the heart and not yet uttered is fully known to God. God knew evil and before the creation of Eden we have the fall of

Satan, not that God did not foresee this sin and fall of some angels also. God spoke the complete ending and means thereof from the beginning. God knew good and evil man did not, so the words mean what they say and man in this sense had become like God in knowing evil existed.

“lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:” gives to us however the real meaning of what is happening. Man is evil and unless God does something man will take of the tree of life and live forever in His sin. How can this be? The tree of life represents Jesus Christ. For those who do not believe God offered Jesus to all of mankind this verse is a real problem. God set life before Adam and Eve in the Garden; they chose death instead of their own will or accord. Christ, the tree still stands there. If Adam and Eve partake before remission of sins then they can never be saved. The Bible is clear in Hebrews that to know eternal life and turn your back on Christ leaves no way of salvation because Christ cannot be sacrificed the second time and no other sacrifice will cover the sins of man. Remember we are at the beginning of the fall and the opening of God’s revelation of His plan of redemption. All the elements are present, but as yet there is no law to reveal these things and Adam could have eaten of the tree (Christ). The Lord’s words before and in the institution of the Lord’s Table uses this very language of partaking of the body of the Lord. Though many were offended and turned aside the first time Christ told a multitude they had to eat his flesh and drink His blood it wasn’t because it was an abhorrent thought of cannibalism but that they were sinners and need to partake of this same tree of life introduced by God here. Christ as revealing their shame and their own pride turned them away and the revulsion and harsh words were self defense not of a moral indignation at the thought of eating flesh.

Most every symbol later found in the Bible will find its roots here in the first book of the Bible. In coming generations (books of the Bible) God increases the revelation until finally God speaks most clearly in the person of Jesus Christ, God in the flesh and living with His creation. Places like this is what Christ was referring to when He said to search the Scriptures (the law) for they are that which speak of Him. Some places it is clear the Scripture is speaking of Christ in the Old Testament. Other places it is the introduction of the type and much shadow is present and only the diligent student will see Christ is indeed present from the beginning.

24 *“ So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”* This is not of necessity a literal sword. Please note it is not a type of angel (Cherubim) with a sword, it is a sword. This sword is the word of God in the person of the Holy Spirit who is represented by fire. Thus the way of salvation is guarded by the Holy spirit who blows where He wills with the winds of regeneration. Angels minister to the saints and the Holy Spirit (a flaming sword) leads the way home, and marks them as God’s chosen.

Application

We see that from day one God has provided everything needed by man to know Him and to survive in this temporal world. That has not changed and God still provides it all. By God’s grace we are saved, by God’s grace we are enabled to persevere, by God’s grace we will be glorified with Christ. All is of God and all is of grace. Disobedience of God is sin and the price of sin is human misery and death. This was so in the garden and remains so until the end of the world. God does not change.

Questions

- What was Adam and Eve ashamed of?
- What was the first sacrifice for sin?
- What does God provide for His creation?
- How are men saved and enabled to persevere until the coming of the Lord?
- What is one of the symbols of the Holy Spirit? Where else do we find this symbol used for the Holy Spirit's presence?