



Having Fallen

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A study of Genesis 3

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1973.01 GFG - The Gift, the Fruit and the Gifts, Thomas Barton.

1990.02 F - The Framework, Sovereign World

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1 – Angels are personal spirit beings

Genesis reveals the basic “givens” God has provided for us, both corporately as a race and also personally as individuals. Of course, these gifts operate within that larger framework of the world. The presence of temptation in God’s good world is not His “given” for us. It comes from another source.

Genesis assumes the reality of heavenly angels as existing before the creation of humans. Following the temptation of Eve and Adam, the way God addresses the snake implies that a hidden, angelic presence is operative. Yet the reference in Genesis 3.15 is brief and condensed; for the focus centres on the predicament of the humans. We need to look wider in Scripture to understand this angelic rebel.

Read carefully through Genesis 3, Isaiah 14.1-21,
Ezekiel 28.1-19, Jude 6-10, Hebrews 1.5-14.

[a] Obedient angels further God’s purposes for us.

Angelic beings are created spirits [Hebrews 1.14]. They have a glory as the executors of God’s will. Some carry high rank, like Gabriel and Michael.

The name Gabriel is composed of gbr and el = “the great messenger of God”. He is given the work of conveying God’s gracious interventions to Israel, God’s beloved and covenant people. He came to Daniel [8.16; 9.21-27] when he announced the restoration of Jerusalem. He also visited Mary and announced the birth of the Saviour [Luke 1.26-28].

The only other angelic personage whose name we are given to know is Michael = “Who is like God?” He is God’s angelic opposer of everyone who raises himself up against God, anyone who dares to try to equal God. In Daniel he contended against the spiritual powers hostile to Israel [Daniel 10.13,21,12.1]. Michael also fought against Satan, the author of all idolatry [Jude 9 and in Revelation 12.7].

Gabriel builds up; Michael overthrows. The former executes the gracious acts and desires of God, Who is our merciful Saviour; the latter, the acts of God, who is our Judge.

[b] Angelic hierarchical glory.

Things, such as flowers, rocks and trees, have their glory in their bodily, physical beauty alone [1 Corinthians 15.38-41]. We have already seen in Genesis that personal beings have a relational glory [#2009.02 Par17]. They demonstrate their initiative or responsive submission in their exchanges with other persons. This relating, as shown individually between the man and the woman, or both of them together with God, manifests their glory.

Angels obey God's commands as they carry out the will of God. Being invested with the necessary power to implement what God has set them to do, they convey an authority in relation to His purposes.

Angels are arranged within hierarchies; ordered by God in ranks. So, as they relate to God by way of command, so they obey those angels of higher authority. Wherever we see hierarchies we see something like angelic order. Hierarchies are task-oriented and so power-centred; rank establishes a chain of command for task. Angelic order is personal; built for command and obedience in association with the execution of power. Such is their created glory.

[c] Humans must know and appreciate angelic order.

As for birds or animals with their ways of living, indeed, for any creature of God's making, we honour Him as we accept and work within His given order. We certainly do not demean it.

As we have seen with human order, even if we recognise our own rebellious elements in the way things are, we do not rubbish the given order of God. Indeed, we can only recognise the disorder of our own experience through the vestigial remains of God's order as first given.

So with the angels; we are to honour their created glory and appreciate that angels are not to be reviled or rubbed; for they are "majesties" [Jude 8]. Even where angels have become rebellious, their order remains God-given and appropriate to their kind. It stands until God changes things. Even Michael did not rebuke Satan but recognised it was for God to do that [Jude 9].

Men and women, if they lack understanding of these matters, may be destroyed by them [Jude 10]. Such men lose their own glory; sinking to the level of beasts themselves. For, it follows that in being deceived about the order of the angels set by God, so they are unable to know their own order - as set over the animals - and so act in a bestial way that dishonours themselves [2 Peter 2.10-22].

[d] Angels and humans are both personal; but they are not of the same kind.

God has set boundaries for the angels both in heavenly matters and in respect of men and women. Being messengers of God to us, angels are to interface with us according to God's purposes. They are not to seek us for themselves.

Indeed, when angels desired intercourse with women it is said that they "did not keep to their own domain" [Jude 6]; that is, they moved outside of their natural created glory. They crossed a boundary set for their kind. It was an attempt to relate to men and women in a way that was "un-natural" to themselves. They

went after “strange flesh” - not of their created sort. As a result, these rebellious spirits were imprisoned by God, and are waiting to hear His judgment of them [Jude 6-7].

[e] Angels communicate with us in the name of God.

Obedient angels, when authorised by God to speak to men and women, convey his blessing and so serve us. In this service of mediating the messages of God to us, there is personal communication through their agency. We notice though, the care of the obedient angels never to speak on their own behalf, but always in the name of the One who sent them. They make it clear they are the executors of Another.

In the case of rebellious angels however, we need to be careful. For, although they are not of our kind, they sound as if they understand us and are like us. And even though they are personal and responsible, they are not ordered as we are and they do not share our nature. They are not made in the image of God as men and women are - it is never said, for example, that an angel “loves” God.

[f] Lucifer, or Satan, is an angel, who was in the Garden of Eden.

This background to angels and their closeness to us in personal exchange, and yet their definite distinction from us as fellow-creatures of God, sets the scene to consider Satan.

The section in Ezekiel 28.1-10 is a word from the Lord about the fate of the leader [prince] of Tyre, a town on the coast of northern Palestine. It follows a funeral dirge in Ezekiel 27 concerning the town of Tyre itself.

In Ezekiel 28.11-19 the funeral dirge over the king of Tyre contrasts his former pomp and splendour with his fall. The fall of the king parallels the fall of Lucifer from his high place in heaven.

We learn about Satan from this section.

[i] He is an angelic personage, a creation of God [Ezekiel 28.13b-14].

[ii] He was perfect in his wisdom and beauty as found in the garden of Eden [Ezekiel 28.12b].

[iii] He was placed on the holy mountain of God. An image that suggests “where God dwells”. God found no blame in him from his creation day until he was found to be unrighteous [Ezekiel 28.15]. This tells us that Satan was not created evil or rebellious.

[iv] He sinned, dishonouring [profaning] the holy place, and was expelled from it. Due to his created splendour, His heart became proud and he was violent within his person [Ezekiel 28.16-17]. In a way that the king of Tyre emulates, Satan expressed his internal violence through his “trade” - through commercial exchange for personal profit. This operating for personal gain marks a departure from angelic nature and calling.

[v] In the way he used the fallen king of Tyre, we learn that Satan uses the creation of God for his own purposes. He no longer serves God’s purposes for

mankind.

2 – Supernaturalists in our thinking

This information, directs us to be supernaturalists in our thinking about reality. Just as God is spirit, so we understand that the angels are spiritual beings, executors of God's commands for our good.

Satan's heavenly rebellion took place before the earth was made. So this rebellion has a considerable impact upon us as people created at the time when the knowledge of good [what God desires] and evil [what never entered His mind] is now within the experience of God Himself [Genesis 3.22]. The holy God hates sin for itself, not just simply for what it does to His world and to human creatures.

Thinking as supernaturalists requires us to balance three matters in our world-view.

[1] The sovereignty of God – that He is clearly in control;

[2] the significance of human beings – for we make a difference in the world; and

[3] the reality of the devil – who is active and malicious towards us.

The Scriptures will present us with these three dynamic perspectives. In the life of Jesus they were operative and He taught us how to live within such a way of thinking.

3 – Good sounding words, spoken with dark, deceptive meaning

We have seen how, having fallen we are in need of revelation in our present our situation [# 2009.02 The Beginning part 6]. Further, we have been introduced to the Word of God as the utterance of God's heart containing a revelation of Himself [# 2009.02 The Beginning part 13]. As the Genesis narrative moves along, what the man and the woman must now face is the terrifying possibility of hearing words that are neither good nor true, and certainly not originating in the heart of God.

What is worse, these words emanate from a spirit-being who is

personal and is able to communicate with humans. They are words presented as close to the sort of thing that God would say because the speaker has been designed and equipped to speak to humans on God's behalf. The only difference is a hidden one; that the speaker speaks on his own behalf now.

Yet, even if the vocabulary is similar, the meaning coming from the source is dark. For the source is an angel whose relationship to God is irretrievably broken. So we have deceptive words; words that sound good. But if taken at face value, and responded to as if they were God's word, they are a commitment of will in the hearer to share in the rebellion of the angel.

Read Genesis 3.1-7

[a] God's wrath expressed.

When God hands people over to their desires that are contrary to His, this is a manifestation of His anger and rejection. In the case of men and women, they experience the wrath of God in that He does not halt them in their sin, but allows them to continue [Romans 1.18-32]. The same principle is now permanently operative in the life of Satan. He has desired to be "as God" - he entertained angelic desires to be God [Gen 3.6].

As an angel he knows chain of command, obedient execution of another's orders and the giving of requisite power to others to do his bidding. He understands submission to be expressed as obedience in practice, with no reference made to the heart of the one who obeys. He is only concerned about getting his own will done - for that is how he thinks of God, from the perspective of his angelic experience, although now as a rebel. Satan desires to be the commander, not the commanded. He wants to rule, not to be ruled. He wants to execute, not to be the executor of another's will.

[b] Satan still has power, even though a rebel.

Although Satan is out of order, God has delivered him over to his desire. This is why, from our perspective, Satan still has power. God allows it as an expression of His wrath. And so He cements him [hardens his will] in his deception - in this way God's judgment expresses itself upon him. Satan's view is that he is getting away with it; God's perspective is that Satan is handed over, he will not be redeemed back or rectified.

It is different with us humans. God promised, immediately after the rebellion of the man and the woman, that a redemptive work would ensue. He has not handed us over to our desires permanently, nor to the dire consequences of our sin. His mind is to redeem us.

Insofar that we are found among the sinners experiencing the wrath of

which Romans 1.18-32 indicates, then we are handed over and rejected. But under the call of God, we have been drawn to Christ and have now become the rejected elect of God. In the same way, but historically reverse, Israel as the elect of God, currently found rejecting the Saviour, have the promise that they will find their election irrevocable [#2009.02 The Beginning part 3]. To the Lord our God belongs mercy and forgiveness!

When Jesus the man, who is God's Son, obeys the Father, who loves men and women and the world He has created, then a great power for redemption of men and women is released. It is the power of the love of God as expressed within the inner life of God. It is the love that men and women, made in that image, can share and understand.

This outgoing love, when received, has the initiating power to draw us into submission - to respond freely and voluntarily. Our responsive love, when returned to God, delights His heart.

For us, as deceived, human slaves of Satan, to know we are loved and to respond to God like that, is to return to the glorious liberty of the sons of God. A freedom found only in union with Christ, the God-man. This human experience is a sweet communion that an angel, may not and cannot know.

God has sent His Son for us, and for our salvation – not for the rebellious angels. They long to look into the matter [1 Peter 1.12]; but it was hidden from them [Ephesians 3.8-11]; what they see now is the result of the Church of Jesus Christ operative in the world.

[c] A subordinate, impersonal creature, approaches the woman and begins to speak.

The woman's place in the order of creation is over the snake. The snake's approach the woman, initiating a conversation with her, is itself a sign of disorder. The snake sets the agenda for a discussion about matters that concern God and the humans; this is another sign of disorder.

The woman had no experiential knowledge of animals, Adam has expressed this authority in naming them, she had not. What she has, we presume, is the word of the man about their shared authority; she had not taken knowledge of this matter by practice. By replying in the way she does, she accepts the initiative of the serpent to converse, and so has already been drawn out of order herself.

[d] Things implied about God in a subtle way.

The serpent, on hearing the woman recite God's word [with the addition of "nor touch it"], moves from the suggestive question "has God said..." to a flat denial of the consequence God had stated. "You shall not die", it says. What is challenged is not the goodness of God's word as a proper command with an offer of sonship behind it. An angel might not comprehend that.

Rather, the denial of the consequence is stated. This blatantly presents the consequence, lovingly foreshadowed by God, as a threat rather than as a protection. But what is implied is that Eve should see the consequence as an incentive to

obedience based on self-centred interest. The serpent betrays the angelic mind behind it. A mind already set to see God as a manipulative controller.

Further, the addition "...For God knows..." implies an access to God that presents the speaker as someone who can now begin to interpret God and his inner motives to the woman. The serpent, acting as a mediator, begins to instruct the woman. Up to this point the only persons who have done that is God Himself and perhaps, by inference, the man to whom she was presented.

[e] Right sounding words with tricky meanings; religious language.

The serpent ventures, as if stating something God knows will happen, that "your eyes will be opened". This is an entire fabrication! What God actually said would happen, was that they "will die". They will be lost to God as those with whom he desires fellowship.

[See, in the New Testament, how the prodigal son as absent from his father is described by his father to the elder brother as "dead" and "lost" - Luke 15. 24].

It was already true that the man and the woman were open to the things of God. Now, rather than eyes being opened their inner heart will be darkened [Romans 1.21]. The tone of the snake's conversation implies that God is holding back something from the woman. God is presented as depriving them of something they could have for themselves.

[f] "Knowing" evil through doing the alternative to "good".

It is true that their eyes will be opened to know evil and good. They will enter into a knowledge. They will take knowledge of evil, by the doing of it; by obeying another mind than the Lord's.

And it is true that now, as things stand in our own present experience, it is always good and evil - a contrast, a duo. Now, whenever there is something good from God, there is a passenger [evil] always there as a rebellious alternative, a temptation.

What was a gracious offer of entry into the fellowship of knowledge of God as Father, now, after the fall, can be appreciated as an exchange of fathers. Adam and Eve obeyed another mind, treating it as their father. A perception stated in the reply of Jesus to the Pharisees "you are of your father the devil, ...he is a liar from the beginning" [John 8.41-44, 1 John 3.10].

The expression, "you will be like God" in the mouth of the serpent, who is a front for Satan, conveys how Satan thinks he is already 'like' God. He sees himself now as a deciding, masterful person, endowed with power to do what he wants. It is a perception, consistent with his deceived position, in which he is now fixed. So he beguiles the woman with language rebelliously angelic in its meaning. A deceptive power is operating by using the same words with a different meaning, spoken from a different place of obedience, by a different class of creature.

In the deceptive state of affairs in which we live we must always be asking:

[a] what are the words spoken?

[b] What heart is shown here? And to test this we look at the fruit of the life of the speaker, not the words spoken.

[c] Who speaks to me and in what relation am I set to them?

[d] What class of creature am I dealing with?

[e] If I obeyed this word, what, from God's point of view, would I be doing?

The woman is already like God, for she is made in His likeness by creation, and for her it is "good" to be like God - that is her glory, along with the man. So Satan has nothing new to offer, just his own warped view to project. It is a perversion based upon angelic knowledge, gained through rebellion to God.

[g] What caused the woman to take and eat?

[i] Under the impact of the serpent's deceptive words, a possibility is presented to the woman. It is that God's gifts may be separated from His Person. The woman could seize for herself the fruit of the tree. She could think of the fruit as divorced from the Word of God concerning it, disconnecting it from the relation to God. She is led to think of the thing itself [#2009.02 Part 29].

[ii] The tree "was good for food". This is certainly true of the other trees, and her experience of them would become important to her thinking now; under the influence of the serpent she begins to rationalise. She has a 'fact' before her, she has tasted this food before; but this 'fact' is not the truth of the matter. The truth is the word of God for the situation of this particular tree. That is what must be believed and acted upon in obedience.

[iii] The sensual "delight of the eyes" drew her to consider her pleasure in it. Such delight draws her to move from finding relational pleasure in the obedience to God's word. She is remembering the pleasure of obedient activity in the past. Now, under the serpent's beguiling influence, she has considered the delight out of context to the word of God.

[iv] The desire "to be wise" was planted within her by the conversation. According to the serpent, there is knowledge that can be "taken" even when it was not "given". Such knowledge is what is called "wisdom" by the world. It is a curiosity, driven by rebellious desire to take from God what He is not offering. To seize it is to take initiative from Him. Small wonder that, after she went on to eat, she then took the initiative from her husband and offered it to him.

[h] To accept a disordered relation by one placed in relation to you is to lose glory. It is a shaming.

As to authority issues, we see here the cunning approach by a subordinate creature to draw the woman into this discussion which is out of order. For this, the snake is later blamed and his consequent circumstances described as 'cursed' by God.

In accepting address from an animal the woman dishonoured herself as made in the image of God. To begin with, she took seriously the things uttered by the rebellious snake. Then, she acts without reference to her husband and so dishonours his glory. Finally Adam, knowing that she responds to him as they

were placed in tandem by God, also eats. This loss of glory by them both will lead to shame, which is the awareness that they are no longer how they once were.

Most important of all, God is not obeyed. Two people, who were designed in His likeness to bring Him glory by our obedient relating, have dishonoured their Head.

4 – Shame: the awareness of lost relational glory.

Satan, the enemy of mankind, speaking through the snake, deceptively insinuated that Adam and Eve were abandoned by God. This, of course, is Satan's experience. And when accepted by the man and the woman, they experienced a disturbance of their relationship between themselves.

What has dawned upon them, having taken knowledge of sin by the doing of it, is that their own relationship is affected. Each registered that he/she is now viewed differently by the other. Each is ashamed of himself/herself in the sight of the other.

Shame is fundamentally a relational issue, because it is derived from the defilement of a true relational glory [#2009.02 part 17]. It registers a change that has taken place between persons. In this way, its relational origins can still be traced. The communal element to this sense about ourselves has not disappeared. We can find that we are ashamed of ourselves before others. However, this is registered as something within and about oneself. It is to know in a self centred way that, personally, "I am no longer in the mint-condition that I once was".

There is an element here of what is behind all the insecurity of persons. They are experiencing an inward registration of their inability to measure up to their peers, their loved ones, and to themselves.

The man and the woman, reciprocally, know that a holy state of affairs between them has been defiled. What they had together is now changed. Something has intruded into their way of relating together which was not there before. They have lost their natural joy together.

Of course, what has entered into their holy relationship, as given by a holy God, is the defiling presence – expressed in the will of Satan accepted between them as a "father" – of a rebellious angel. To their detriment, what they learn through the shame they now experience, is

just how much the relation between them was deeply dependant upon the One who had made them in His image and for one another. It is to retain a glimpse of a truth lost by experiencing the absence of what was there but no longer actualised; no longer operatively known. It constitutes a “longing” now – under the changed situation.

Read Genesis 3.7

Covering - an emergency measure.

To live with their shame they made fig-leaf covers for the only places that showed their complementary anatomy. Their genital differences, a bodily statement of their differentiation, had formerly stated their answering to one another; their solidarity and oneness. What was once a delight and a joy they now covered over, for it reminded them of their lost glory, their shame.

5 - Good and evil; not a dualism

We can now see why the tree in the middle of the garden is called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As the man and the woman were made and placed in the garden, they knew “good” - what is in God’s mind, how He wishes their world and life to be arranged and how they are made in His likeness. This we have said is their glory. How they relate to what is made demonstrates who they are. God saw this and said that it was “good”.

We have considered that God’s word to them was a gracious offer to take knowledge of sonship by obeying, but it was also a deep warning - it was a protective word as well. What was God protecting them from in the good world that He had made?

It turns out that it is not the “good” world He has prepared for them which generates the need of this protective word, but the prior rebellion of Satan. That was not a matter for the earth, or the garden, but was a matter of the heavens. That rebellion had been registered in God as a rebellion that He had to judge. Insofar that the angelic rebellion was not according to His good will, it is “evil”.

Good and evil then, are not two equally opposed matters. In this part of Scripture, “good” means the state of things God has caused to come

about by creation. It is a revelation of His mind and character. By “evil” is meant a disobedient action by his creatures, in opposition to this revealed “good” mind of God.

The decisive thing to keep before us is the relational setting we have been constantly re-iterating. Here we see that “good” has its origin in God. “Evil” is a response to what is good: it is a contrary response to the express purpose of God. “Evil” then, is reactive, not pro-active: it does not bring a new thing into existence. It is an adverse creaturely response to God’s initiated “good”. This is important to remember. Satan, or man for that matter, can never cease to be a creature. He may act as if he is not, but that is to act on a deception.

6 – Knowledge of good and evil.

From the point of view of God Himself, He has recorded for us what He did in response to Satan’s action when He removed him from the holy mountain as a profane, unholy defiling personage [Ezekiel 28].

From Satan’s deceived point of view he thinks of God now as One who knows good and evil [Genesis 3.5b] - we learned this from the mouth of the serpent. Yet, it fails to take into account the “freedom” of God [# 2009.02 The Beginning part 2]. Forgetting the free response that God allowed for in His creating, Satan thinks that by his rebellion, he has brought into God’s experience a difference to God by forcing Him to “take knowledge” of his adverse response.

He is wrong in this, for his bent thinking arises from rebelling against his creaturely relation. He has forgotten that God is a Creator and he a creature. It is solely for God to initiate the “taking of knowledge” - which is presented to us as knowledge of Himself, or what He has made as expressive of his Mind. That relation being inviolate, assures us that only God can save and remedy the situation. It is not possible for a creature to introduce something into God that was not there already.

What in fact has happened is that the holiness of God has expressed its deep reaction – a response to Satan’s response - to Satan’s rebellion and judged him. God’s knowledge of “good and evil” does not affect his character; He is God who is good; evil can only be the responsive work of a creature.

Knowledge of “good” and “evil” comes now then to mean knowledge

of God and what He has made, sullied and dirtied by the rebellion of Satan.

So, when it is said that humans have acquired knowledge of “good and evil” it means that a creature made by God presented to us how he sees and thinks of God. This presentation is set up by the initiative of the tempter. As the humans accede to it by their own will, they “take” the knowledge that the tempter knows – adopting his own rebellious stance. But they do so as humans, not as angels, finding the new knowledge expressing itself after their own kind. This happens over all of their life.

It is only as we have revelation of the truth, the word of God, about anything that we can be set free from the deception of the perverse, creaturely voice.

7 - Fig leaves: a rebellious attempt to alleviate shame.

They took from the fig tree not its fruit but its leaves and they found a use for them that was never intended. And they must sew them, configure them to cover genitals – the bodily difference between them. This is the first record of work done after the fall. And it is not a good work, a work with an accompanying word from God. It is a self-remedy. All works of man after this are not “good” works.

They will have to wait for the ‘seed of the woman’ to come for there to be the possibility of good works again - for that will bring about the possibility of sharing in the righteousness of Christ.

Use of the leaves is an initiative of the man and the woman to alleviate their pain - it is pattern-making and sewing driven by shame. It is the pain of the heart, sharply associated through what the eyes are now seeing. The differences in their bodies stand no longer for joy and delight, but loss of glory. So, what brings pain must be hidden.

We cover nakedness not because there is something wrong with it, but because there is something right with it - it testifies to our origin and intended union. We cover over what is good because we are not good and have come to know good and evil in respect of it.

The fig leaf solution is the work of the man and the woman from their own desperate experience - but not from understanding built on revelation. It is driven by their suffering and seeks for a release from it.

This demonstrates that the problem of pain is really consequent upon the understanding of creaturely evil.

8 - Garments of skin - a godly pattern revealing the ultimate cost of redeeming human glory.

The difficulty of the fig leaves is that they are the initiative of the man and the woman, and so represent a compounding rebellion. In attempting to alleviate their pain themselves, they act as if they are abandoned by God to their situation.

Nothing is further from the truth. God shows Himself to be in full control and knows all things. He knows what to do, and makes preparation for their pain. But He will not simply alleviate their pain. He will, at the same time, reveal to them the pain in His own heart. For He and they are in relation.

If they have made a response to the command not to eat, God Himself will now make a response to their response. Even if they think of themselves as abandoned, He is there for them. The relation set up between them and the Creator is not destroyed from His side, for He keeps to His part of the relation.

This pattern of relationship with Adam and Eve is foundational. We shall see it again in covenant with Israel. God, in His freedom, chooses – elects Himself – to be in covenant with the people of His choice. In committing to that, He never abandons the covenant connection. Even if Israel is unfaithful, He is not.

Further, such choosing by God to maintain relationship always means that He takes the suffering part as necessary to bring a final alleviation of the pain for His creatures.

So the way of fixing the matter will take the form that does not simply alleviate their shame. It takes the form God sees it must. So that form is set by what it means to Him.

Whatever the consequences of their rebellion means for them any remedy has its foundation in what must first be fixed in God, for He has not ceased to love them, and so there is an answering pain in God's heart. He must deal with that. Being the pain of a "good" heart – it cannot be ignored. From His holiness, rescue can only come through judgment, through His decision. It is always the case for fathers.

Although He is making a response to their response, because it is His action it signals a redeeming, new initiative. So the covering of the shame of the man and the woman needs the shedding of blood. True covering comes at the cost of life. Here, at this time it will be expressed through the loss of an animal's life, whose skin will cover the man and the woman for a time. God graciously acts so as to say, 'put away your fig leaves, use my covering, it is better, for it is my work not yours, and it is done in my way, not yours - I am your Saviour, not you; trust Me about this.'

The shedding of blood to achieve a covering for shame is stated here. The principle is foreshadowed that only death will permanently deal with shame.

Later, it is the death of the God-Man; Who by his way of dying shamefully, will exhaust the shame of all men and women.

The Lord Jesus is the Godhead's solution. Totally unable to deal with their shame, men and women will, through Him, come to see that they have not been abandoned by God, but always loved.

We Christians are a shameless people - not because we do not have, of ourselves, much of which to be ashamed - but because of His glory which accrues to us as a gift of righteousness; His, not ours!

9 – The basis for clothing and the nature of modesty.

In thinking about the clothing of the man and the woman, we contrast their own provision of fig leaves with God's work of the killing of an animal and the use of its skin to cover them.

The man and the woman are interested in hiding from each other the loss of glory they sense and experience in their bodily realm. We have seen that it is really a relational exchange that precipitated the loss of glory. They reversed their order. But as they look at each other their answering bodies embarrass them. Once their bodies could speak to them of their beautiful difference. Now, they can also testify to relational loss. So they cover each other from the other's gaze.

Later, this theme of "clothing" will be used by Paul, when he will speak about putting off the old life and putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. He thinks of the Lord as the covering for shame, and that covering is found in union with a Person [See later page 35-36].

10 – The judgment of God is his good word to a fallen situation.

The issue that God has with us is not that we have heard an alternative voice. That is not what He is calling us to account for. Living in a world where a prior angelic rebellion in heavenly life has taken place is not our fault. Accountability before God is where He calls us to speak to Him about a response that we have made to a source that is not Himself. We have listened to and obeyed a voice other than His and so we have chosen between Him and another. This is unholy relating.

Later in Israel's history, we shall see that He calls them to listen to His prophetic voice exclusively. They are not to listen to other voices, and they are warned about those who perform detestable practices [Deuteronomy 18]. These folks listen to other demonic voices [# 2009.05 Listening Exclusively to God, part 1.4-9].

Read Genesis 3.8-15

[a] Aware that things have changed between him and the woman, the man now registers change with God. With her, he registered shame; a matter connected with the loss of glory they had shared. However, at the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden, the man hides from the Lord out of fear. Fear, we are told in Scripture, has to do with punishment [1 John 5.4.18].

The gracious Lord seeks the man. The man admits to nakedness thus indicating his change of position. "Where are you?" leads to the statement, "Who told you that you were naked, have you eaten...?" What the Lord is saying is that when He made them, both naked as they were, they were not ashamed. Nakedness for the man and the woman, understood from God's side and coming from His hand, was a good state of affairs. They never hid from God before, although they were naked then.

[b] When the man says that he is "naked", he does not describe the naked existence as God made them in the first place. It doesn't refer to the body per se. Rather, it is a statement "I am not clothed", in the sense of 'not covered'. The original nakedness they had from the hand of God was a glory. Now, it testifies to a lack of something.

Such feelings of nakedness are not consistent with how God gave them to feel when he first made them. So it is not God's voice that has spoken this alternative message to them - someone else has been speaking. And it is not possible for them to be registering the results of fear, shame and nakedness unless they have 'taken

11 - Blame is strictly personal.

When asked if he has eaten, the man reported the circumstances of how he came to eat. The woman, God provided for him, gave the fruit to him and he ate. Adam does not blame the woman - there is no indication of that in his answer.

Adam makes no mention of the exchange between the serpent and the woman. Indeed, the text, by its silence may imply that he has no knowledge of the woman's exchanges with the serpent. As far as he is concerned the woman presented him with the fruit. Indeed, he may have thought it was fruit from any of the trees they were allowed to eat – perhaps there would be no physical difference. All he would have found within himself was that, on eating the fruit, shame and fear entered his experience.

I do not mention this ignorance of the exchange of the woman and the serpent so as to absolve the man from eating, for God does not excuse him from that. It is his “eating’ that is addressed.

Also, I write this way because the flow of the deception has proceeded from serpent to woman, and now from woman to man. It is the solidarity between the man and the woman that draws him in. This is what he means by “the woman you gave to be with me”. In answering to God, he draws attention to His order, ‘she and I were set in relation to one another and she gave it to me’.

This is what I believe Paul is getting at in 1 Timothy 2 when he says that the woman was first deceived. He is not apportioning blame in the sense of saying “...it is the women that are the problem!”. He is discerning the disruption to the order of the relations God has set. That is why he does not permit a woman to have authority over a man - it is contrary to the given order; the same contrariness to the order that he sees in the work of Eve.

Also, bear in mind that Paul is discussing what he, as an apostle, would permit. Not what he sees happening. The issue at stake is that he will not sanction an “out of order” situation. He would certainly have acknowledged that such things took place.

For example, the exchange between Deborah and Barak as to the honour of killing Sisera indicates a state of affairs between men and

women which is a discipline upon Sisera himself [Judges 4.7-9].

There is another reason for respecting this silence of Scripture about Adam's part during the serpent/woman exchange. It is that God does not apportion blame at all between them; He deals with each according to the deed that each had performed.

Blame, as God apportions it, is personally distinct; it is not comparative. The man is called to account because he ate, the woman because she gave, and the serpent because he beguiled.

In other words, there is no attempt in the judgment of the Lord to distinguish proportional blame. Neither should we. In fact to do so, would be a sign of the fall upon us. We must not read the Scripture in the light of our apportioning and sit in judgment on them. Rather we need to read the Scripture for what it says and see how God thinks of it all.

Later, in our understanding of conviction of sin, we shall see that when the Lord makes us aware of our sin, He deals with the deeds we have done, or the thoughts we have thought or the words we have said. He brings us clear, factual conviction.

It involves no comparative judgments about others. That would be to compare and contrast ourselves with other persons – a result of the fall – and that is not how God works with us.

In a similar way, we can discern the work of our conscience. When trained by our parents, our conscience registers our departures from the social values of our society as contrasts we see in comparison to others.

Later, under the renovation of the Lord's Spirit within us, we begin to register within our conscience with a deeper purity. In that sense it is a conviction of what is taking place between He and ourself only, although the occasion of the sin may be our relation with others. This registering of blame within us is pure because that is how He judges. He is working out of a personal knowledge and relating to each one of us, one-to-one.

12 - Judgment of deeds done reveals guilt

It is important to understand that "being" guilty is quite different from "feeling" guilty. Our feelings are associated with the facts of our life. But we are not guilty because we feel so; yet we may feel guilty if we are so.

When a person is tried in a court legally, he is accused of a crime, and then, if found guilty he is judged to have done that of which he is

accused. This is what guilt is, it is to be found blameable and therefore the next step is a liability to penalty. So it would go in the legal framework.

As the holiness of the person of God confronts Adam's rebellion, his guilt does not have to be established. In Adam it is already evident. He admits to the deed and also evidences feelings that accompany such guilt towards God.

13 – Forfeited blessing leads to cursed living.

Blessings express the initiative of God. They are the word of God for the world issued as statements of command. They presume God's own given order for mankind. Since commands are based upon His gifts given - blessed obedience is the response drawn from those who are able, by God's gift, to perform what is commanded. The commands are a joy to do, combining both the power to do and a happiness of spirit in the doing. Commands as blessings bring delight because they are an opportunity to enact the relation with God in which we are set. They make real the experience of fellowship with Him.

A cursing is unlike a blessing. Curses are not God's initiative but His response to our response of wickedness. They express how things will now be since what we have done is not good. So they are a judgment - in the sense of being God's evaluation and prediction in the light of the prevailing situation. Because they are God's judgment, they are a good judgment, always right and appropriate. They spell out the consequences of our actions. These cursed consequences may be changed if God will intervene, but not otherwise.

The serpent, as an animal, has dishonoured the woman set over him by God. Being committed to dishonour he is handed over to it; he will enact his own dishonour where he has been set. As an animal he will slither along the ground for all his days - he shall be forced to take a lowly place. If the cattle and other animals fall under a curse the serpent is cursed "more than all cattle". He was introduced to us as "more crafty than any beast of the field" [Genesis 3.1]. So his lowly place of eating the dust will be particularly appreciated by him.

14 – Promised rescue for mankind. Redress through the seed of the woman.

Having used the snake as his agent, Satan is recognised by God as the source. But the form of the statement is still addressed to the serpent - similar to the way the king of Tyre was addressed in Ezekiel.

God states that a wonderful, holy hatred will be set up between the woman and the serpent; for she has been seriously ripped off here. This hatred [enmity] will show itself as strife, reflecting the sort of hatred which God himself has, a right hatred against all that is unrighteous and unholy.

This hatred will find expression in action between their “seeds”. While stated ‘there and then’ in the garden by God, it refers to the future; which is ‘here and now’ for us.

The seed of the serpent [Satan] are the “sons” he has by obedience to him. These are the men and women who obey Satan; they find themselves implacably opposing the “seed” of the woman, who is Jesus Christ [Galatians 3.15-19].

Now Satan is directly addressed in the last statement to the serpent, “He [the seed of the woman] shall bruise you on the head” - a serious blow to Satan is forecast here. “...and you shall bruise him on the heel” - a wounding of the Christ is stated, but not as serious for him as it is for Satan.

This signals a conflict on behalf of men and women. The seed of the woman will engage, as a true man, the enslaving enemy of mankind. As the promised ‘seed of the woman’ Christ will plunder Satan’s house and set free the slaves.

15 – The final judgment of Satan foreshadowed.

However, this address to Satan expresses a final dealing with the source of evil, even if it does not eradicate the consequences of

evil.

Before this time, in rebelling against God, Satan had gone too far. He was already under the judgment of God. Satan is already cursed in the heavenly realms and demoted from his original place of honour.

In tempting the woman, he has also gone too far, but in ways he shall have to wait to find out. In desiring to meddle with earthly affairs, he has entered an arena to find the curse of God, expressed as an implacable hatred of him, is now registered among the humans.

This hatred originates in a holy God. The enemy will find that he is hated among the people of the earth [even though he is powerful] and there will come a Man, a seed of the woman, who will express that hatred to Satan and all his works in such a way as to deliver him a final judgment. Indeed, a judgment which entails a man ascending into heaven to make war and cast Satan out of heaven and down to the earth. A final victory over Satan comes about through the heavenly man, who is the seed of the woman.

As people are moved from the satanically enslaving grip of the world and come to God, they are drawn to Christ. The Holy Spirit establishes three convictions within them as they see that God saves us through judgment [John 16.8-11].

First, they are convicted of their own, personal sin of unbelief in Jesus Christ. That their stance of not trusting Him is a decision of their own; in seeing the gospel they realise their error and culpability.

Second, they are convicted about the righteousness of Jesus Christ. For, the cross and resurrection and ascension indicate that Jesus went to the Father, and therefore must have come from there and so is declared to be the Son of God.

Third, they are convicted about judgment. Christians understand that the cross of Jesus Christ is the judgment of this world as it is also an infliction of a defeat for Satan – for it breaks his influence over men and women, and casts him out of his dominating place in their lives. It is also the judgment of the world, as the sphere of Satan's influence. This judgment is, at the same time, the salvation and the judgment of mankind.

Praise the Lord here! That his first cursing has to do with the great enemy of mankind and his agent, the snake. He sheeted home the blame straight to its original source. He did not start with the victims who have sinned, but with the tempter, who initiated such a set of circumstances for those made in the likeness of God. In this sense the first cursing is bad

news for Satan, and that means there must be very good news for those he has ripped off - the good news is that there is justice, because there is a just God at the head of all that is.

16 – Changes for the woman in giving birth

The woman, as she responded to the deception of the enemy, not only was deceived herself, she became the agent of temptation for the man. God has made us personally significant; we matter. Whenever we have taken an action – we commit to stay in that way of thinking unless we change our mind.

Read Genesis 3.16-17

To the woman concerning giving birth.

Up to this point in the narrative we have not heard of the woman and the man having children, except for the statement of blessing given in Genesis 1.28 concerning them. There it was said that they should “be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth...”. It is from this text that we are to understand these two are our first parents.

Further, their coupling together [cleaving] in sexual intercourse has been described as their uniting in celebration of their origin. The coupling is the act of the man and the woman. The union has a product in that a family is established.

So, multiplication is a commanded blessing, a fruit of the sexual intercourse between the man and the woman. Since the blessing implies the ability to carry it out, then the gift of the Lord will be conception for them both, as parents, and the carrying of the child as temporarily domiciled in the body of the woman.

[Genesis 4.1b “with the help of the Lord” - does this apply to conception or to surviving the pain of the childbirth, or both?]

The pain of delivery, already there in the first place, as now “multiplied”. The human body is endowed with receptors for pain that are necessary for functioning; it is how God has made us. Pain involved in the cost of multiplication was there - but now the mark of the fall is that it will be greatly multiplied. The pain intensifies to an agony. Their joint union, the celebration of their origin, has a product: strong pain will accompany the woman in bringing it to birth.

The cursed circumstance for her is pain associated with birth. There is not

a curse on children and multiplication, for these simply reflect the created order of God. This pain is exclusive to the woman, associated with her own part in multiplication, the carrying and delivery of the children of their joint union.

17 – The “emergency order” of her husband’s rule

In Genesis 4.7 the expression spoken about sin, presented as a waiting power, wanting to overpower and master Cain, is that “its desire is for you”. Cain, at that time, was alerted by God that it was imperative that he must master this power, sin.

This expression is paralleled and used of the woman in respect of her husband; “your desire shall be for your husband. What God seems to be saying to her is that by taking the initiative from her husband she has stepped radically out of order. She has a mind set, contrary to the created order. In taking “knowledge” of evil, her desire is now to master her husband.

In the light of this committed stance towards her husband a preserving resistance to her desire is set in place.

We must remember here that the record of this exchange explains for us the fallen state of the situation in which we now stand. Eve is a representative person in this respect – that is how the text uses and presents her. The issue being dealt with here is the provision of an ‘emergency order’ – a provision designed to impede further rebellion and its effects. It was put in place until the saving work of the Saviour can come to be expressed in those who receive His Spirit.

God’s gracious provision for her in such a setting is that her husband shall rule her. It will now be a rule, a regulation of her activity, by her husband, in which he is the agent of the hand of God in curbing this disorder to which she has succumbed and has now enslaved herself.

Notice that her husband did not rule her before this. Previously, as the man spoke or acted, the woman responded to him in loving harmony. This mirrored the lead and response found in the Trinity of the Persons of the Godhead. Then, they both shared in the likeness of God.

And they still do; but, in practice, under the emergency order, it is differently expressed. What the man previously had found was that he

acted with no idea of imposing his will upon another.

God's response takes the form of a check so that the increasing chaos will not bring destruction.

It is a gracious provision. For God has not handed her over to what she desires so as to reap the irrevocable consequences. He has provided a halt, a wall, a curb, which she will experience. This wall, this provision, does not express the desire of her husband to rule her, but of God's care, and her husband is his agent in this matter.

That, of course, men would go on to use this to their own rebellious advantage to dominate women is a development of further rebellion and sin. But the original tension that God's provision set up is still discerned as a gracious check – not a handing over to consequences.

We shall see this gracious provision expressed in other great themes of the Bible, in respect of God and Israel, Christ and the church, the Holy Spirit and the human fleshy drive.

18 – Adam's blame is stated

For Adam, there are consequences for his other relations also. He is addressed as to his own misdemeanour; it is that he "listened to the voice of his wife", instead of listening to the voice [command] of God [Genesis 3.17]. This "listening" doesn't mean that he simply heard her voice. There is no sin in that. It is that he attended to it so as to obey it.

The issue for God is that Adam has obeyed his wife rather than the Lord's command [Genesis 3.17]. In other words, God is saying to Adam something along the lines of, "our relationship is out of order; you should not listen to her when it is contrary to what I have commanded".

So why did he? To understand this we need to look at union and what it means for the woman, and what it means for the man.

19 - Union a different experience for the woman than the man

For the woman, she has had an experience of union through her creation. She is drawn, by God, from Adam as her bodily source;

she is bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. She knows joint-union by creation because she was taken from someone and made. Simply by being created she came from an experienced union with Adam.

In this sense she has taken knowledge of something that he has not. To later have union with him in intercourse is to find a mutual expression of that union she already knows.

Adam does not know union by creation - for he is made of the dust of the earth. When he tills the ground he “works” something from which he was formed, but does not recognise in the ground someone from whom he is created. Whenever Eve looks at Adam, she sees the one from whom she was created; and to be formed from him is to have known a union with him; to be created is to come from a union with a person.

Further, when she is presented to him, what he does know is that she is “bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh”. So he has an awareness of this union she experiences in being created; but he has no such knowledge of the union-experience himself.

She is in solidarity with him; she is a gift presented to him by God. And she is a delight, in a way that he knows the animals are not. She corresponds to him. The animals obey his command and he sets how they will be named. She, on the other hand, is a present from God. Adam initiates and she responds with the freedom that mirrors how it is within the Godhead. What he seeks in her is this union between them which God gave to meet his aloneness. He is powerfully drawn to this solidarity. The danger, once she has taken and eaten of the tree, is that he will choose what he is drawn to in her rather than obedience to God.

What is so tragic for them both is that if they had obeyed God’s command, they both would have known God as “sons”; the experience of fellowship - a living unity with Him as creatures, made in His likeness, were meant to have.

20 – A relational change for the man in his work

We have already thought about the work of the man as his sharing in purposive action similar to what God does [#2009.02 The Beginning Part 20]. But man does this not as God, but as a creature in a contingent world that he “rules”. Our picture is of him acting purposively on the stage of this world as his place of action and display.

Read Genesis 3.17-19

[a] The man and the dust.

Prior to the creation of the woman, Adam's body is formed from the red dirt already there. His relation to the earth is not that it gave him life [as is set forth in some myths; close, but not true]; but that he was formed from it, and God breathed life into Him.

It also guards us against the clear error that man is made "from God" as we have seen the woman was made from the man. If that were so we have the man as an extension of God in some pantheistic way. This error is closed off by Scripture.

[b] The man and the garden.

All the plants in the garden exist for him and serve his life. When he tills the earth they bring forth abundantly and what they bring forth is good for food. In this sense, he has authority over it; relationally speaking, it is one of the expressions of his glory.

As we saw in the case of the snake, an accursed disruption in the order of one relation leads to others being affected. As the snake moved out of order with the woman, so he reaped a change in his relation with the rest of the animal kingdom. As we have seen, this is not because God is vindictive at all - it is that He has made the world as an interrelated whole. To disturb one set of relations, has results for others.

In Adam's case it is his relation to the ground that is affected - it will no longer be man oriented - it will bud [grow] thorns and thistles [Genesis 3.18]. There is now a product of the garden that does not benefit the man - the earth no longer yields for him, but rather something other than for him - it too goes astray. And this is for him a loss of glory. For now every thistle and thorn bears testimony to his loss of glory and impaired authority.

This is why Genesis does not tell us of the creation according to the science of the biological/agricultural disciplines. What is being addressed here is the origin of the frustration to man that the earth produces in a way that is not always beneficial to mankind. It is connecting for us how a garden, given by God, as a wonderful provision, could now, in our time, be so obviously unproductive and unhelpful to men and women. That is the issue Genesis addresses. It is saying a great deal about the relational inter-connectedness of the earth, the man, the woman and God Himself.

Tilling the garden is no longer sweet work that goes as it should. Now a massive effort is required; Adam learns what it is to toil; to work hard for a product. From now on, in his work, he has an uphill sense of things.

Further, the creational union he seeks will be expressed as returning to the ground. Instead of coming to union with the Someone who made him, he will return to what he was formed from, before he was enlivened by the breath of God. He will lose the breath of God and return to the formed substance - he will cease to live, he will bodily die because he has preferred the obedience to a creature [his wife] before relation to God which is expressed by obedience to Him.

What a deep disaster this is! How profound is the loss?

Our proper Man, Jesus Christ, will return us to life intended for us. He will lead us to share His life. A life lived in union with the Father. We shall come to be united with Christ; but in receiving this we shall be receiving a feminine experience – a drawing of our life from Him - the union of being made anew from a sharing [participating] in His glorious resurrected life. What a wonderful Saviour!

21 – The original meaning of obedience

Obedience for democrats is a dirty word. Fallen, adult people who have been oppressed by human tyrants, wish to be free “from” having to do what they are told. Or to “obey” reminds us of being treated as a child, when folks directed our life and confined it for our own good, since we lacked wisdom and maturity to decide things for ourselves. Adulthood, in this sense is the freedom “to” express our mature selves.

The same is true about the use of “command” – we locate that in the military, or in some hierarchical thinking as with monarchs and the like. Actually it is similar to the angelic order of things.

In these sections of Genesis, notice that the idea of “obedience” occurs within the relational exchange between persons. It has to do with an initiative taken by one of them. When the other person responds so as to agree and takes action accordingly, then the responder has obeyed the initiator. This willing response is the original free expression of obedience. This is the case with God, as it was intended to be between the man and the woman; and between the snake and the woman.

The initiator begins the exchange, he has a starting position.

We see this in the temptation of Jesus. The enemy approaches Him; although the Gospels assure us beforehand that this encounter is on the initiative of God really; for He has been ‘driven’ into the wilderness by the Spirit of God to encounter the devil.

In this example Jesus chose not to yield to the initiative of the tempter - He did not obey. He challenged Satan’s assumptions, He pushed back

and corrected him.

Wise people, in a fallen world need to examine the assumptions [pre-suppositions] of people before they make simple replies to those who approach them. Our Lord did this constantly to those who questioned Him – and we must do it to many folks who take an initiative with us as well.

Whenever we fallen ones think of that word “obedience”, we understand it to convey a framework where one is controlling the other in a servile and demeaning way. For that reason we find “obedience” a distasteful word when used between persons, and particularly between adults.

But everyone understands that when two people operate a friendship, or work side-by-side we will often speak of one of them as being “dominant”. What we imply by that is that the other is “submissive” and that this is somehow not an “equal” sort of relationship. It may be thought to be demeaning and indeed, it may be so.

But it may not be demeaning at all. It simply expresses a relational truth. Initiative is the action of speaking first in the exchange of the moment. And the responder is then only able to respond to that initiative; either by compliance, modification or challenge.

It is of great help to us to re-orient ourselves down this line of thinking. For it will set us free to be submitted one to another in a godly way. It will release us from much resentment and presumption that we are being dishonoured when we find that there are people to whom we constantly find ourselves needing to respond.

It also helps us to see why the “word” ministries of the Christian church are primary in the movement of the kingdom of God. It is because they bring a word of God’s gracious revelation first, and then a response to that word is called for.

22 – How God retards the disorder until He rescues it.

The judgments of God under consideration here are not punishments but decisions that aim to restore order within the fallen setting. They are ‘emergency orders’, adapted by God to maintain what is still

operating more or less truly and to impede the proliferation of mess. Like a true father, God sets things in order at the beginning, but as things fall into disrepair and relationships fracture, so He maintains the mess until He can restore the matter permanently.

The Lord works, even in the mess that we have made of his world and of our relationships with Him. He can and does act, even as He did with a recalcitrant Israel and a disordered Church.

Read Genesis 3.15-19

There are a number of levels at which we can look at this word of God concerning the judgment He makes on the serpent, Satan, and the woman and the man. These judgments are prophetic, they lead us forward to other portions of the Scriptures.

[1] The promised Messiah, the seed of the woman, comes forth from Israel, the chosen people of God.

Revelation 12.1-2 opens for us an understanding of two signs that appear in heaven. The first is a woman [12.1] and the second is a great red dragon [12.3].

The woman may first be thought of as Israel; for such is the description that matches the dream of the seventeen year old Joseph concerning his father Jacob [Israel], his mother and his eleven brothers. Indeed, Jacob interprets his dream to mean himself, his wife and his eleven other sons [Genesis 37.5-10].

The woman gives birth to the Messiah [Rev 12.5] as the dragon is waiting to devour the child. The Child escapes the dragon, ascends to the heaven and brings about the downfall of the dragon, identified as the devil [Satan see Rev. 12.9]. The hatred God has put between the woman and the serpent [Genesis 3.15 - snake, dragon, same image] is now to be thought of in terms of Israel and the devil.

[2] Israel and the Lord of Israel.

Revisiting Genesis 3.15 in the light of Israel we are no longer thinking of Eve. We have begun to think of the woman as a collected people of God who are feminine in their relation to God; Who Himself is cast into a male role as Israel's Lord.

If we study the whole of Hosea 2, we see how seriously the Lord takes the image of Himself as the offended husband who has a wife of harlotry; he disciplines her, and He re-woos her and allures her back to Himself. This theme is maintained throughout the whole of the Old Testament. The constant struggle for Israel as a holy people – in the sense of chosen by God for covenant with Himself – is the struggle of their fleshly lusts and drives with his requirements. They are constantly recalcitrant; He is always loving, reaching out as a Husband to his people.

23 - Holiness as an exclusive commitment.

As we see throughout the history of Israel's relationship with God, she is always finding that what her Lord wants runs deeply counter to her flesh. Israel is a holy people called into relationship with a holy God. That is, they are placed in relation to one another as two entities who are to be exclusively, permanently and totally for one another. There are to be no competitors, no other gods in Israel's life - and she draws her life from Him as she is set in relation to obey Him.

Similar to the way that we have seen Eve has a desire to impress her will upon her husband, so we see that Israel is constantly acting this way with the Lord. And as it is for Eve, the rule of the husband is that which is her constant check against her set way: so we see for Israel it is the same. It is the rule of the Lord that again and again re-centres Israel back to the One to Whom she is to yield her allegiance and obedience.

24 – God has plans for the Man from heaven to take a Bride.

We said in part 21 that the mess was there, and that there are maintenance arrangements in place so that the disorder does not escalate to such a degree that the destruction of mankind results.

The maintenance arrangements climax in the final revelation of God concerning Himself is made in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He is the proper man and He is the representative Man who draws a collective Bride to himself by His death and resurrection; the demonstration of the outgoing love of the Father Who sent His Son.

25 – Human marriage sets forth a mystery of Christ and the Church.

Just as Genesis 2.22-24 allowed us to understand the man and the woman celebrating their union - so we see that the decisive meaning of marriage among humans is really a celebration of a mystery,

hidden until the coming of Messiah [Ephesians 5.21-33].

The apostle Paul makes clear that relationships in the Christian church are governed and expressed by a mutual submission one to another out of fear [respect] of Christ [Ephesians 5.21]. And this applies in the relations of husbands and wives, children and parents, masters and servants [Colossians 3.18-22: Ephesians 6.1-9].

But in discussing the husband and wife relation, he makes clear that the reality to which the marriage of men and women testifies is Christ and the Church. This is the mystery lying hidden in these passages of Genesis for us. The coming of Messiah reveals something deeper here.

So, in our reading of Genesis we need to see that there are hidden things lying there. These latent truths are yet to be revealed. But when they are, they will make sense of the deep principles embedded in the section we are studying.

26 - Christ drew upon Himself the death we must die.

In the garden the woman comes into existence through God's creative work. As the man sleeps, she is made as she is taken from the man's side, and she is later introduced to us as his bride.

In the light of Christ and the church we see that God's redemptive work parallels His former creative work. Christ dies; a matter which makes us consider death as a sleep because He rises from it. As the sleep of Adam was a creative moment for Eve's existence, so the death of Christ becomes the event from which the Church comes into existence. For His death ransoms His people and the spilt blood that flowed from His side is a release of His life leading to the creation of His bride who shares in his life as the way of her origin. The church knows herself as being in union as her experience of her creation.

Adam entered into death as a consequence of sin. He first experienced this as a relational death – a loss of the living fellowship exchange with God – as later he would bodily die.

At His death, Christ experienced a separation from God, His Father. This loss of fellowship would be the personal awareness of Fatherlessness; as reciprocally, the Father, no doubt, experienced Sonlessness. Being true Man, He also experienced bodily cessation of life.

As Adam entered into death and curse, so Christ took upon Himself the curse of God and drank it to its limit for us. He exhausted what death meant for us, both relationally from God's side and also from the human side.

In dying, the spilt life-blood of Christ flows from him to each member of the church. In baptism, they enter into his death; so as to leave their former selves behind as dead. Christ satisfied the requirement that a death would be the consequence of their rebellious action. They are justified from sin [Romans 6.7]. Once this matter of a death, which rightly follows rebellion, is satisfied in Christ, a new humanity can now arise. As a new humanity, collectively risen with Christ, his Bride is sharing in his life by union with him.

27 – The union-in-life we have with Christ now

With Israel it was the Law which God gave to constantly bear witness to their own lusts and desires - the Law kept them frustratingly aware that they were not able to perform, in the sense of justify themselves.

As we see in the life of the woman in the garden, a deep pattern had set itself in her life. And it will be resisted, as to its consequences, by the rule of her husband. So with Christ and the church.

It is this union which is her origin and the basis for the shared death and resurrection of her Bridegroom [Romans 6]. And each member joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him [1 Corinthians 6.17].

This union-in-life is known in Christ. It is the ministry of the Spirit of Christ that communicates the union in Christ's death and resurrection to us. The Spirit lusts against the flesh to prevent us doing what we would [Galatians 5.16-17]. Even here we see the preventative work of the Spirit, Who is also the power to live a godly life; and so to know God's blessing of command satisfied.

All this waits for the coming consummation. For we live at the moment in the world, but not of it – to use John's language. And we live in the flesh but not according to it – to use Paul's. This place of tension we occupy until Christ comes for us, if we are still on the earth at that time; or brings us with Him, if we have slept [died] in Christ before that time [1 Thessalonians 3.13;4.14].

Our Lord Jesus is a true Husband to us. Let us praise Him, honour and obey Him! We find ourselves cast into the feminine response to Him Who has initiated all of our life for us. We share in His life. When husbands and wives live together, showing forth in their life this way of living and honouring one another, it is a testimony to the deeper, greater truth of which both experience in their respect for their Husband as two Christians.

28 – The need for resistance in the Christian life to what is ‘natural’.

When we think of the natural life, we are thinking of what it is that we have been given by God as that which sets the norm. But, as we have seen, it is ‘abnormally’ normal. The world manifests to us a brokenness. It no longer serves us; indeed, it can threaten us and master us. So with our own selves, our own drives are not within our own control. Paul’s letter to the Romans will teach us about this challenge in the Christian life [Romans 7-8;12].

Read Genesis 3.20-24

[1] The man calls his wife a name.

As we have seen with naming of things, God does it, when He creates, relates things together and then names them individually. So we saw that the man also named the animals. And what he named them originates in how he thought of them.

Adam names his wife Eve [the Hebrew means “life”, or “living”].

The text records why he did this, she seemed to him as the “mother of all the living”. Adam has hope through Eve; she was deceived, but through her will come a redress of the situation. She is the one whose seed shall bring the victory over the devil

He believes in the word of God here in calling her Eve - for he has nothing which is tangible and sensual to encourage him about the redress.

Adam speaks of Eve as she is before him. We would, from our vantage point in history, have a number of developments in mind. We could think of Israel, the Old Testament people of God, from whom the Messiah is born. We may even go

on to think of Jerusalem from above who is our mother as contrasted with Hagar the bondwoman [Galatians 4.26]. It is the children of the free woman, the bride of the Lamb, who have the promise of liberty and who crush Satan under their feet [Romans 16.20].

God will crush him under their feet; but in the meantime, the Christian church must understand how their own victory over Satan comes.

Indeed, the people of God overcome as their Husband did. As they live under his pressure, they are God's instruments to cement Satan in his deception, which is his judgement and experience of the wrath of God - he is delivered over to his deception forever. Every time he exercises force and crushes the Christians, they triumph over him in losing their lives [Revelation 2.10, 3.21,6.9-11].

We are not, in the teaching of Jesus, to resist the evil man. This is the same principle we see here applied to Satan. It is because our lack of resistance cements him in his own aggression – it acts as a judgment upon him.

[2] God covers their shame His way, more costly than theirs.

As we saw previously, the Lord provides a covering for each of them in the face of the other. His choice is the skins of animals; obviously, at the cost of their lives.

This pattern introduces the sacrificial death of the animals as foreshadowing the death of the Messiah for the world.

This use of skins for a covering of one person in the face of another anticipates the patterns in Leviticus which later became the basis for Israel's approach to God through different offerings. One form of offering was for the covering of their sins from the face of God. This was what is behind the sin offering.

Indeed, it is within this perspective that we may consider clothing generally. We have already seen that unashamed nakedness was the original condition [2009.02 Part 25]. After the Fall, the necessity for covering of nakedness is really a way of living with shame now felt before others.

The New Testament uses the metaphor of "putting on" Christ as a garment. In the context of "putting off" an old, former life, we are to consider ourselves as clothed in Christ. His glory, which has come through deep shame embraced for our sake, now accrues to us, in union with Him, as a glorious, new, unashamed view of ourselves, given as a gift.

[3] God shields the tree of life for the time being.

At the creation of man and woman there was a discussion between the Persons of the Godhead. In Genesis 3.22, we have another discussion. We learn that Adam has become like "one" of Them; in knowing "good" and "evil".

God can know good and evil, but not as a creature does. God simply judges the evil – as something that does not reflect His own mind - and is Himself, tempted by no one. It is not dangerous for Him when the voice of rebellion speaks. For to Him it is the voice of one of His creatures and He simply quells it

with a word.

But the man has come to know evil by the doing of it, is brought into slavery by it; for that is what must be the case when good and evil is known by a creature.

Now, should the man live for ever, he would be cemented into a rebellious position against God. This would be the same as being abandoned by God to being under his wrath. And this is certainly not God's mind for men and women, made in His image!

Graciously, the Lord drives the man from the garden, so that he may not eat of this tree of life. This means that God has an interim period in mind, in which a redemption will become possible, and then men and women may eat of the tree of life. But it is not yet, there is a long time until that will be so.

God sends him out of the garden to "cultivate the ground" - this will become clear in the next chapter.

He guards the way to the tree of life by one of the cherubim - an angelic spirit being of equal rank with Satan. God is making clear that there will not be a repeat performance of this deception in regard to the "other tree" which is central to the garden.

That we have here an angel of equal rank to Satan, one of the cherubim, is important. It signifies to us that not all the angels are in rebellion against God. Further, it tells us that there are angels who are ministering spirits sent out by God for our benefit. We can think of "obedient" angels and "rebellious" ones.

29 – The tree of life; the grace of withholding.

That God will not allow the tree of life to be within our sphere of self-centred operations. This indicates that there is a further plan to yet unfold and that in the meantime He is graciously protecting us from permanent and irretrievable loss of life. All this until His gracious sending of His Son has taken place.

Only through Christ can the life of God for us be secured. It is in this way that the angelic guarding of the tree of life blocks off any further angelic attack, nor can man seize something on offer by his own initiative. What was God's intention is now not to be offered until God has put in place the Saviour – the One who secures a redemption for us, and with that, the final arrival of the life He has for us. The Saviour is also the access to it.