

RECONCILIATION IN CHRIST

Readings in preparation for an applied study of the salvation worked for us through the atoning Incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ.

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Introduction

We have two sets of readings to prepare us for the consideration of the Reconciliation worked for us by God through Christ. Our first set deals with our relations with God as the Creator and the second set with Him as our Redeemer.

The creation allows us to see the wonderful provision of God and how that was ruined and God's ultimate goal for us was forfeited. The redemption shows us how, through the God-man, our ruination and the world's decay was arrested and that we were delivered from its powerful results and then restored. In this way, God's ultimate goal for us is experienced as we can now enter the shared life of union with Christ by the Holy Spirit.

The Creator

1. The life of God before our Creation:

There are exchanges transacting in the life of God as Father, Son and Spirit that have a profound effect upon us who have come to understand that we are creatures of this holy God. Of course, we only know about these exchanges after our creation, after our coming into being by the will and act of God. They are revelations given by God Himself, so that we may know His character and understand some of the exchanges in His Life that affect us as His creatures. They equip us to live upon the earth with our Creator.

2. Space and time

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The creation of the world and ourselves by God is the beginning of what we call our 'where' and 'when', our space and time. Space and time are given to us within the fabric of the created world. The earth is the space, the "where", in which He placed his creation. The patterns of day and night and the seasons of the earth are the sequences of time, the 'when', which God has ordered and measured for us.

3. Revelation is made through personal exchanges.

In order to reveal Himself to us, God, who is eternal, must engage with the creature, who exists in limited space and time. This communication or revelation, by the Word of God keeps pace with the actions and interchanges of the space/time of our history. So, it appears to us over what we call a long 'time', to be a progressive revelation, a gradual, increasing unfolding of the nature of God and His purposes for us. And that perception is true! All human exchanges follow the same deepening progression.

However, when we speak of the revelation 'keeping pace' we must accept that it can only build at the pace of the relational exchanges between God and men and women. Something can only be known of God because an actual exchange took place in space and time. This is the way it is between persons. Genesis presents God's revelation to us in this form of exchanges. This is how it must be because we are made in God's likeness.

For us who live for such a short time, dealing with an eternal God seems a very slow process.

4. God's use of human language in a form suitable to us

Such communication is the gracious adaptation and accommodation of an eternal One to our creaturely life, bringing to us revelation from beyond our creaturely sphere, using human language and form that we can understand. Because it is the revelation of the Person of God who is our Creator, it fits in and makes sense of His world for us, and also who we are as persons made in the likeness of God.

The truth that God reveals is expressed by the Spirit in language that graciously accommodates to us. But the language itself is not God; it is speech uttered concerning Him. Being creaturely, we cannot know God exhaustively, that is everything about Him. But we can know Him truly because He chooses the words, speaking them through his prophets.

We shall need God's words to speak of His Person and works. Our readings teach us, through the study of real exchanges between the Creator and the creature, the vocabulary that God uses: words and actions such as: made, be, separate, name, to rule, beget, command, to rest, obedience, blessing, curse, shame, guilt, die, work, toil, judgment, salvation, presence of the Lord, to "know" one another, to find grace, to build, to rebel, to strive, to be dispersed.

The Redeemer

1. Covenanting God and his covenant people.

The special history of relations between God and Israel, which begins at Genesis 12, means that the covenant is expressed through its many exchanges over a long time. The covenant becomes the underlying basis – the presupposition - for the atoning work of Christ.

2. Use of human language and form that fits the redemption

God chose this people and communicated with them in a language that taught them a way to think and understand His purposes. They learned this God-directed vocabulary, and its meaning through life alone with God in the wilderness, and later in the promised land. They also learned through his discipline in exile. These conceptual tools prepared them for the hope of the final redemption. We shall use these tools to understand as well, for we have a share in God's promises to the Jews.

Words we must understand are: covenant, holiness, righteousness, sin, uncleanness, love, mercy, grace, faithfulness, humiliation, exaltation, forgiveness, justification, atonement, salvation, creation, kingdom of God, judgment, death, resurrection, Messiah, suffering servant, prophet, priest, king.

3. The Word of God takes flesh – the Incarnation

The culmination of all the revelation of God is presented in the incarnate Word of God, who is the person of Jesus of Nazareth. His coming into the created world of space and time makes some stupendous changes for us, which we must study in later readings.

God is known in the Old Testament as doing ‘works’ accompanied by ‘words’, usually through the prophets who bring that word. Jesus Christ does not bring the word of God as a prophet who is simply a human agent; He is the Word of God Himself. He is accompanied by works and as the Son of God, speaks the word of his Father.

He is not a manifestation of God, like the Old Testament epiphanies; He is God come to us as man. He is truly human and he is a particular man, without ceasing to be God. He does not come to us, as the first Adam did, as simply beginning his creaturely life upon the earth and made of its elements. Jesus Christ is the Son of God and as the second Adam comes to us from within the very life of the Trinity of the Godhead. He does not take us back to the garden, but straight into the sonship of shared life with the Father – the very thing that Adam was offered, but forfeited and never knew.

The revelation that Jesus makes, through what He says and his atoning work for us, is progressively unfolded over the time of his conception, birth, baptism, temptation, the call of his disciples, his teaching as a rabbi, the Galilean ministry, his journey to Jerusalem, his arrest, trials, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, ascension and his final return.

Just as the history of Israel took place over a period of time, and there was a revelation appropriate to many consecutive exchanges, so it is with Jesus. The revelation keeps pace with the incarnate life of the God-man as we read it in the Gospels. Our readings will make selections of the things we need to know about the redemption worked for us here.

Our readings begin:

Reading 01 - Ephesians 1.3-14

Salvation centred “in Christ” long before Creation

1-1 “...the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

“The God of Jesus Christ” means that Jesus Christ is a true man. He too, has a God He worshipped and obeyed as He lived His life on the earth to bring about his God’s purpose for us.

If the God who has blessed us is the ‘Father’ of Jesus Christ, then Jesus is truly God, the Son. We worship Jesus Christ as our Lord – as our own true God. In Jesus Christ we were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise [v.13]. This work of salvation is the blessing of God to us, from the Father, worked in the Son and by the Spirit for us.

1-2 We are a ruined people.

We are people in a situation where our life is cursed and ruined by our own “trespasses” [v.7] and we have been granted, by His grace, to know that our God has “blessed” us. This blessing is from God the Father and it has been brought to us “in Him” - in Christ [verse 3].

1-3 What happens for us “...in Christ...”

[1] We have been *blessed* with every spiritual blessing that is found in God’s own life.

[2] We have been *chosen* by the Father before the world was laid down – before Creation. This means that our salvation was known in the shared life of the Trinity before there was any act of will that brought about the creation of our space and time – our history. Salvation is a form of life where, like His own Son, we are holy and blameless before God.

[3] Issuing from God’s own out-going love towards us, long beforehand He *predestined* us in a way that reflects the kind intent of his own will to bring us into “*sonship*” in relation with Himself. This intent was expressed as a work done through Jesus Christ. “Sonship” is the

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fellowship that has an open access to Him, relating to Him as our heavenly Father; and, as a result, knowing ourselves, men and women alike, as sons of God.

[4] All this was for us, whose response is to praise the glory of his grace - his favour so freely bestowed on us in His 'Beloved' Son. The free act of God means that He was not compelled by any thing outside of Him; it also means that we had no claim upon Him that He should act so. This gracious kindness and love has its beginning in the life of God which pre-dates our very coming into historical existence. In that sense, it is an '*inheritance*' [v.11] which has always been God's own mind for us.

[5] These riches of God's grace, lavished upon us and wrapped 'in Christ', come to us in our ruined and cursed state as our redemption. It is a ransom initiated by God and which is 'through Christ's blood' – it comes at the cost of his life. It is our redemption in that it works the forgiveness of our trespasses. It means that, in the grace of God, He is no longer counting our sins, which stood against us as offensive to Him.

[6] There has taken place in this act of redemption a revelation of God. Specifically, a revelation of His will, His purpose. What was always there and yet hidden to us – a mystery – has now been made known to us. We can now see God as kindly in his love and decisions about us because we have come to see what God had always intended, what was His purpose, hidden in Christ before creation.

[7] Further, we can, with this revelation, look forward as well. Because the fullness of times in relation to God's purpose, which have come upon the earth in Christ, shows that God now has an order, an administration, an economy or way of working which sums up everything in Christ. The whole box and dice has its meaning in Him.

Further, we have obtained the inheritance God always intended for us in Christ. For when we hope in Christ, we are the first people on the earth who are giving God such praise and glory for the way He worked everything as He wanted. Our praise then, is to His glory.

[8] The revelation of God's grace towards us, and our hearing of this wonderful good news of our eternal salvation drew us to believe it. God has now sealed us – stamped us as His own – with the Holy Spirit Whom He promised to give to us. Having given us of His Spirit, never to leave us, we have the pledge of our eternal inheritance which looks toward the full possession of God's redemption. We praise His glory.

1-4 Salvation is a work of the Trinity.

This leads us to think of God who, – as the ancient Creed puts it – “for us and for our salvation” was “made man” for us, is going to involve each Person of the Trinity in our salvation. This we shall see more of as we read the unfolding of the Gospel records.

1-5 Eternal salvation “to” and an historical salvation “from”.

This reading from Ephesians raises the meaning of “salvation”. It is the eternal mind of God for us as He saw us in his Beloved Son. It is the central matter of what salvation, and being a Christian, is about. This aspect is not well understood today.

I find it helpful to think of it from two perspectives: salvation “from” and salvation “to”. Both are God's work and put together give a full picture of “salvation.”

Salvation “from” arises after the creation of man when he was tempted and fell and his relationship with God was broken and his humanity ruined. As a result, we humans desperately need to be redeemed from such ruin. We have been captured by external and internal powers that enslave us. We need liberation from these powers of sin, death and the devil. We have become liable to the wrath – righteous anger – of God and we need rescue from Him, who is holy and awesome to us. We cannot face Him without obliteration; only He can help us here. Only he can save us and restore us to relation with him.

This brings us to Salvation “to”. Something God always wanted for his people, something which was there right from within the life of God. He has always wanted us to have His inheritance. In the life of God, the Father's total focus is the Son, just as the Son's life is the response to the Father. He always had an intention for us, to come “to” what He had laid up for us and centred in the life of His Son.

Whenever we speak of these things we have to be clear which aspect of salvation we mean. Today, salvation “from” is the prevailing meaning in people's minds when they think that

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they are 'saved'. They have avoided condemnation, hell and wrath to come. These things are true, but to simply rejoice in them is to stop short of what salvation means. We need to go on to the holy and blameless life that Christ has lived for us and, by the Spirit's power, live it in the tension of where we are placed right now.

1-6 Salvation and revelation.

To come to know the will of God for us opens us to understand God's own heart. This revelation is what we respond to when we express faith. We cannot trust anyone, let alone God, if we have no revelation or knowledge of their person. So the gospel preaching first tells us what God has done and then reveals why He did it. So His love for us is revealed.

This is made even clearer when we see that we are saved "to" sonship. To know God in open access, to freely be able to approach Him, can only be done with confidence and joy if we have a revelation of who He is. That only comes to us through his incarnate Son. So we shall see that Jesus takes us where the first Adam never went - into knowing God as Father. The incarnate Word of God comes to us from within the life of God Himself. Only He, the incarnate Son, can reveal the Father as He is. So we have the knowledge of God that we get through Jesus Christ; knowledge such that no other can give.

Note 1-6: Only the Son can reveal the Father; only the Father can reveal the Son.

Unless there is a real identity or unity between the revealer and the revealed we would be left with a 'disconnect'. So, such references as Matthew 11.27; Luke 10.22 or John 5.27 emphasise the unique connection between the mutual knowing and the shared being of the Son and the Father.

Reading 02 – Genesis 1.3-2.3

Creation Part 1: The beginning of History for us.

The creation of our space and time.

1.3-5	<i>Day 1: the start of formation of the heavens and the earth</i>
1.6-8	<i>Day 2: Separation of waters to give an expanse [heaven]</i>
1.9-13	<i>Day 3: Dry land and vegetation</i>
1.14-19	<i>Day 4: Day and Night – the rule of Sun and the Moon</i>
1.20-23	<i>Day 5: Living creatures of sea and the air</i>
1.24-31	<i>Day 6: Cattle, insects, beasts, man and woman to rule it.</i>
2.1	<i>The work complete</i>
2.2-3	<i>Day 7: A blessed and holy day in which God rested</i>

2-1 God and what He has made

The first chapter of the Bible focuses our attention on **God Himself as the Creator of all** that there is and in particular what is visible to the men and women of the earth. We learn Who is responsible for the heavens and the earth. We also see that we are either dealing with God or some creature He has made. There is *no third kind of reality* presented to us.

Note 2-1: Our own imagination

We need to remember this when we encounter the fantasies and imaginings of our own origin. They are not objectively real - made by God - they are may be "real to us" in our own warped way of knowing things. Genesis 3 will give us a way to think about this warping.

2-2 The Word of God is the Agent of creation.

God creates by way of his Word; we see that He speaks to create. The Word of God is His agent of creation. What ever this Word brings into existence is "good"; which is to say it is of

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God. It is what He meant it to be, and as He expresses, it is how it comes into being; and perfectly so.

Note 2-2 The Word of God is the Wisdom of God.

There is more to see here in the light of the opening introduction to the Gospel of John 1.1-18. There, particularly in verse 1-3, we shall see laid out the implication that the Word of God is actually a Person. This Person is said to be with God "in the beginning"; is also God Himself [which requires us to think of more than one person in the Godhead] and was the Person through Whom all things were made.

A similar theme will be brought to light in the Proverbs 8.22-31 where Wisdom is personified as being alongside God, pre-existing before anything is made, and as a master workman alongside God. In the light of Colossians 1.16 we shall have to identify the Word of God and the wisdom of God.

2-3 Basic relations – separating, naming, relating.

God relates things one to another by his Word. Sometimes it is a *separating* of things from one another [1.4,7,14,]. In this way, there is a distinguishing of things that differ – it is a 'differing' that originates in God's mind and so He speaks of them. It is this difference in His mind that establishes the differing glory of each created thing. Sometimes it is a setting of things into relation to one another. So, when they relate, we see what it is that God intends that they should do in respect of one another. All subsequent scientific enquiry is thinking God's thoughts after Him.

For example, with regard to the sun and the moon, these are said to separate the day from the night [1.14]. This states a difference. But it is also said that they "*govern*" [1.16-18] the day and the night. Here we have an initial fixing [relating] of things by God, and two great lights that sustain that fix - they maintain that order. This sustained order of God is known freshly, every day, by his creation and sustaining of the universe. The "governing" of the Sun and the Moon however, are dependent upon his Word - should there be a change ordered by Him, there would necessarily be a change in their governing.

Note 2-3 The Day of the Lord is the manifestation of his Kingdom.

We notice here that when it is said that the sun "governs" - rules - the day then the daylight itself is a manifestation of the rule of the Sun. In this way, we might say, the Sun has a kingdom which is called the "day" and that the day is a showing of its rule. This understanding of the meaning of "day" will be helpful when we come to look at such expressions as the "day" of the Lord; the "Sun of righteousness" as applied to Jesus; that we are called "children of the day" and that we should live that way. It will also help us to think about what John calls the "light" and the "darkness". They will all imply a governing activity, a kingdom being manifested.

God also *names things* by his Word. This glory is expressed in His "calling" them by a name [1.5,8,10]. To name something is to state what is in mind - it is also to state what it shall do, how it will relate to other things. It is to distinguish it so that, in its relating to other matters, its glory may be seen.

2-4 "...Let us...our image"

When God comes to the creation of man there is introduced a *conversation within the Trinity* of the Godhead. This is different usage of the Word of God to simply commanding that something will be; instead of "let there be" there is a "Let Us...". It is said that mankind, is made in the image of God, after their likeness. That is, how God is, will be expressed in the creation of this man. This likeness will include what we have seen so far of God's Mind, which is shown in what He does and says, these actions always reflect perfectly Who He is.

The conversational "Let us..." introduces something other than what we have seen God do in his creating, relating, and naming sequence so far. The conversation is addressing of One Another in the Godhead. If man is to be made in the likeness of God then mankind is **made to be addressed** by God, and is created **to know God**. This personal address in God and the knowing of one another through this address means that the same will be true for the exchanges between the man and the woman, and between them and God; it sets what it means to be persons.

Accordingly, when mankind is made there is to be a plurality, there are two personal forms, **male and female**. This will imply that the likeness of God can only be seen in the relating

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of more than one person to another - as it is in the Godhead. There will be a Lover and Beloved, there will be an expression of love that answers one to another, and there will be one who Mediates that love which is between the one to the other.

Within the Godhead they have a separate relation to one another, and so each must have a Name in a relation to one another. They have a distinct glory, which must be expressed in their way of relating to one another; this includes mutual submission, which displays the governance which can operate between One another.

2-5 Man and the woman rule

In relation to the rest of the created world, men and women are to rule it, to govern it. They are to govern in the heavens as far as the creatures of the earth fly. It is not said that the government of the heaven where God dwells or the heaven [mid heaven], where the angelic spirits are, is extended to mankind to rule. The unmistakable impression is that the earth is there for them. They may also eat the plants of the world for food.

Note 2-5 Angelic rule is something of a different domain [Jude 6-8].

We learn of this later in the Old and New Testaments. The angels are heavenly spirit beings who relate to God's command with obedience. They are arranged in hierarchical order and seem to be centred upon three archangels. They are invested with great power for they carry out the wishes of God for the sake of those humans who are destined for the "salvation" which God had in mind in Christ before the creation [Hebrews 1.14].

2-6 Command of God as their blessing

Everything God made He proclaimed to be "good", in the sense of being in accord with His own will. So we understand that He is good, and that all his good wishes, as they come to be made known by his Word of command, are a blessing to his creatures and especially to men and women.

Insofar that the man and the woman are made in the image of God - made to be addressed and spoken to – then they may be blessed. The Blessing takes the form of command; the command is to do what God has made them to do. And what He has made them to do they are already equipped to do by the gift of their creation - the gift precedes the command. It is always so with God. If the man and the woman obey this word of command intended to bless, they shall know the blessing in their experience. They are to be fruitful, to multiply, fill the earth and to subdue it. They are to rule the other creatures. So, as to authority, they are the top of the heap, the pinnacle of creation.

Note 2-6 Command as a blessing.

This understanding of the command of God being his blessing for us seems strange to us. We don't like being commanded by anyone. But that is just the point of this opening chapter of Genesis! It sets forward things as they once were, so that we can know that we no longer think of it that way, and so learn that there is something gone wrong with us.

This is vital in our reading of Genesis 1-11 because rather than ask our questions, whether they are scientific or philosophical, of the Bible text, we must let the text present itself as to how things once were. In that way we shall see our own brokenness mirrored in the sharp contrast to how we now think. In this way, the text will question us; it is a gracious revelation of God designed for our benefit. We learn through it by way of contrast how things once were and that we are now, no longer, in that way of it; certain freedoms have been lost and ways of life have been forfeited.

2-7 The seventh day – God finishes things.

We have read a little into chapter 2 of Genesis for the sake of continuity. After the completion of the created heavens and the earth and all that is in them [Gen 2.1] we are introduced, in an abbreviated form, to the seventh day.

It is a day that is blessed and sanctified [hallowed, set apart]. The stated reason is that the Lord rested from his labour on that day. Its significance is seen later in Israel's history when God instructs Moses about the Sabbath.

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Just as we have seen the Lord separate things from other things as different from them [1.4,6,14,], so we see here a seventh day separated from the other six of work. The separation has to do with what the Lord is doing; he is working on the six; He is resting in the seventh. It celebrates that the work of the six previous days has been brought to a close. It stands as a separate day, unlike the others. They stand for work in progress. The six days speak, as God is actively working, of non-completion; the seventh advertises the finished work.

That it is a “blessed” day for us, implies that it is, to God, a feature of his life, a good thing. Just as it may be seen that He works, so He also finishes and completes. As He is involved in the doing of things on some days, so his resting is the completion of the work. He is not just an active, He is active with a purpose in mind. He recognises the completion of a work, not just the doing of it. He records its accomplishment, its goal as having been achieved – this is what is meant when it is said that God rests. It doesn’t mean that He grew tired and need some recuperation.

Note 2-7 Sabbath is a ‘God-thing’ that passes over into our lives.

We are not saying all that can be said here obviously. And we are not dealing with the idea of the Sabbath rest in the Israel’s Law – that comes in its proper place. But these two aspects of blessed and sanctified are important. Later, we shall see that God refers his people to having a Sabbath rest because they are said to be “my” Sabbaths [Leviticus 19] and it is part of his invitation to them to be sharing *in the holy life that He has*.

Reading 03 – Genesis 2.3-28

Creation Part 2: God’s ways of work and rest

The man and the woman made in the likeness of God

- 2.4-7 *The formation of the man*
- 2.8-17 *The garden God planted*
- 2.18-25 *The helper suitable for the man*

Helpful places to read:

Heidel, A. [1963], Babylonian Genesis, 2- Edition Chicago
Torrance, Thomas F., [1983], The Mediation of Christ, Exeter, Paternoster Press,
Smail, Tom, [] “Like Father Like Son”
Von Rad, Gerhard, [1972, ET 1961,1972] Genesis, SCM OT Library

3-1 God creates man and woman in his image

In chapter 1, the Hebrew word used for create [bara] stresses that God is the source of the all that comes to be. The creating act, which carries no parallel to the sort of manufacturing which men do, stressed the separation and distinction of things from each other. The newly separated things were named and then set in relation to one another.

Genesis 1 presents the creation [bara] of the man and the woman against the backdrop of the wider creation; especially mentioning the likeness to God, which is the origin of their difference from the rest of the creatures. Chapter 1 also concluded with the blessing of the man and the woman. This blessing took the form of the command to multiply, fill the earth and to subdue it. This was nothing less than a mandate to govern it as joint lords of their given domain. The view of the man and the woman presented in Genesis 1 is of a unit, set within the rest of the creation. Their image bearing constitutes their humanity; their lordship of the earth is jointly held.

Note 3-1a: Image of God.

Tom Smail, in his book “Like Father, Like Son”, points out that Gen 1.28 interweaves three ideas: humans imaging of God, human dominion over the earth and gendered human relationships as the expression of the one and the possibility of the other.

He shows that there are two Hebrew words expressing the idea of image; *selem*, which speaks of an image as a representation of that from which it derives, and *demut* which

emphasises the likeness or similarity to the image it resembles and from which it is derived.

Speaking of “image” as representation, *Selem* was used of pagan gods and kings who ruled on earth representing and acting in the name of one who ruled in heaven. The usage here in Genesis will mean that the dominion, which the man and the woman exercise, is a consequence of them being a representation of God.

Speaking of “image” as likeness to God, *Demut* strengthens that the image corresponds to the original. It implies that humans rule on the earth because of a real resemblance between the divine being who created them and the human being that is created.

That we are like God is not explained anywhere in the OT. To find more definite content we need the NT, where the imaging language re-appears.

Christ is seen as the one Man who is the image of God. We will know what it means to be in the image of God when we know what it means for Christ to be the image.

There is a distinction to be made between being “in the image” [Adam] and to “be the image” [Christ]. Colossians 1.15 looks back beyond Adam to an origin and prototype, which has become visible in Christ, who is the model and source of all creation.

Adam reflects God as his creature: his ‘imaging’ comes into being at his creation. Christ is the image of God. He images God as being himself integral to the life and being of the God He images. The Greek word, *Eikon*, from which we get the word icon, carries the idea, when applied to Christ, that he participates in the nature of God; he is not simply a copy. He visibly manifests and perfectly reveals God in human form.

The imaging of God in God by God is the basis of human imaging. What He is as uncreated Son of God who images his Father, he is also in his incarnation as the created human being he has become. In his humanity He reflects what he is in his divinity, he becomes the last Adam, the ultimate human being that Adam was meant to become.

Hebrews 1.3 speaks of the “stamp” of God. Here *karakter* takes the place of *eikon* in the Colossians passage. It is a word used for the stamp of the die which is driven into the wax, and it is also used for the imprint the wax receives from the die. So it stands for both the die and the imprint.

This usage implies that Christ is both the divine prototype that is stamped on to our humanity and so imparts to it the divine image, and also the human being who has received that image and is the perfect expression of it - fresh, new, authentic and complete.

Christ does not just display God – reflecting humanity – He also imparts humanity to us. Christ’s humanity is the means by which his divine likeness becomes accessible to us. We cannot become God but He, in His freedom to stoop low for us, can become incarnate and so reveal what it means to be authentically human to exist in the image of God. Jesus is not then an example to copy, He is the proper human life lived for us, and so becomes the transforming dynamic that re-shapes us into the same likeness. What Christ is, is imparted to us by the action of His Spirit.

Jesus is the Son of God; as the creed has it “God of God, light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, through whom all things are made”. He can reveal and take us to the Father as the only Son of the Father; something Adam never could do.

Our final destiny is to be transformed into the glory of Christ [Romans 8.29-30]. The glory of God is so mirrored in the humanity of Jesus, that when we are exposed to that we are transformed by it, so that we increasingly manifest it with increasing clarity [2 Corinthians 3.18]. This transformation is a present work of God upon and in us, going on all the time of our Christian life. So it is both a present process and a final destiny. We were made human in our creation in order that we might become fully and authentically human in our re-creation in Christ.

This ultimate purpose was already in view in Genesis. Romans 8.29 is the final meaning of Genesis 1.26-27. Grace does not replace natural creation but perfects it - bringing it to its goal.

So we see that the final revelation of the image of God is not found in Adam, but in Christ. [After Smail loc. cit.]

Note 3.1b Jesus makes us truly personal and properly human.

Torrance [1983] page 78-79, speaks of Christ as the “personalising Person” and the “humanising Man”. What he is showing is that for us, in our depersonalised state and degraded humanity, Jesus of Nazareth, as truly man without ceasing to be God, both reveals God to us, while, at the same time, he reconciles us to God. He also offers to God on our behalf a true human response that, having its origin in His life for us, can be imparted to us by his Spirit.

In this way, as we share in the life of Jesus through the Holy Spirit, we are brought to the goal of our creation through such redemption. We are being conformed to the image of God’s Son, as the NT describes it.

3-2 The different narrative approach in Genesis 2 and 3.

In chapters 2-3 the style of the narrative is different from Genesis 1, which speaks of a series of commands which God gives to bring into being what is; accentuating God's sole activity. Here, in the related chapters 2 and 3, an account of the origin of the man sets the scene for the tragedy of chapter 3.

In 1.1-2.4a, the man and the woman are created last, carrying the clear implication that they are the culmination of creation and the meaning of it. In chapter 2, the perspective of man and woman is the focus, expressed in that the first act of God is to fashion the man. It then moves to the man and the earthy garden, the animals and finally, his relation to the woman. Each of these relations is more closely considered than they were in Genesis 1. It has been said that chapter 1 has the man and the woman as the apex of the pyramid, whereas chapter 2-3 has them as the centre of a circle.

3-3 Work and rest – completed work separate from the Creator

The creation of the man and the woman is set against the background of the seventh day. It is a rest day for God, having created in six days. The idea here is not that God is tired, but that the seventh day is the day after his work, and the creation ceased because he had finished his work [1.2]. It is simply a separation of the seventh from the previous six. The meaning of it will be learned in the way that God applies it to Israel, and generally to the world of men and women.

As a man ceases from his labour, having put down his work, he goes on to rest. This demarcation between work and rest states that creation is a work of God and so is distinct from Himself, that is, His Person. In this way, the seventh day requires us to conclude that the work is not God; He is not part of his creation. There is no pantheistic inclusion or extension of God here. Such ideas draw God into the material He makes; they also blur the work and the person by merging them.

Note 3-3: God as distinct from his created world.

This principle, that God is distinct from his creation is in clear contrast to the prevailing attitudes around at the time. There are parallels, [See Heide, A.1963], which have been observed between the Biblical and the Mesopotamian accounts of creation, notably with the pictures of water and disorder, the order of creation and God resting. Yet the account of Genesis 2 and 3 is Semitic and unique, leaving no evidence of the polytheism of gods that behave immorally. The view of man is very high here; humanity is not portrayed as a tool of the gods, behaving as their lackey.

3-4 The Person and the Work are separate

Genesis teaches us to distinguish the person from his work. God is not what He does, and when we call Him the Creator, we are not stating something of his Person, except in relation to ourselves as his creatures. Genesis tells us that creating does not add to God's Person: it is the other way about. He creates as an expression of Who He is. The work does not make the person; the person is expressed through the work.

This makes clear that the man and the woman are not adding to the created work of God, they are not co-creators. The seventh day puts a boundary to our thinking there. It makes clear God's gracious preparation for them is complete. It also states firmly that they are not active in their own creation but passive; they are 'receivers'. They do not even co-operate with God in their own creation - they are brought into being by His activity alone.

3-5 Six days of work and a seventh of rest.

God blessed the seventh day and set it apart. This is to reserve it for an exclusive use: it was a holy day. Up to this point the man and the woman were said to be blessed when God commanded them to multiply and fill the earth and subdue it [1.28]. Likewise here, we are to understand that to 'bless' the seventh day and to set it apart means that it will have some benefit in reference to the man and the woman. [And therefore to us, as the readers of this revelation.]

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Later, the revelation of how to live as a community is given to Israel. Sabbath-keeping was introduced by God as keeping “my Sabbaths” [Exodus 20.8ff; 31.12]. Israel was commanded to keep it because God did. In this way, they would be holy because He is.

Note 3.4a: Holiness as separation to God and His ways

The expression, “my Sabbaths” points to something that God does after His creating work. The work has come to a rest; it is completed. It is God’s style, His way. In asking Israel to also maintain a Sabbath He is giving them opportunity to share in His own life and style and so to show that they are His people. It expresses their holiness, their separation and exclusive commitment to Him. It would mark them out.

The Sabbath rest of God evokes an answering response from men and women. In the garden, before the fall, the seventh day proclaims the wonderful finished presentation of the work of God for them, as created persons, to participate in it and to enjoy. After the fall, when toil and the poor responsiveness of the earth has become the given state of life, then the man and the woman will be encouraged to cease from their striving to be right with God and to yield trustingly to His gracious and free provisions for them in that regard.

Note 3-4b: Sabbath rest of the people of God.

For God’s people to be blessed in the Sabbath of God they are to celebrate His finished work for them. Hebrews 3.7-4.18 makes clear that in redemption, as in creation, there is no work for a man to do to establish himself with relation to God. Rather, he is, by faith, to enter into the Sabbath rest of God, when He rested from all his labours. [The entry into Canaan, as a graciously prepared land for the people of God teaches the same thing]. He is meant to enjoy a finished work of God, not labour to try to make it for himself.

The Sabbath was used in Israel’s living with God to express that He was their God. They were to find in the promised land the entering of a rest from such discipline and striving and to simply take what it was that God has provided. Later, after the Messiah came, the epistle to the Hebrews will still speak of a “Sabbath rest” for the people of God that must, of necessity, be entered simply by trusting in the finished work of Israel’s Christ; to cease from trying to enter the kingdom by works, and rely solely on the finished work of the Saviour and High Priest.

The placement of man's creation in the record asks that we think of all the creating work of God having been done. The man and the woman begin their life together not by fashioning something for themselves in order to live, but by receiving everything given by the grace of God. They enter a pleasure park where they participate in what happens, and are receivers who do what God has enabled them to do. It is also the provision of God that the park responds to them as well; it is fruitful and produces for them as they, in their creaturely way, work it. Their work is a blessing to them given by God, and as a gift of that relation to the ground, it brings forth by God’s gift to them.

3-6 God fashions the man

Man is made by God and so is a “son of God” by creation [Luke 3.38] but not in the sense that he is generated from God’s own Person – man is not an extension of God Himself, he is a ‘work’ of God, and so distinct from Him. Accordingly, in Genesis 2.7, the picture is of God acting as a potter, fashioning some pre-existent material. The man is not made according to the formula “Let there be...”; rather, but some red dirt is taken and formed into a body, which is given form by the will of God. The way this is done is deliberate. It is a body that is earthy, formed from what is already there. It has a continuity with the elements of the earth. It contrasts with another type of body that God already had in mind [See Note 3.6b below]. This body has life of God breathed into it [2.7] and Adam becomes a living being. He shares the life of God but he is not as an extension of God, a little God; nor is he of the same essence as God.

Note 3-6a: The man became a living soul.

Chapter 2.7...“distinguishes not body and “soul” but more realistically, body and life. The divine breath of life that unites with the material body makes man a “living soul” both from the physical as well as from the psychical side. “When God withdraws his breath [Psalm 104.29f.; Job 34.14f.], man reverts to dead corporeity.” Von Rad [1972], p.77

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As such it is a frail body and, in the light of the later rebellion and fall, to “die” is expressed as to return to dust [Job 10.9, 34.15; Psalm 104] from which it was made.

Note 3.6b: An earthly body and later a spiritual body.

1 Corinthians 15.35-49 will speak of the glory of the different bodies within the creation. It will then speak of Adam's body as an earthly body, which anticipates the spiritual body we shall receive through Christ. In forming Adam's body from the earth there is redemption in God's mind; the eventual spiritual body that will come by virtue of a redemption and a resurrection [1 Corinthians 15.35-49]. It will be the second Adam who will bring this to us.

3-7 The relational glory of the man

As we have seen from chapter 1, glory has to do with being placed by God in relation to other persons or things. Adam has a created glory by being set in relation by the *word of God given to him*:

[a] concerning *his relation to the garden*, where he is placed [2.8], where the trees please his eyes and their fruit is suitable to be eaten [2.9] by him. God is the originator of his sensual pleasure and the sustenance for his life.

He is to cultivate [work with it as it produces] and keep [preserve] this garden. The implication of the latter is that the life of the garden may be lost, both of itself and to him, if he does not preserve it.

He is to discriminate two centrally placed trees in particular. These dominant trees, like the others, are sensually pleasing to him [2.9,3.6]. However, there is a word about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that unlike the other trees, he must not eat of it.

[b] concerning *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* he has a prohibition as the word of God for him [and the woman]. This introduces a new set of relational requirements of which we shall say more of this in the next reading.

[c] concerning *the helper who answers to him; the woman*. Everything that has been made by God up to this time has been said to be "good"; and this implies amongst other things that it is completed. However, it is said of the man that, when he is on his own, it is "not good" that he should be alone [2.18] - there is someone who is to be there for him and he for her. It is not so much that 'as a man' he is not finished; rather it is insofar that he is 'alone' that it is not good - there is another to be created and set in relation to him. If that were done then he would not be alone, and that would be 'good'.

The creation of the man first, before the woman, has an implication for their life together. She is derived from him. This is not because of anything the man does. In fact, he is put to sleep and she is formed from part of him, his rib, related and at the same time distinct from him. He does not see her making. As he is formed by God, so is she. This is God's doing. It is said to be "good", for man is no longer alone. He has one who is a help-mate to him, one to walk alongside him.

Note 3-7: God is not alone in His life.

This will answer to a relation found in the Godhead, where there is Someone who 'speaks' and initiates and Another who will 'answer' and responds. This initiating and answering does not speak of an inequality between the man and the woman, no more than it does of the Son with the Father. Rather it establishes the relational glory of the man by virtue of the presence of someone who answers [who is given to relate] to him. When the New Testament states [1 Corinthians 11.7-9] that the woman is the "glory" of the man, it is referring to this relational glory which is first given at their creation and is to be expressed between them. It is a glory which is 'in God' and so adds to our understanding of what it means to be made "in the image" of God.

Similarly, 1 Timothy 2.11-13 will speak of a responsiveness of the woman to the man as expressive of this God likeness between them. In thinking of the man this will be stated as him having an 'authority'; which, in this setting means the given relation set up between them by God's Word; it is another way of speaking of relational glory between persons and things.

[d] concerning *the animals*. They are introduced [2.18-20] in the context of the discussion of the need for a helper who answers to man; it is definitely said that they are not that

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helper [2.20]. They are created by God but named by the man. This "naming" we have already seen as the last action of the sequence 'creating, relating, naming' of Genesis 1. While the creation of an animal is not in the hands of man, the relation he has been given, his authority over them, is expressed by the action of naming. Whatever he calls them, that is what they are to be known as, by him and also by God, for God will stoop to call them what the man does. Naming expresses a rule, a government, a relation of man with the animals.

It will be the same for us as we express relation between one another as persons. Parents give names to their offspring as a statement of their authority over them, that is, the relational glory which God has given, by conception, to be between them. When we are found in loving, caring relationships with spouses, friends, and children we often have 'nick names' - names that express the 'glory' of the way we relate. A 'nick-name' signals an intimate relation, a holy relation, one not shared by others. We call people by a name that expresses how they are seen by us, and in relation to us.

Indeed, as our revelation of God is on-going, He often makes Himself known by a new Name - which is always a further revelation of the relation which is being revealed between us and Him, usually reflecting the new setting for such a revelation of Himself to be appropriate.

Note 3-8: Idolatry – confusion of the creature with the Creator.

This is the real affront to God of idolatry - when men and women call something by the name 'god' they have taken an authority that is completely out of order to the "givens" of life. They manifest deep rebellion.

Reading 04 – Genesis 2.18-28

Creation Part 3: The Woman as the Sharer of the life of the Man.

2.18-25 *The helper suitable for the man*

4-1 She is stuff of his stuff

The forming of the woman from the side of the man states some deep things.

First, it says that she is stuff of his stuff - she is fashioned from part of Him. Adam understands this for he welcomes her as "bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh".

He is not her origin in the sense of being her Originator, that is God's place and His work alone. Yet Adam is her origin in that he is made before her, and she is bodily made from his stuff.

Speaking about her *body*, she is derived from him. For her to come into being is to know her union with the man. Intercourse between a man and a woman expresses a move back to bodily union.

As to her *person*, she is distinct from him and answers, in the sense of corresponds, to him relationally. Yet she draws her life from him by sharing in the life that he already had.

Note 4-1: Foreshadows our united life to Christ by the Spirit.

It will be in our Saviour, Christ, that we shall see this in its deepest way. We shall cleave to Him, spirit to spirit, because we have already drawn our life from Him. And we have not drawn it from Him as if He were an unwilling victim; rather, He has slept for us [voluntarily died], and awoken again [been resurrected] that we may share in his life by the will of the Father.

4-2 Adam sleeps

Second, Adam is asleep during the process of her creation. He is not given by God to watch her formation. He knows that she is of identical stuff to him bodily; yet her formation is secret from him. She too, like Adam, is God's work, and like for Adam, He works alone, and with no spectator to watch the process of her becoming.

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We, the readers, are in the same place as Adam - it is not given to us to know the "how" of her formation. The method is not given to us to know; however, while it is mysterious to us, what we are given to know is that she was made from the man.

Note 4-2: Parallel between Adam's sleep and Christ's death and burial.

When Christ dies, He dies in faith that another is at work to raise Him. He is passive as to his resurrection and awakening. Similarly, how we, as the Church, are formed is hidden from us for it is a secret of God's.

4-3 She is named by Adam.

Third, her name of "woman" expresses her origin from the man's body and so what she means to Adam. She was taken out of man by Another. However, while they have an identity of bodily stuff they have a difference in relation [ie order, or authority]. This comes to expression as Adam names her.

Note 4-3: Christ gives us our name as well.

The church has many names - each of which expresses either her relation to Christ, as her Creator or Redeemer. We are his body, taking our direction and co-ordination from Christ the Head. We are his Bride, who arises out of his sacrificial laying down of his life for us and built to share his life and to have union with Him. We are the Temple of his Spirit, a dwelling place for God.

4-4 Nature of marriage – a union of bodily life

Fourth, we see that the bodily origin of woman from man has a counterpart expression in marriage [Genesis 2.24] for that is what we now understand is presented here between these two. They are neighbours, they are a man and a woman, yet they are also husband and wife. The meaning of the marriage is taken from this statement of the origin of the woman from the man; and it is reflected in what they both do.

There is a leaving - from the mother and father; not so as to cease from honouring parents but a removal from their day to day provision, governance and authority.

There is a cleaving - which is the meaning of glued together; it refers to a joining of bodies in sexual intercourse. And this is a return to oneness, to one flesh. In seeking bodily union they are expressing the original union from which God made her from at first. Intercourse is the form of expression of their oneness in the midst of the separateness as persons with their own bodies. It celebrates origins.

Note 4-4: Jesus, the second – and final - Adam.

Most significantly, there is a statement being made here which is only clear after the Cross and Resurrection and Second Coming of Jesus. It is that Jesus, the Second Adam, also slept in death to awaken to a Bride presented to Him. And while asleep, his side was opened; and from his wounded side flowed out his life. From this life shed, another has come into existence. She is the Bride of the Lamb who was slain. For shed blood does not simply speak of an infliction of death, although it is that. It is shed blood and flesh that may be eaten like food and so brings life and sustenance [John 6] to the Bride; it is the release of His life for another to share. And this will lead to a union of spirit [1 Corinthians 6.13-17]. Whoever is joined to the Lord is one Spirit with Him.

4-5 Both naked and not ashamed [2.24].

The Lord God brought the woman to the man [2.22]. Their bodily glory was an expression of their correspondence. His bodily difference from hers simply declared that his body was made for union with hers - and the differentiation in their anatomy stated that truth of God.

Nakedness means that they were transparently answering to each other and this was their delight and their glory. That they were unashamed of themselves means that they openly answered to each other and delighted in how God had made them to relate. There was, at this time, no shadow over their relating and correspondence.

The outward bodily correspondence accurately demonstrated the personal relating that they were experiencing under the creative hand of God who makes all things "good".

Note 4-5: Differentiation in unity.

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There is a principle here, which we also find in God. That there can be a difference – distinctions can be made between persons – but the persons can be one. The unity that is found is not based on some arithmetic, but union between persons has a reality that is not contradicted by the fact that they are not the same.

4-6 God comes and goes.

It is worthwhile noticing that, in the garden, Adam's experience of God is that He comes and goes [3.8]. Man as a creature finds that his relating to God, his Creator, must take into account that God has other business and activity in Himself to which the creature is not admitted nor may participate in.

Man's intermittent experience of God is something that takes place in the history of Israel. Sometimes God is very present in cloud and fire, as during the Exodus from Egypt; at other times in Israel's history He is so silent and withdrawn – leastways it seems to their experience – that He isn't there.

Note 4-6: Jesus "comes", "goes", then comes again [See nt234]

We have seen throughout the Gospel narratives that the Incarnation is the invasion of our space and time, our history, by the Word of God who takes our flesh for the purposes of our salvation. This is his *1st coming* to us.

At the time of his burial, as his body is taken down from the cross and entombed in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea, we have His *1st going* from us. It is a time of deep disillusionment and real sorrow for the disciples. There was a sober awareness that they would find themselves persecuted as they and the Holy Spirit bear their joint witness [John 15.18-16.11]. This was tempered by the statement that would go but in a "little while" they would see Him although the world would not.

But by Sunday morning, Jesus is resurrected and this is His *2nd coming* to them.

It is followed by the period of the Forty days when the Christian community finds its life and drive with Jesus being bodily present among them – they cannot contain themselves for joy. His day and His time is their time – He defines their life, their acts and their history. At the end of these 40 days Jesus is taken up into heaven from them – this is His *2nd going* from them.

On that great Pentecost day, the Spirit of Christ descends upon the assembled disciples who are obediently waiting. This is Jesus' *3rd coming* to them. We are clearly to understand that the Spirit will never depart from them – so this coming of the Spirit of Christ to them is permanent and a down payment, a guarantee of their inheritance.

So the time of the Son of Man is now. And we live between the *3rd coming* of Jesus – when His Spirit descends to impart his life and power to His community and the *4th coming* of Jesus in the flesh and attended by His Father's glory.

This *4th*, and very much anticipated, coming of Jesus, never to go from us again, is our next frontier in time.

In our current living, after the *3rd "coming"* of the Lord as his Spirit to us, we understand that the Spirit, once given, will never leave us. We are in union with the Lord Spirit to spirit [1 Corinthians 6]. So we need to be careful not to think of the Spirit as if He is coming and going, but rather, as permanently with us. At the same time, bodily speaking, the Lord is absent from us, and we eagerly await his *4th* and permanent coming to us, when we shall always be with the Lord.

Reading 05 – Genesis 2.15-17

*Creation Part 4: One of two central trees in the garden:
the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

2.8-17 *The garden God planted*

Read also: John 8.39-47; Romans 6.16

5-1 Word and work

Once the man and the woman are set within the garden God has provided for them, God also gives them His Word. This word tells them how they shall relate to the provided things and situations. It tells them what to do with them; for example, the garden must be tilled and kept. In this way they are instructed by word how to relate to the things given.

Whenever God works, whether it is in Creation, as here, or in the providential Care of on-going life, He always provides a word, that accompanies His work. Both his work and his word reveal his character and purpose. But, unlike the animals, the word is expressly given for those made in his image, who can be addressed by Him and may answer Him freely. Indeed, man "lives" by every word, which proceeds from God [Deuteronomy 8.3; Matthew 4.4b].

5-2 Trees in a garden

That we are in a garden, which is full of trees doesn't mean that we are being taught the nature of agriculture or of how to garden well. 'Trees' in their garden setting here are a powerful picture. They convey a number of implications concerning what is presented to the man and the woman.

[a] The whole garden is a provision of God. It is the gift of God to the man and the woman. Creation comes to its apex in these human 'image bearers' and we are left in no doubt that the whole of creation was made for them to rule and express the position which God gave them – it is His economy, His order for them. The garden is their immediate setting in a wider world.

[b] The tree is a natural image of something planted by God occurring in their own garden space. But the tree itself is not self-explanatory. It requires the relationship with God, and specifically his Word, to make any sense of the tree's purpose for the man and the woman. The tree has a latent benefit for them but they need to know what to do with it, or about it. It cannot realise its usefulness by itself; for it does not stand alone for them, as if it could be somehow disconnected from the Word of God to them.

[c] trees are living things, they yield fruit; they have a product. So "tree" is a picture that has the power as an image to express a result when related to in such a way as guided by the word of God to the man and the woman. There will be fruit, or consequences, one way or the other, and all dependent on the Word spoken.

[d] So the necessity for them is to listen to the word of God about the use of the tree so as to arrive at God's purpose for tree in relation to them. It is a 'work' of God for them but it needs the 'word' of God to them to know and realise in their experience God's meaning of the tree for them.

[e] So the tree is an 'occasion' – a setting in space and time - for an encounter with God. It is the stage, or backdrop, against which His creatures will interact with Him.

5-2 The experience of God as Creator and Provider

All the other trees of the garden have a word from God spoken about them to the man and the woman. If they act upon the word given, they shall receive what God intended for them from the tree. The word is that he may "freely eat" of all the trees, except the central two [2.16]. As an example, if they want to take a banana, they shall have the delight of its colour to their eyes, feel the texture with their hands, and know the satisfaction of its taste in their mouths and see that it is good for their bodily sustenance. A truly sensual experience.

They not only have a sensual experience in taking and eating the fruit, there is also another product in their life. For, when they obey the word given, the fruit conveys to them a knowledge of God's love through what is good for them in their garden.

This means that their experience of the trees is immediate; it is bodily known and appreciated and communicates the love of God for them; they know God as Creator and Provider in their outer, sensual experience and in their inner registration of joy in obeying Him.

5-3 The central, and most important, trees of the garden

One of the central trees, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil has a word attached to it which, if obeyed, denies to the man and the woman any tangible, sensual product in their mouth. Materially speaking, if the word spoken about it by God is obeyed, it bears them no material fruit.

This tree and its word, reflect a decision by God. He now puts before them an occasion for obedience that will lead them to know Him and themselves in a proper relation. They will either be set to know what is good – as God's Mind judges that for them – or they will become

their own judges, adjudicating their own values of what they consider is good and what is evil for them.

That man and woman are made in the image of God, in God's likeness [1.26], means they are able to have fellowship with God, to have some exchange with God. Each movement of continuing revelation that God opens to them, places before them an ever increasing experience of relating to God. This tree and its word is a new offer to "take knowledge" directly of God [not just about Him], in some facet of his character, which before this, they had not known.

Notice that God has the initiative of the revelation. He loves to reveal Himself to the man and woman for has He made them to know Him and enjoy Him. He may not be inquired into as a subject of study by the man and the woman as something that they decide to do. They cannot take the initiative here; they cannot know God by enquiry or force of action. [Genesis 3, which records the mishandling of this tree, will explain to us how these ideas of "knowing about" and studying something from self drive and curiosity come to be in our experience.]

The word, concerning this tree, is a gracious, covering word of God. It is a protective word in that it shields the man and woman from a loss they would incur if they disobeyed God. It is a protective word about what may be forfeited. This of course, is not a reason to obey God's word. It does not constitute a motive for obedience; it simply makes clear a possible relational result.

5-4 The tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

This centrally located tree requires that the man and the woman know the following:

[a] Up to this point all knowledge of God has worked with the material and the sensual. It has brought a bodily experience and a material product to their life. This word does not offer such a material or sensual product, indeed it requires that they shall "not eat". In the light of their previous knowledge, this means that, for this tree, they refrain from doing what they have already been doing with the former trees. Previous actions that were satisfying and bodily pleasing and which God had said was "good".

[b] Any attempt to obey this word then, will entail not a working by sight, such as through the attraction of the senses, but will have to proceed by faith, expressed as an active trust, in the Character of God, already known as the trustworthy Creator and Provider.

This occasion, with its accompanying word, asks that they abstain from eating; they must abstain with no other assurance than they have of God's goodness to them up till now. It asks that they take this particular, new word to heart now. They are not to treat this tree as they have rightly been treating the others, because the trees are not the main focus, the word is. And they are not to assume that the good, bodily-sustaining eating they have already enjoyed should be the way of this tree. So they are not to work by their experience of trees so far, but to listen to the word about this particular one.

Note 5-4a: "Today, if you hear His voice..."

This is true of all God's words to us. They are for the moment, for today. They are to be expected as daily wisdom and while we are aware of our past experiences, we are to be ready for a new word about a new tree.

In this way, God shifts the focus from the sensual and material product of his provision to the knowledge gained of Himself by that experience. He also does another thing. He makes his particular word for the particular tree the decisive matter for them, not the likeness of the tree to the rest or a past word about another set of trees.

[c] In this way, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil contains an offer of relating to God, not for a product, which is received to oneself from the tree itself, but for no other reason than He has required it. It is an offer of sonship or fellowship with God through obedience. That is the product of 'not eating'. It is a focussing on God and them as persons in direct relation, uncluttered by any other matter; including what He can and does provide. In this sense, it leaves the tree behind – it simply becomes the occasion for a word, an exchange, a relationship. That is the main thing here; we are left with God's word to them, as a word to be obeyed.

[d] If they obey Him here, it will take them into direct knowledge of Himself through faith in His expressed word. It would mean that their former knowledge of God, mediated

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through the things He had provided is not denied, but transcended, by taking knowledge of Himself mediated directly through his word. It is to know God as a son knows his father. The word accompanying this tree thus contained an offer of sonship – a fellowship with God such as He knows within the Trinitarian life of the Godhead.

Notice that this tells us of something positive and wonderful which is behind this offering of the word of prohibition. It is not to be understood as simply a protection from a Satanic tempter; it has true meaning in itself. And the expression "the day you eat of it, you shall surely die" means that, should they fail to obey this word of prohibition, they would not come to live as God intended they should through obeying this word. They would be dead in respect to the shared fellowship with God as sons - they would not know it. They would not have found the 'sonship' God had for them 'in Christ' before the world was made. They would still have to find what 'salvation' meant in its original meaning and experience.

As we shall see, the man and the woman never actually knew God this way - for Genesis 3 reveals the circumstances of how they failed to fulfil God's purpose and also did not take knowledge of this covering and protective word. They forfeited life and took Satan as their 'father', as the one they would obey [John 8.39-47; Romans 6.16]

Note 5-4b: As to our loving Saviour, Jesus:

1. It is through faith in His life as a true Son, who hung on a cross so that all the world might know that He loved the Father that we see true obedience enacted and known. He reveals the Father through his relational obedience, which was practised all through his life and death. This is how his death in obedience to his Father shows his glory - it demonstrated the relational glory between the Father and the Son.

2. It is through faith in Him that we receive Him for who he is and so are given authority to become children of God - his obedience accrues to us as we share his life. So we experience that we are children of God [Romans 8.16-17].

Reading 06 – Genesis 3:1-7

Temptation and Fall - Part 1: The talking snake, a tricky creature

- 3.1 *A lowly creature engages its superior in conversation*
3.2--5 *A conversation about God's word rather than doing it.*

Read through also: Isaiah 14.1-21, Ezekiel 28.1-19, Jude 6-10, Hebrews 1.5-14.

To understand this interchange between the subtle creature, the snake, and the woman we need to understand that there is someone behind the snake. This someone is an angelic being and is later exposed by God [3.15] as the source of the rebellion and temptation of the man and the woman.

6-1 Angelic majesties: of a certain glory

Angelic beings are spirits [Hebrews 1.14], who have a glory as the executors of God's will; some of high-rank are named in the Bible. As we have seen in Genesis so far, personal beings have a relational glory, that is, you see their initiative or submission in the way they relate to other persons. This relating, as it is between the man and the woman, or both of them with God, is their glory. Things, like flowers and rocks and trees, have their glory in their bodily beauty alone [1 Corinthians 15.38-41].

6-2 Concerning angelic beings.

Because they execute the will of God, angels relate to God by way of obedience [or in Satan's case, with those evil angels under him, disobedience] to his command, and they are invested with necessary power necessary to implement what it is that God has set them to immediately do or what he has set them over in relation to his purposes.

They are set within hierarchies; ordered by God in ranks. As they relate to God by way of command, so they relate to those angels of higher authority by command requiring the response of obedience, which is then carried out with a given power. Wherever we see

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hierarchies, we see angelic order. It is their way of relating; it is task oriented and so power centred; expressing itself in strict order by ranked authority.

Angelic order then is personal, understands command and obedience in association with the execution of power. This is their glory.

Note 6-2: Gabriel and Michael

The name Gabriel is composed of the two Hebrews words gbr and el = "the great messenger of God". He is given the work of promoting God's work on the earth. It is in this capacity that he comes to Daniel [8.16,9.21-27] when he announces the restoration of Jerusalem. He also comes to Mary announcing the birth of the Saviour [Luke 1.26-28].

The only other angelic personage which is invested with a name is Michael = "Who is like God?" He is God's angelic opposer of everyone who raises himself up against God; anyone who dares to equal God. In Daniel [10.13,21,12.1] he contends against the powers which are hostile to Israel, God's beloved and covenant people. He is also referred to in Jude [9] and in Revelation [12.7] where he fights against Satan, the author of all idolatry.

Gabriel builds up, Michael overthrows. The former executes the desire of God, Who is our Saviour; the latter, of God, who is our Judge.

6-3 The relations between angels and humans that they serve.

Accordingly, because God sets angelic beings in their order, men and women whose understanding is informed by receiving the revelation of God, appreciate that angels are not to be reviled for they are "majesties" [Jude 8].

Even if the angels are rebellious themselves, their order is God-given, and stands until God changes things. Even Michael did not rebuke Satan, but recognised it was for Another to do that [Jude 9]. Men and women, who lack understanding of these things are destroyed by them [Jude 10]. Such men also sink to the level of beasts themselves, for as they are deceived about the order of the angels set by God, so they are unable to know their own honour, as set over the animals, and so act in a way which dishonours themselves [2 Peter 2.10-22].

Just as God set the angels' boundaries in heavenly matters, so He has in respect of men and women. The angels interface with us according to God's purposes, they are messengers of God to us. They mediate some intervention of God for us when He sends them. But 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". They moved outside of their natural created glory. They attempted to relate to men and women in a way which was unnatural to them, they went after "strange flesh", flesh not of their created sort. As a result, they found themselves imprisoned by God, coming under his judgment [Jude 6-7].

Whenever obedient angels speak to men and women in a way which God authorises, they convey his blessing and they serve us. But they are not ordered as we are. They are not made in the image of God as men and women are - it is never said that an angel "loves" God. Whilst there is personal communication between us and God through their agency - we never see in the Bible that the good angels speak as from themselves, but always in the name of the One who sent them. They make that clear up front - for they are the executives of Another.

Note 6-3: Our Lord Jesus Christ presents to us God as He truly is.

How we praise the Lord that He has spoken to us in these days through a Son. The New Covenant is brought to us by an authorised Messenger Who is a true Man and also greater than the angels [[Jesus as our Apostle, Hebrews 3.1 Hebrews 1.5-14, 2.1-4].

Indeed, because He is a true Man, and has ascended far above all creation, has caused the world to come to be subject, not to angels, but to man [Hebrews 2.5].

Angelic mediation of the word of God to us is superseded here by the work of His Son, who does not bring us the word of God as a messenger who simply bears it; He is the word of God and so can convey to us God as He truly is in Himself – since He is God.

6-4 Lucifer, or Satan, is an angel, who was in the Garden of Eden.

Scripture is reticent to give us any direct revelation that puts the focus on Satan for himself. Because of this, we are only given information of him as he directly impinges upon our

own world. That is, we are given practical information that protects us but we are never invited to directly focus upon him for himself.

For this reason, information about Satan is presented to us as he directly effects human life and history: on a need-to-know basis, as it were. We saw that in the section where the talking snake appears to the woman. Only later, are we given to understand that there is behind this episode a darker origin, standing at the back of it.

Occasionally, there appear in history human persons – Judas would be an example - who are very deeply used by Satan. It is on those occasions that we are given some information against the tapestry of the human life that is for us to see and understand before us. Here, in what follows there is a consideration of the king of Tyre.

The section in Ezekiel 28.1-10 is a word from the Lord about the fate of the leader [prince] of Tyre. It follows a funeral dirge in Ezekiel 27 concerning Tyre itself. In 28.11-19 there is a funeral dirge over the king of Tyre where his former pomp and splendour are contrasted with his fall. The fall of the king is spoken of in the same terms as the fall of Lucifer from his high place in heaven. We learn from this section concerning Satan:

[a] he is an angelic personage [28.14], who is a creation of God [28.13b]

[b] he was perfect in his wisdom and beauty [28.12b] and was in the garden of Eden.

[c] he was placed on the holy mountain of God [an image which suggests "where God dwells"] and God found no blame in him from his creation day until he was found to be unrighteous [28.15]

[d] he sinned, dishonouring the holy place he had [profaned] and was cast from it. His heart was proud, due to his created splendour, and he was violent within [28.16-17]. In a way that the king of Tyre emulates, Satan expresses his internal violence through his "trade" - through commercial exchange for personal profit.

[e] by the way he uses the fallen king of Tyre, Satan uses the creation of God in such a way as God does not expressly will what he does, in the sense that God originates what comes from his wicked heart; but God certainly allows it, for He is the true Ruler of heaven and earth.

In the case of evil angels however, we need to be careful, because they sound as if they understand us and are like us. This is so insofar that they are personal and responsible.

6-5 God expresses his wrath, handing Satan over to his desires.

When men and women's desires are contrary to God's for them, God hands people over to what they desire. This cements them in their thinking and is a manifestation of his wrath, His anger. [Romans 1.18-32].

The same principle is operative in the life of Satan. He has desired to be "as God". And for an angelic mind to desire to be like God means that he can only think and desire according to his own experience of God. And that is the experience of an angel.

Accordingly, from what we have seen about angels, this will mean that Satan thinks to be "like God"[3.6] means to be as God, according to the way an angel would think of God. So we are not surprised that he thinks in terms of command, obedience, and execution of another's orders and having the requisite power to give to others to do his bidding. He understands submission to be expressed as obedience in practice, with no reference to the heart of the one who obeys. He is only concerned about getting his will done - for that is how he thinks of God; as an angel by experience, and as a rebel now.

6-6 Why Satan has power still, even though a rebel.

God has delivered him over to this desire - for it is out of order, and so it works as a judgment upon him. So this is why Satan has power. His former power is still allowed him by God for it cements him in his deception. This *is* God's immediate judgment upon him. For, in not having any opportunity to change his mind, Satan is handed over to his deception in a way that it is permanent for him.

So, at the temptation of Jesus, Satan is shown to really be acting on the basis that the world is his, it has been handed to him by man and that he is the ruler of this world.

6-7 The death of Jesus is the judgment of the prince of this world

And this is why the cross is Satan's final judgement - for it is where something is declared in the powerlessness of Jesus, the man. It is that when a Son, who out of loving submission to his Father, obeys Him who loves men and women and the world He has created. Then Satan begins to discern that a greater power is released.

It is the power of God, Who is love, which is expressed within the Godhead as the way they relate. A love in which men and women, made in that image, share and understand; this love is the power to draw into submission freely, voluntarily, a love for God which delights His heart and brings upon those who are drawn by it the glorious liberty of the sons of God. That is the glory of the Son. And that is a sweet communion an angel, and a rebellious one at that, does not, and cannot, know.

Note 6-7: "Now judgment is upon this world... [John 14.31-32]

Following his Father's heavenly voice affirming that he would glorify His own Name, the teaching of Jesus is that judgment comes upon the world at his own death. That He shall be lifted up on a cross is the casting out of Satan from his foothold upon the world where his power holds people his captives. This judgment will be accomplished by the crucifixion of Jesus. Later, at the Ascension of Jesus into heaven we shall see that there is a casting out of Satan as a rebel in heaven [Revelation 12].

Reading 07 – Genesis 3.1-7

Temptation & Fall Part 2: Good sounding words with dark, deceptive meaning

- 3.1 *A lowly creature engages its superior in conversation*
- 3.2--5 *A conversation about God's word rather than doing it.*
- 3.6-7 *The woman takes the initiative*

7-1 The approach of a subordinate creature, which is out of order.

We have learned from Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 that the rebellion of Satan in heaven is prior to the rebellion of the man and the woman. The use of the serpent to approach the woman and to initiate a conversation with someone, who is over this creature in the order of creation, is itself a sign of disorder.

Further, the serpent sets the discussion about matters between the God and the man and the woman - this is another sign of disorder. The subtle creature is out of order, firstly, in conversing with the woman at all and then, in what is discussed.

The woman has no experiential knowledge of animals, Adam had expressed authority in naming them, she had not. What she has is the word of the man about their authority; she, herself, 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 moved out of order herself.

7-2 The invitation to talk about the word of God rather than do it.

The snake, as an underling to the woman, initiates a conversation and that is bad enough. But the subject of the conversation, into which the woman is invited, is about what God has said. Whenever we talk about what God has clearly said as an alternative to doing it, we fall into the religious way of thinking and cease to be obedient ones.

In the context of teaching and preaching, we may talk about what God has said for this is an imparting of God's mind to us so that we can learn what He has said in order to act upon it and obey him.

7-3 Implications about God subtly conveyed.

The serpent, on hearing the woman recite God's word [with the addition of "nor touch it"] moves from a suggestive question to a flat denial of the consequence, which God stated, "you shall not die". Notice that what is challenged is not the goodness of God's word as a

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proper command, which has an offer of sonship behind it; rather, the consequence of His word is denied.

This implies a mindset within Satan which interprets the consequence foreshadowed by God as a threat [rather than a protection] and therefore as an incentive to obedience based on self-centred interest. The serpent is speaking from a base, which betrays a mind hostile to God and resentful of Him as God. It is a view of God as a manipulative controller.

Further, the addition "...For God knows..." implies that the speaker claims to know God in such a way that he is able to take the role of interpreter and instructor of God's word and motives to the woman. Up to this point, the only persons who have done that are God Himself and the man He presented her to.

7-4 'Right sounding' words, but with a different meaning.

The snake says, "your eyes will be opened"; this is something which is said God knows will happen - it is an entire fabrication. What God, from His perspective, actually said would happen is that they "will die". This means that they will be lost to God as those he desires to have fellowship with Him.

Note 7-4a: See the prodigal son: when he is absent from his father, the father describes him as his father to the elder brother as "dead" - Luke 15. 24.

The serpent says that her "eyes will be opened". Indeed, it was already true that they were open to the things of God; rather, now the eyes of their heart will be darkened [Romans 1].

All this is said in such a way that there is an implication that God is holding back something from the woman, He is presented as a God who deprives them of something they could have for themselves.

It is of course, true that their eyes will be opened to know evil and good. They will enter into a 'knowing', they will take knowledge of evil, by the doing of it, by obeying another mind than the Lord's. Now it will be good and evil - it will always be a contrast, a duo. Now, whenever there is something good from God, there will be a passenger [evil] always there to state a rebellious alternative, a temptation. It is also true that what was a gracious offer of entry into the fellowship of knowledge of God as Father, now will come to be an exchange of fathers. For Adam and Eve will come to obey another mind, and relate to it like children do when they obey their father - "you are of your father the devil, ...he is a liar from the beginning "[John 8.41-44, 1 John 3.10].

"...you will be like God..." means in the mouth of the snake, who is a front for Satan, that he means "like God" in the sense that Satan, under a powerful deception, thinks he is already 'like' God. As we have seen, Satan has been cemented into a deceived position by being handed over to his desire to take God's place in the universe. So he beguiles the woman with language which is rebelliously angelic in its meaning, but has the same words as the man and the woman might legitimately use together. This is the deceptive power, they are the same words with a different meaning, spoken from a different place of obedience, by a different class of creature.

Note 7-4b: Some Practical tests.

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, 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?

He is addressing the woman who 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 here, only a perverted view of himself to project, and that is based upon a knowledge of God which is learned by rebellion to God.

7-5 What caused the woman to take the fruit of the tree.

The woman is very much working out of her past experience of the all the other trees of the garden. She has begun to treat them as a generalisation of all trees and has accommodated her experience to this particular tree in the light of them.

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She didn't listen to the particular word of God for this particular tree, even though the very opening words of the snake draw attention to that fact. This indicates that she is already under the powerful temptation to accept that she should begin to run alone in her own wisdom at this time. She accepted that:

[a] the tree "was good for food". This is certainly true of the other trees, and her experience of them becomes important to her thinking now; under the influence of the serpent she begins to rationalise. She has a 'fact' before her, she has tasted food provided from the other trees 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.

[b] the sensual "delight of the eyes" drew her to consider her pleasure in the fruit of this tree. At that moment, she did not find pleasure in the obedience to God's word. She remembered the pleasure of obedient activity as a past thing but now, under the serpent's influence and beguiling, she considered the delight out of context to the word of God.

[c] the desire "to be wise" was planted within her. There is knowledge which can be taken when it was not offered. 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 the initiative from Him. Small wonder that she went on to eat the fruit of the tree and then to seize the initiative from her husband and offer it to him, and he ate.

Note 7-5 Desire

1 John 2.16 picks up the 3 fold nature of temptation the world presents to our desires, lusts of our eyes and own pride and boasting.

7-6 To participate in a disordered relation is to lose glory.

As to authority issues, we see here that there is a cunning approach by a subordinate creature to draw the woman out of order by her agreeing to a discussion. Afterwards, this creature is blamed and its future life is described as cursed by God.

Once the rebellion was accepted by discussion with the snake, the woman had accepted a dishonouring of herself as made in the image of God. By accepting address from an animal, she found that her glory had been interfered with.

Then she began to take seriously the things uttered by the rebellious snake.

She acted without reference to her husband and so dishonoured his glory herself.

Adam knew that she was presented to him as someone who responds to him. Given to him by God, and being in solidarity with her in their sharing of life together, he also ate.

Most important of all, God is dishonoured, for He is not obeyed, and they, who were designed in his likeness to bring Him glory by their obedient relating, find they have dishonoured their Head.

RECONCILIATION IN CHRIST

Readings in preparation for an applied study of the salvation worked for us through the atoning Incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ.

Week 2: Readings 8-15

Reading 08 – Genesis 3.7

Temptation and Fall - Part 3: Shame, covering and knowledge

Reading 09 – Genesis 3.8-15

Salvation through Judgment: Part 1

God discerns the matter and proclaims a judgment.

Reading 10 – Genesis 3.16-17

Salvation through Judgment: Part 2

The Lord's announcement to the woman in respect of her husband

Reading 11 – Genesis 3.17-19

Salvation through Judgment Part 3:

The judgment delivered to the man in respect of the ground.

A ruined set of relationships and a forfeit of life.

Reading 12 – Genesis 3.17-23

Salvation in the midst of Judgment: Part 4

Promises are the beginnings of good news

The people of God as Eve: Christ and the Church

Reading 13 – Genesis 3.20-24

The future promises through the Eve.

The pattern used for covering of shame and sin.

The preservation of an eternal life.

Reading 14 – Genesis 4.1-2

The birth of two brothers: a separation within mankind.

Reading 15 – Genesis 4.3-5

The gracious possibility:

A person may be accepted by God but only indirectly now, through an offering that is acceptable to God.

Reading 08 – Genesis 3.7

Temptation and Fall - Part 3: Shame, covering and knowledge

8-1 Shame: the awareness before another that I am not as I once was

Later, we shall see that what the woman did will make her guilty before God and He will hold her, the man and the snake accountable.

However, before the man and the woman come to answer to God, they experience a change in the way they relate together. Something has changed in their own relationship. We have seen that the acceptance of a disordered relationship by the woman when she encountered the talking snake led to a loss of glory. It dishonoured her and defiled the holy, given relation she had received from God in regard to the world, the animals, the trees and the man. It was a violation.

Both the man and the woman have the experience that things between them are now changed. Together, they have lived in a way that is not right for them. They are now aware of a difference that shows in their life together. Things are no longer as they once were, they are ashamed of themselves.

This is registered personally when they see each other. The openness they had in seeing each other's bodies is now an uncomfortable and disturbing experience for both of them. They realise they are naked and want to cover themselves - their bodies - from the other's gaze. To be bodily uncovered is not the honouring and beautiful experience it once was.

Before, they were open to look at each other, and appreciate their differences genitally, anatomically and relationally. Then, these differences were signs to them of how they were meant for each other, were built for bodily union and the union of shared life together in every way; they were signs of mutual glory. Now, to look upon each other is to find these differences an offence, because, instead of glorying in them they now find before each other a constant reminder of their defiled disorder of relation. This is the experience of mutual shame.

8-2 Covering, a shielding of myself from the eyes of another

The man and the woman are registering shame. As an emergency measure, their way of dealing with that is by making loin coverings in order to cover themselves in the places where they have a complementary anatomy. Their genital differences are an outward bodily statement of how they answer to one another - it testifies to their solidarity and origin - their oneness. What was a delight and a joy is now something they do not want to look upon - for it now awakens in them their lost glory. Something has happened in which they are both involved; and they are no longer in the mint condition from which they came from the hand of God.

8-3 Fig leaves - a rebellious attempt to alleviate shame.

They now use the fig tree's leaves [not its fruit to eat], but in a way which was never intended. For they must sew the leaves together, they have to fabricate something not given to them in that natural form. It is their attempt to cover themselves from each other. This is the first record of work done after the fall. And it is not a good work. All works of man after this are not "good" works.

It turns out to be an initiative by the man and the woman to alleviate their pain - it is works that are driven by shame. It is the pain of the heart, which is sharply experienced through what the eyes are now seeing. That is where the change is registered – in their perception of themselves in the eyes of the other. For the body each has is still as they came from the hand of God; this bodily form has not changed. But to behold it is now a matter of pain and stands no longer for joy and delight, but loss of glory. So, it must be hidden. We cover nakedness not because there is something wrong with what is covered, 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 aware that, in our persons, we are not good.

Note 8-3: The suppressing of what is good.

The picture we have here is that the bodies of the man and the woman are unchanged in their 'natural' beauty and yet need – for some other deep reason – to be covered from sight. This does not arise from a change of body such as we see in old

age as compared with the bodies of those who are younger. This is a need to suppress the truth of God – our natural, bodily, created glory – so as to deal with some awareness in ourselves that we are no longer in relational order. There is a brokenness to the relational glory, and this is reflected in the need to suppress – to hide - the bodily beauty which, by contrast, has now become the occasion of remembering this loss.

This is worked out deeply, on a much broader scale, in Romans 1.18-32. The suppression there is with reference to God's deity and power. People suppress it – hold it down – rather than engage it.

The Gospel message, as it is accepted and trusted, sets us free in the forgiveness of God to a place of accepting ourselves before God on the grounds of Christ's work for us. In doing that about ourselves, it gives to us the ability to deal with folks who are not bodily beautiful, or whose bodies are deformed or in other ways broken; to say nothing of their personal brokenness and fallen nature as persons.

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

8-4 Garments of skin - the ultimate cost of fixing it.

The difficulty of the fig leaves is that they are the initiative of the man and the woman, and so they really represent another rebellion. Having now fallen, they attempt to alleviate their relational pain themselves - which implies that they think they are abandoned by God to their situation.

Nothing is further from the truth. The way out that God provides shows that He is in full control and knows all things. He knows what to do, and makes preparation for their pain. But He will not simply alleviate pain. He will make a revelation of the pain which is now in His own heart. A pain engendered by His deep sympathy for them in their now difficult plight, to say nothing of the pain to his heart because of their rebellion.

For the way of fixing the matter will take the form God sees it must - and that is set by what it means to Him. Fixing the matter means that it must first be fixed in God. Because He loves them, and because they are in His likeness, there is an answering pain in God's heart, which must be dealt with. Because of his holiness there must be a death as well; salvation will come through judgment, which implies death, as it always does.

So the covering of the shame, the loss of relational glory for the man and the woman, will now be dealt with by the loss of life to animals, whose skins 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.' Here, in this preliminary pattern – or type, shedding of blood to achieve a covering for shame is stated [Genesis 3.21].

Note 8-4: The death of the Son of God in our place and in our stead.

The principle is signalled here - the actual death, which will permanently deal with shame is that of the God-Man, Who by his way of dying shamefully, will exhaust the shame of the all men and women.

The Lord Jesus is Godhead's solution. Totally unable to deal with their shame, men and women will, through Jesus Christ, come to see that they have not been abandoned by God, but always loved. The solution for their shame and guilt will have to wait for the 'seed of the woman' to come for there to be that possibility again - for that will bring about the possibility of sharing in the righteousness of Christ.

And we Christians are now a shameless people - not because we do not have, of ourselves, much of which to be ashamed - but because of His glory, which we have, as our life is drawn into union with His righteousness.

8-5 Good and evil.

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"; which means they knew what is in God's mind for them, how He wishes their world and life to be arranged and how they are made in the likeness of God. This we have said is their glory, for how they are given to relate to what is there, demonstrates who they are in relation to everything and everyone else - and God saw it and it was "good".

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As we have seen earlier, God's word to the man and the woman not to eat the fruit of the particular tree was a gracious offer to them to know him as sons to a Father by obeying His word. 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 that He has prepared for them which initiates the need of this protective word, but the prior rebellion of Satan; and that was initially a matter of the heavens. That rebellion God had to judge. And since it was not according to His will it is "evil".

Good and evil are not two equally opposed matters. In this part of Scripture, "good" means the state of things that God has caused to come about by creation. It is that which it pleased Him to create and bring into being. In this sense, it is a visible expression of His mind and character. And it is "good".

Note 8-5: Our mind set is not to be Dualistic.

When we say that good and evil are not two equally opposed matters, we are refusing to think of the world and the history we are involved in through being created, as a matter of two equal and opposite forces. That way of thinking is to approach the world as being dualistic. Dualism majors upon the statements of opposites, and it has regularly infected the Christian church. It tries to resolve issues by showing that they must be kept apart as two extremes. In emphasising the extremes, we see an emphasis placed on one and then the other, such that they are not connected but are portrayed as opposites that never meet. All this with the implication that they were never meant to meet; they are sort of 'contradictions', built into the universe that God has made. This places the blame for such matters into the hands of God Himself.

So people speak of good and evil as being of equal value, when really only good is the true work of God and the evil is known as a rebellion against the good. Evil has no real place of its own to stand but arises from the creature in relation to the creator.

Light and darkness are said to be simply 'opposites' instead of seeing that the presence of light is that which pushes back the darkness and, in fact, has the reality of truth.

Matter and spirit are not to be opposed, but the creation by God of incarnate fleshy beings, such as ourselves, and then making us aware of Himself as a spiritual being finds its union and connection in a reality which is truly real.

Mind and matter are not opposites but simply two complementary facets of human existence, we think and we are to also be found placed to live in a material world.

God is not a man, and yet, once the Incarnation of the Word of God takes place, we can no longer bring these into our thinking as opposites, but as an event which has taken place and we must learn to think from it, once it was so. While we might not have thought our way to it, we can think out from it once it is so.

8-6 Evil

By "evil" is meant a description of what takes place in God's creation, by his creatures, in opposition to this revealed "good" mind of God. Here we see that "good" has its origin in God and "evil" is a response to what is good: it is contrary to the express purpose of God. The decisive point to understand here is that evil is reactive, not pro-active: it does not bring a new thing into existence, it opposes what is there already. It is creaturely; for Satan is a creature. And that is the important thing 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.

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 thing [Ezekiel 28].

Note 8-6: Evil as a creaturely, disobedient response to what is good.

From Satan's deceived point of view he thinks of God now as One who 'knows good and evil' [3.5b] - we learned this from the mouth of the serpent. In other words, Satan thinks that by his rebellion, he has brought into God's experience a difference to God by forcing Him to "take knowledge". 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 is a creature. It is only for God to initiate the "taking of knowledge" - that includes a knowledge of Himself, or of what He has made.

It is this relation of God as Creator and we as creatures that is inviolate and which assures us that 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 to Satan's rebellion and judged him. God's knowledge of "good and evil" does not affect his character, because He is God who is good, and evil can only be the work of a creature.

8-7 Human “knowledge of good and evil”

[1] Its content – awareness of some alternative that should never have arisen

Knowledge of "good" and "evil" now means knowledge of God and what He has made, sullied and dirtied by the infiltration and imposition of the point of view of a rebellious creature, Satan. So, when it is said that we have a knowledge of "good and evil" it means that we have something, or someone, made by God presented to us; and then this other upstart voice, speaks how he sees it and thinks of God about it.

This upstart voice sullies everything happens to all of life. It is the voice of the devil, who first thought this way from the point of view of a rebellious angelic relation to God. It is the desires of our fallen flesh, which is our natural and sensual beauty corrupted into a drive to be always satisfied. It is also the voice of the world, which is mankind's own, pre-occupation with ourselves on a collective and systemic level. 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 other voices.

[2] Its practice – a judging experience that should never have come to be practised.

When God says within the Godhead that the man has now become like one of Us, knowing good and evil, then what is meant is the practice of discerning or 'judging' what is good – according to God's mind – and what is not good, or evil, - what is not according to His mind. That men and women think that they can judge matters of their own accord, without recourse to the revelation from God which alone makes matters clear in these things, means that they have become their own judges; both of themselves, to their own anxiety, and also of their neighbours, to their hurt and condemnation.

Reading 09 – Genesis 3.8-15

Salvation through Judgment: Part 1

God discerns the matter and proclaims a judgment.

- 3.8-9 *The presence of the seeking Lord*
- 3.10-13 *Conversation with the man*
- 3.14-15 *The decision of God about the matter*

9-1 Fear to meet with God.

Aware that things have changed with the woman, the man now registers something about God that is also new for him. In regards to the woman, a fellow creature, the man registers shame; that is directed to the glory they share in relation.

In regard to God, their Creator, it is different; the new element is fear of His presence. Shame led them to cover themselves from each other's eyes; with God, fear leads the man and woman not to hide their bodies but to hide *themselves* so as not to be found at all. Unable then to seek the Lord because of what they are experiencing, the gracious Lord seeks them.

Note 9-1 A seeking God – a further act of grace.

We see how God seeks out the man and the woman with whom He desires fellowship. That the man and woman cannot be easily found in the garden where God had placed them, requires a call from God. The calling of God is something that expresses His grace towards us in that He is a seeking God. Notice that He does not call because He cannot find them, but because the man and the woman are hiding; as if they can do so permanently?

When God and the man speak to one another, the man uses language of nakedness, which indicates his change of position. A change which has come about because of the eating of the forbidden fruit. Fear, we are told in Scripture [1 John 5.4.18], has to do with punishment; and it is fear the man feels now.

"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. "Naked" as spoken by the man means "I am not clothed", in the sense of

'covered'. It expresses a lack of something, when by creation they were fully as God intended. This is not how God taught them to feel when he first made them. It is not his voice which has spoken this alternative message to them - someone else has been speaking. It is not possible for them to be registering the results of fear and shame and nakedness unless they have 'taken knowledge' of that other defiling voice. To God it is clear they have obeyed that upstart voice.

9-2 The conversation with the man

When asked if he has eaten the fruit from the forbidden tree, the man states the circumstances as he understands them to be. The woman, whom God gave to be with him, gave it to him and he ate. I do not think the man is here attempting to blame the woman - there is no indication of that in his answer. He is simply reporting the circumstances as to how he came to eat. He makes no mention of the exchange between the serpent and the woman; indeed, the text, by its silence may imply he has no knowledge of it. As far as he is concerned, the woman he is given to be with, presented him with the fruit. Indeed, he may have thought it was fruit from any of the trees, which they were allowed to eat – perhaps there would be no physical difference. What he does know is that the fruit, when eaten, brought about a registering within himself of its result of shame and fear.

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. But He does not blame him, nor take him to task, in relation to the woman - He addresses only his eating. 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 which draws him into her action. This is what he means by "the woman you gave to be with me" - that is, 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'.

Note 9-2: A matter of relational order.

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 had set. That is why he does not permit a woman to have authority over a man - it is contrary to the order. And it is this 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 and "out of order" situation by permitting it. He would certainly have acknowledged that such things took place and that God can use them, when He decides to do so. So for example, the exchange between Deborah and Barak in reference to the honour of killing Sisera indicates a state of affairs that is a discipline upon the man himself [Judges 4.7-9]. What Paul is saying is that, in the freedom of God Himself to act, it is one thing for the Lord to make use of a disorder for good, for himself it is not his place to decide to do so.

There is another deeper 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, which each had performed. The man is called to account because he ate, the woman because she gave to her husband, and the serpent because he beguiled the woman. 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 opinion and sit in judgement on others in the situation. Rather we need to read the Scripture for what it says and see how God thinks of it all. [See 8-7 [2]].

9-3 Judgment discerns blameable deeds; and so a revelation of guilt.

Judging is an action; it signifies the act of discerning what has taken place according to the mind of the authority. God discerns what has happened to the man and seeks to find the actions that have led to this state of affairs.

It is important to understand that *being* guilty is quite different from *feeling* guilty, although they are connected. We are not guilty because we feel so; but we may feel guilty if we are so. When a person is tried in a court legally, he is accused, and then, if found guilty, he is

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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 this is the situation within the legal framework.

Here the holiness of the person of God confronts a rebellion. Guilt does not have to be established, Adam already has, to God's eyes, the signs of guilt, both as to admission of nakedness and also of the deed as well as of the feelings of fear that accompany such guilt towards God.

Notice that guilt is only knowable within the encounter between God with Adam. Guilt is a relational matter. It is the verdict passed upon the deeds of a person that they are blameable deeds. Deeds judged to be ungodly are deeds that are not according to God's mind.

9-4 God proclaims a judgment; He announces a decision.

Judgment announces a verdict – it is the statement that is made in the light and as a result of the act of discerning. It states how things will now be according to the mind of the authority.

[1] Blessings and cursings.

Blessings express the mind of God for the world and men and women. They are statements of command spoken within the setting of his own plan for mankind. They are *commands which, based upon the gifts which He gave*, require obedience from those, enabled by that gift, to perform them. They are a joy to do, because there is power to do and happiness of spirit in the doing. Blessings bring delight because they are an opportunity to enact the relation with God in which we are set - so they are the experience of fellowship with Him.

A cursing is unlike a blessing. Curses are not the original will of God – they are *His response to our response*. They take the form of an announcement. They arise as His response to our wicked response to the word which He first gave. They do not command what shall be done, they are a response, the announcement of the result, the consequences, to what we have already done [deeds committed] and when we have not done what is good [things omitted]. So cursings are a judgment - but because they are God's judgment, they are a good judgment in that they are always right and appropriate. They deliver us over to the consequences of our actions in such a way that if God will intervene they will be changed, but not otherwise.

[2]How it will now be for the snake?

The snake has dishonoured the woman as one who was set over him by God - now he will reap a dishonour among his own created group. 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 as "more crafty than any beast of the field" [3.1]- so his lowly place of eating the dust will be particularly appropriate to him.

9-5 A holy hatred between the “seed of the woman” and the enemy of mankind?

Satan is addressed as the one standing behind the serpent, as the one who used it. But the form of the statement is still addressed to the serpent, in a similar to the way that the king of Tyre was addressed in Ezekiel. An intense hatred is announced here by God between the woman and the serpent, for she has been seriously ripped off. If it is an enmity – a strife - which God has put there, then it must stand for the sort of hatred which God himself has, and that is a *right hatred* against all that is unrighteous and unholy. This hatred will find expression in action between their "seeds". That is, it will not find immediate action. While it was established here in the garden, it will be brought to full realisation in the future. The seed of the serpent [Satan] are the "sons" he has by obedience to him. These are the men and women who yield to him to obey him and they shall find themselves implacably opposing the "seed" of the woman, who is Jesus Christ [Galatians 3.15-19].

9-6 This hatred will issue in a mighty conflict.

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 it is not as serious for him as it is for Satan.

This address to Satan expresses a final dealing with the problem of evil, not because it will deal with the results and consequences of evil, as it will, but because it deals with the *source* of evil.

So, in tempting the woman, the enemy has gone too far; he has invited the curse of God upon himself and the hatred of him is registered among the humans. This hatred of Satan is as a work of 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 who will express that hatred of the devil and all his works in such a way as to deliver him a final judgment.

Note 9-6: Sin, righteousness and judgment – a conviction worked by the Holy Spirit [John 16.8-11]

All Christians have three convictions given them by the Holy Spirit as they are translated from the world and are born of God. They are convicted of their sin, which at that time was their unbelief in Jesus Christ. They are convicted of Jesus' righteousness because the cross and resurrection and ascension indicate that Jesus went to the Father, and therefore he must have come from there and must be the Son of God. They are convicted that a judgment has taken place. The judgment that true Christians understand is that the cross of Jesus Christ is the judgment of this world and for Satan - it is that which casts him out forever - it is a judgment which is, at the same time, both 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, who alone knows their worth, for He alone knows His own value. 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 as the head of all that is.

Reading 10 – Genesis 3.16-17

Salvation through Judgment: Part 2

The Lord's announcement to the woman in respect of her husband

3.16 *The Lord's announcement to the woman*

10-1 Being fruitful and multiplying.

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

Further, their coupling together in sexual intercourse has been stated against the background of their uniting in celebration of their origin and in their making of a new family as they take leave of mother and father.

This former expression applies to the man and the woman in the garden; the latter implies that there is a new family established and so can only apply in the light of later, subsequent men and women of the earth. So, intercourse between a man and a woman and multiplication is an original commanded blessing. Since the blessing implies the ability to carry it out, then the gift of the Lord will include the conception, the carrying of the child and its delivery as the responsibility of the woman. [4.1b "with the help of the Lord" - does this apply to conception or to surviving the pain of the childbirth, or to the whole process?]

10-2 Increased pain accompany pregnancy and delivery.

When God says that He will "greatly multiply" her pain in childbirth, this implies that there was meaningful pain there in the first place. We must not mistake physical pain for the emotional pain of the fallen conscience we just seen in the man and the woman after the fall.

The human body is endowed with receptors for pain, which are both necessary to functioning and also included in the created process. Pain involved in the cost of multiplication was there - but now the mark of the fall is to be expressed about that; it will be greatly multiplied. It is the added intensity to the pain, which moves it to an agony. And it is this agony, that is associated with the movement of the woman being out of order with her husband. Their joint union - the celebration of their origin - has a product. A child is born and strong pain will accompany the woman in bringing it to birth.

Notice, it is the pain associated with pregnancy and birth, which is said to be what God has delivered her over to. There is no curse in respect of conception, the growth of children in the womb or of multiplication as such, all that is the created order of God. This pain is exclusive to the woman, for it is associated with her particular part in the fall.

10-3 To the woman about her husband in relations.

In Genesis 4.7, in speaking of Cain's situation just after God had rejected his offering, an expression is used of sin. Is described as a power that seeks to master us. It said there that sin, as a waiting power, is crouching at the entrance and its "desire is for you". This means that it wants to overpower and master Cain. However, Cain is instructed by God that it is imperative that he must master it.

This exact same expression "desire is for you", is used of the woman in respect of her husband. What God seems to be saying to her is that, by taking the initiative with her husband, she has stepped radically out of order. She is now of a mind set which is contrary to the created order. She has "taken knowledge" of evil in her desire to master her husband. Given her stance towards her husband - a remedy to the effects of her mind set is now given.

God's gracious provision for her in such a setting is that her husband shall rule her. That is, her husband will now regulate her activity and life, as God's agent, in order to curb the disorder which she has succumbed to and has now enslaved herself.

Note 10-3a: A ruler who curbs our desires.

That husbands have gone on to apply this curb to their wives, by further corrupting this "rule" through their own sin and self-aggrandizement, no way detracts from God's emergency order.

For any man – or woman for that matter – to be the agent of God for the restraining of a mindset that is harmful to one's fellow humans is very difficult. It is the constant witness of the Torah, the Law of Moses, that the limitation of punishment of crimes was necessary because it was clear that men would use God's law to lord it over their neighbours by going beyond what was fair and appropriate.

So it is with men and women. It is important for us to see that the provision of this order holds back the fast degradation of the original order for the man and the woman. However, with this change – it was now a matter of rule, of decree in the face of fracture, not a matter of freedom and joy. Under the new covenant it may [may!!!] return to being a joy when Christ's renovating power is brought to life.

Now notice that it was not a "rule" of the husband for her before this. Then, they both shared in the likeness of God [and still do, but in action, under the emergency order, it is differently expressed]; and that meant the man found himself initiating and the woman responding to him in a loving harmony which mirrored the lead and response found in the Trinity of the Persons of the Godhead. The order, which God has now imposed upon the woman, is that He will make a provision that the increasing chaos which would ensue from her mind set being expressed, will not bring destruction; it will be held in check.

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, and her husband is his agent in this matter.

We shall see this gracious provision of a restraining of disorder expressed in other great themes of the Bible, in respect of God and Israel, Christ and the church, The Spirit and the flesh.

Note 10-3b: Christian marriage.[Ephesians 5.21ff]

This halting, restraining work of God in relation to the woman is quite overhauled in the coming to pass of the New Covenant. We shall see a very different dynamic used in the instruction of the Christian community to be mutually subject one to another and especially the importance of a man to care for his wife and a wife to respect her husband.

But neither of these are the imposed will of one upon the other, but the mind of the Lord for each in respect of each other. All this is built upon the basis that each hears and knows the Lord clearly. This newfound freedom arises through Christ's representative and substitutionary work for us. It will be connected for us through the readings that follow about the Covenant setting of all the work of reconciliation.

Reading 11 – Genesis 3.17-19

Salvation through Judgment Part 3:

The judgment delivered to the man in respect of the ground.

A ruined set of relationships and a forfeit of life.

11-1 The man and the dust.

We have seen, prior to the creation of the woman, that Adam is made from the formation of the red dirt, which is already created. His relation to the earth is not that it gave him life [as is set forth in some aboriginal myths; close, but not true] but that he was formed from it, and God breathed into Him life. Here God is the author of all life and the Creator of the earth, which He worked to make man.

11-2 The man and the garden.

All the plants in the garden are "man centred" plants - they exist for him and serve his life. When he tills the earth, they bring forth abundantly; and that is all they bring forth - that which is good for food for the man. In this sense he has authority over it; relationally it is one of the expressions of his glory. Every farmer knows of this good sense of his relation to the land.

As we saw with the serpent, a disruption in the order of one relation draws the curse of God so that the orders of the others are also affected. So, as the serpent moved out of order with respect to the woman, 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. We saw that God's announcement of cursings simply gives expression to these disordered consequences as they apply – He simply makes them clear. It is the other side of His being our Provider and Sustainer.

11-3 God's relationship is spurned by Adam.

So for Adam there are results for his other relations also. He is addressed about his own misdemeanour, which is that he "listened to the voice of his wife", instead of listening to the voice [command] of God. His obedience shows to whom he has listened. He has obeyed his wife rather than the Lord's command [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? Why did he choose the solidarity with her over the obedience to God? To understand this, we need to look at union and what it means for the woman, and what it means for the man.

11-4 Union: different experience for the man than for the woman.

For the woman, she has experience of union by creation. That is, she is taken from someone, made, and then in intercourse finds a re-expression of that union. For her to be created then is to experience, simply by being created, union with Adam. She is bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. She knows union by creation. In this sense, she has taken

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knowledge –she has experience - which he has not. This is a side of their relationship he knows nothing about, leastways through his creation.

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, as in the case of the woman with Adam. Whenever she looks at him, she sees the one from whom she was created; and to be formed from him is to have a union with him, union with a person.

Further, 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 union experience himself. But she is in solidarity with him - she is given to him, presented to him by God. And she brings a delight, in a way that he knows the animals do not, she answers to him, she corresponds to him. The animals obey his command and he says how they will be thought of by the name he gives them. She, on the other hand, is a present from God and set in relation to him. He initiates and she responds but with the freedom which mirrors the freedom in the Godhead. As he takes the fruit from her, he stands with her in this solidarity they have, rather than obedience with God.

What is so tragic for them both is that if they had obeyed, they would have both known God as "sons" - and had a fellowship, a unity with Him, expressed by the doing of it.

11-5 The man and the 'ground'.

So his relation to the ground is now affected - it will no longer be man centred - it will cause to bud [grow] thorns and thistles [3.18]. Plant life arises which is not there for man, and does not suit his purposes. There is now a product, which 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. Every farmer knows and experiences this frustration and disturbance.

Also, what tilling means to him is not work which goes as it should, but sweat to his brow. There is extra effort now required which is manifested as toil. He has an uphill sense of deep frustration in his work from now on.

11-6 "to dust you shall return"

Further, the creational union which he sought 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 by formation, before he was enlivened by the breath of God. This states that he loses the breath of God and returns 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.

Note 11-6: Ruination and forfeited life.

What a deep disaster this is! How profound is the loss? Our proper Man, Jesus Christ, will lead us to share His life - a life, which is 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 - the union of being made anew from a sharing [participating] in His glorious resurrected life. What a wonderful Saviour!

Reading 12 – Genesis 3.17-23

Salvation in the midst of Judgment: Part 4

Promises are the beginnings of good news

The people of God as Eve: Christ and the Church

12-1 The promised Messiah, the seed of the woman

There are a number of ways to consider these words of God concerning the judgments He makes on the serpent, Satan, and the woman and the man. To study some of these will

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inform us about other portions of the Scriptures. In this way we begin to anticipate the covenant, which is the main underpinning of salvation – for both Jews and all men and women.

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

Revelation 12.1-2 has 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 is Israel; for this description matches the dream of the 17 year old Joseph concerning his father Jacob [Israel] and his mother and his eleven brothers. Indeed, Jacob so interprets his dream to mean himself, his wife and his eleven other sons [Genesis 37.5-10].

Israel gives birth to the Messiah [Rev 12.5]: he comes out of that covenant people. He is also born of a woman and is son of Mary, as we shall see at the Incarnation. The dragon is waiting to devour the child, using Herod the Great as his historical persecuting agent. The child escapes the dragon, ascends to the heaven and brings about the downfall of the dragon, who is 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 expressed in terms of Israel and the devil.

12-2 Israel and the Lord of Israel.

We are starting to connect up here with the material we have been studying in Genesis 3.15. But, in this case, 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. God, Himself, is cast into a male role as Israel's Lord. In 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.

12-3 Holiness: an exclusive commitment to one another - with no rivals to defile their relationship.

Throughout the history of Israel's inter-relationship with God, she is always finding that what her Lord wants runs deeply counter to her flesh. Israel is a unique people called by Him into relationship to a holy God: that is, Israel and God are placed in relation to one another as two entities, who are to be exclusive, permanent and total in the way they are for one another. There are to be no other gods in Israel's life - and she draws her life from Him as she is set in relation to obey Him.

We have seen that Eve desired to impress her will on her husband. Israel constantly approaches and lives with the Lord in a similar way. It is the rule of the Lord, which again and again re-centres Israel back to the One to whom she is to yield her allegiance and obedience.

12-4 So it is also for the Church and the Lord Jesus.

In Genesis 2.22-24 the man and the woman celebrated their union. So we see that the decisive meaning of marriage among humans is really a celebration of a mystery which was hidden until the coming of Messiah.

Paul makes clear in his teaching [Ephesians 5.21.] concerning mutual submission one to another that relationships in the Christian church are governed and expressed by a mutual submission one to another out of fear [respect] of Christ. This applies across the relationships of husbands and wives, children and parents, masters and servants.

In discussing the husband and wife relationship, he makes clear that the reality which is testified to by the marriage of men and women is Christ and the Church. This is the mystery hidden in these passages of Genesis for us. We have to wait for the coming of Messiah to see something deeper and more meaningful.

So, in our reading of Genesis we need to see that there are things hidden, which are yet to be revealed and which will make sense of the deep principles embedded in the section we are studying.

12-5 Christ took upon Himself the death we must die.

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We have seen that the woman in the garden is taken {made} from the side of the man. There is another parallel here between Christ and the church. The church also is made through Christ. It is taken from his side. She is united [in union] with him through her very creation and origin and so shares life with him.

Adam entered into death as a consequence of sin. Death is understood from God's side as a loss of fellowship with him, and from man's side as a bodily return to dust. So, on the cross Christ experienced death. As the God-man He experienced the loss of fellowship with His Father [Fatherlessness] and the Father knew the loss of fellowship with His Son [Sonlessness] and as truly Man 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.

When he died, Christ spilt his life for us. His life-blood was poured out. He acted within the requirement that death be a result [consequence] of our rebellion against God. Each member of the church has entered into his death. They leave their former selves behind as dead and enter into life with God. He saves us "from death" "to" life. They are justified from sin [Romans 6]. But with this matter of a death being satisfied in Christ; now, as a new man, risen with Christ, his Bride is sharing in his life by union with him.

12-6 The Holy Spirit resists our natural bent of life even now.

As we see in the life of the woman in the garden, there was now in a pattern of life which was to be resisted by her husband's rule. So with Christ and the church, a church in union with Him.

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

With Israel it was the Law which God gave to constantly draw attention to their own lusts and desires - the Law kept them clear that they were not able to justify themselves by what they could perform. Now in Christ, the ministry of the Spirit of Christ to us is that He communicates the union in Christ's death and resurrection to us; at the same time He lusts against the flesh to prevent us doing what we would, as ruined ones, naturally do [Galatians 5.16-17]. Even here, we see the preventative work of the Spirit, Who empowers us to live a godly life; and so to know God's blessing of command satisfied.

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.

Reading 13 – Genesis 3.20-24

The future promises through the Eve.

The pattern used for covering of shame and sin.

The preservation of an eternal life.

13-1 The man, in faith, 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 called them is how they were thought of.

Adam names his wife Eve [the Hebrew means 'life', or 'living']. The text goes on to say why he did this; it was because she was to him the mother of all the living. She is the one whose seed will bring the victory over the devil. If that is so, then in the midst of much that has been forfeited or ruined, she will be the mother of all the living.

From Adam's perspective she has been given the position and promise to bring the seed who will deal with the deceiver. Adam has hope through Eve, she was deceived but through her he sees there will come a redress of the situation. He believes in the word of God, and acts in faith in calling her Eve - for he has nothing which is tangible and sensual to encourage him about the redress. It is raw faith in the word of God about that.

Note 13-1: We are at a different historical perspective

Adam is thinking of Eve as she is before him; we would, from our vantage point in history, 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 [Galatians 4.26] as contrasted with Hagar the bondwoman. 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]. Indeed, they overcome Satan as their Husband did; as Satan oppresses them and kills them, they are God's instruments to cement Satan in his deception, which is his judgment 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].

13-2 God covers their shame through His, more costly, way.

As we saw previously, the man and the woman experienced a loss of glory in their relationship with each other. The Lord signals that they will need to be covered. But the covering he provides will require loss [a taking] of life and the use of the fruits of death, in this case animal skins. This is a sign, a pattern, which is introducing for us in the sacrificial death of the animals a foreshadowing of another death - that of the Messiah for the world.

Israel's approach to God will use the patterns in Leviticus that cover their sins from God through offerings. Indeed the basic idea behind the sin offering will be built on this concept of a covering provided by God.

Note 13-2: Covering of sin in God's sight.

Here the issue of covering deals with shame of Adam and Eve, and of course, those who follow them. Much more shall we find that God, in his relation to us, finds us a defiled and unholy people. As such, our deeds are an offence to Him

There will be foreshadowed here in respect of shame in the sight of a fellow human, a deeper need for covering of sin in relation to us and God. We shall be tracing this development in the Old Testament and the New when we look at the three basic ways that God redeems us.

Clothing which we use to cover our bodies is a thing to understand; for it is from this base that we have a foundation of what we call modesty. We say that someone is immodest when they are shameless, acting as if there is nothing wrong with them when there is.

Yet there is a true shamelessness that comes about through Christ, who covers our sins from the Father's eyes so that He can look upon us and find pleasure in us. But while we, as to our persons, are redeemed, our body is not yet. This affects the way we live. For we live modestly in the world, aware of the need to cover our unredeemed bodies. However, we shall come to possess a new, spiritual body, given us by God; and then it will not be a matter of not being ashamed; rather, we shall be bodily glorious.

13-3 God provides a shield, for the time being, to the tree of life.

As we saw at the time of the creation of man and woman in the image of God, there was a discussion about it between the Persons of the Godhead. So there is another discussion here; we are let into a conversation between them. We learn that Adam has become like "one" of Them; that is in knowing "good" and "evil".

God can know good and evil for He simply judges the evil and is tempted by no-one. It is not dangerous for Him when the voice of the enemy is speaking. For it is to Him the voice of a creature of his, and He simply quells it with a word.

However, the woman and the man did listen to the voice of another tempting creature and they act upon its word. They do what it says. By their disobedience to God's stated mind, they come to know evil and are brought into slavery to another creature .

Now, should the man live forever he would be cemented into a position where he would know that God is God and that he had rebelled against him. This would mean that he would partake of the "second death"; living forever whilst knowing Who God is but not enjoying Him but rather being under his wrath.

Graciously, the Lord drives them both from the garden, so that they 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 here, in the Genesis narrative it is not yet, there is a long time until that will be so.

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

God guards the way to the tree of life by one of the cherubim - this is an angelic spirit being of equal rank with Satan. Just as the man and the woman have been led into sin and are in danger of being cemented forever in it by eating of the tree of life; this is just what Satan would wish for them now, to die forever.

So the tree is guarded by an angel who is set there to make certain that no angelic deception can lead the man to that tree and cause him to eat its fruit. If man now has heavenly "enemies" of an angelic order, the obedient angels, at the command of God take up the preservation of the mind of God for man – so that it cannot be violated. 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.

Reading 14 – Genesis 4.1-2

The birth of two brothers: a separation within mankind.

14-1 From the garden of opportunity to the world of consequence

When we move from Genesis chapter 3 to 4, we are entering a new phase. Looking back on the chapters 1-3 our focus has been on the given relationships established by being created. There are relationships with God, with the earth, the animals and birds, the grass, the soil and the all the fruit of the garden in its man-centred service. It was there for the woman and the man.

Yet, at the centre of the garden were two trees, which did not, as the other trees did, declare God as Creator and Provider. These two trees placed the focus upon God as One who can be known as He is obeyed. They set the possibility for a relation to God which took the man and the woman from a knowing of God through the things He had made to a knowing of Him directly for Himself - these trees, offered by God, a movement for them into intimacy of personal exchange and relationship.

When we move to Genesis 4, we have moved outside the garden of opportunity to the world of consequence. This movement "outside" the garden is a picture presented within the backdrop of something lost, something which was offered and not gained.

14-2 Adam 'takes knowledge' of Eve.

It is said that the man "had relations with his wife Eve" [NASV] but the Hebrew text reads that the man "knew" his wife. The advantage of staying with 'knew' is that we must understand that it is not just an action, which he does in the sense of "having intercourse". But it is action, which tells us what it means for him to know her. For this is not only an action, it is a taking knowledge of her as to her bodily person.

She already "knows" him bodily by the union of her creation. Intercourse for her is the celebration or consummation of a union already established in her knowledge. He has always known, since her creation, that she is of his body, and taken out of man - he knows information about the unity of body they share. Intercourse for him is a "knowing" of her body by experiencing it.

Out of this knowing of the woman by the man, a conception results and a male child is born.

14-3 The birth of Cain and Abel.

Eve's response to the birth of Cain is that she "has gotten a manchild, the Lord". The words "with the help of" are interpolated into the text. Our English translations print for us an editorial attempt to make sense of the difficult expression.

The word "Cain" is a naming/calling of the boy as to what he means to Eve - it means 'gain' or 'acquisition', and reflects the Hebrew verb "I have gotten". She sees him as the promised seed to her; and she names him accordingly as a great gain.

Abel, means loss or vanity. Presumably he was born directly after Cain from the same pregnancy as a twin, for it is not said of Eve that she conceived again and bore Abel - which is the normal way of expressing a separate pregnancy.

The arrival of two sons prompts Eve to recognise a difference in them from her point of view. Perhaps the arrival of the first was seen against the promise of the seed and the coming of the second was simply a contrast - a 'not needed one' in the light of the first. In her judgment, Cain's birthright was the word God had given to her. As we shall see, the choice – or election - of God's grace is otherwise.

Perhaps this value of the one over the other is reflected in their occupations. Cain, as the first born, sustains his father's calling, being the lord of the soil. Abel, as being someone "after" and subordinate tends the cattle. There is a division of labour associated with a distinction of rank.

14-4 Eve stands at the head of line of promise.

Eve has had a personal word given to her about a "seed" which will come forth from her. She has taken that personally, and this is not wrong, for it is addressed to her personally over and against the man. How else could she take it?

What she doesn't understand, as the person who is first in a line, is that she is a representative person. So, while she may be spoken to personally, the meaning of what is said to her will come to light in generations afterwards. She is a representative, head person according to God's mind in that the promise will come through her.

But in taking the word personally, in the sense of limited to her own gain, she may contribute to Cain's later disappointment when God's intervention makes some things clear from His point of view.

Note 14-4: The word of God is 'our' word before it is my word.

Eve has a view of the word of God as a "personal prophecy" - and takes joy in it as a word for her, and so a sign of approval, when it is actually a declaration of the sovereign purpose of God of which she is the occasion.

We are not always receiving the word of God for "ourselves" but usually for the corporate body of God's children, so that they may be edified.

Reading 15 – Genesis 4.3-5

The gracious possibility:

*A person may be accepted by God but only indirectly now,
through an offering that is acceptable to God.*

15-1 The context of worship

The episode that the text lays before us is one of worship. Worship is the act of stating or ascribing worth to a person. It is a recognition of the value of a person for themselves alone. It implies the receiving of the person for who they are in themselves.

This ascribing of worth-ship takes many forms; it may be a posture – bowing down, kneeling before or prostrating oneself. It may be by words, which state the value and greatness

of the one to be worshipped. This value, and its obligation may be stated through service to the person; as when a man takes a wife and says ‘with my body, I thee worship’.

Worship focuses upon the object of worship and this focus is seen in the way that the worshippers relate to the One who is the object of their worship. You watch what is happening between them. But this direct sort of worship implies access; a direct way of speaking, bowing, relating. But what if the state of the relationship is fractured?

15-2 The need for mediation – some thing/someone between man and God.

The ejection of Adam and Eve from the garden, the place where the promises and relationships were first given, has serious consequences. The most serious is the loss of direct access to God. Adam and Eve no longer experience the daily sharing of God’s life.

This has some very significant consequences. Other means of approach to God will now need to be found if the source of human life is to be sustained. The history of mankind that follows will indicate some ways that men and women will attempt to do this from their own efforts.

But even before such human efforts may begin, there is indication from God as to how this might be done in the midst of the fallen world, where the ruined human relationships with one another and estrangement from God Himself prevail.

There will now be a need for mediation; for some middle man, or some middle way, that stands between God and humans that will be provided so that they may continue to relate, even as that relating still bears witness to the brokenness of their relationship.

This constitutes the value and use of the offering to God; it maintains a way of relating when direct access is lost. It also bears witness to the broken relation, but in such a way, that the actual exchange can still take place. As we shall see, it will have to be bridged from God’s side of the equation for it cannot be done from man’s side. Through this episode, we learn what it is that God has established, and will now identify, as a way of approach.

15-3 Both men bring an offering from their area of work

Cain as the first born brother has the initiative and he brings some vegetable matter, which is described as the fruit of the ground. This fruit is something which God gave for man; it was placed in the garden especially for the man and the woman as food for them.

I don't think we are wrong if we understand Cain to be offering God something which he, himself has come to value: on two grounds; first, that it is food for man and second, that it is his sphere of work. A man does not offer something of little value to a personage he reveres. We are not told at all why they would "offer" anything - nor do the chapters before this one indicate what is in their mind in doing so.

Abel also brings an offering. He also brings a product from his work. And like Cain's offering, it is also food, for it is described as the firstlings of the flock and their fat portions. He would have had to take them and kill them, shedding their blood, and also butcher them to remove the fat portions. It seems clear he does not present them alive, but has taken their life so as to present them as dead.

15-4 The Lord has a regard for Abel and his offering.

The text makes clear there is a firm relationship established in the mind of God about the offering and the offerer. Should the offering be received, then the offerer is received. The approach to God through a blood sacrifice is foreshadowed. This basis of approach will be declared by God in the later revelation of Levitical law, and ultimately foreshadows the work of Christ for us.

As we see from the work of God in making them skin coverings for their shame in Genesis 3.21 and other sections of Scripture, the cost of a life, and specifically the shedding of blood satisfies the Lord for allowing sinful humans to draw near.

Note 15-4: The acceptance of the person in the Offering

This principle, laid out here in the offering of the first born of Abel's flock, is expressed through the offering of the life of an animal. Ultimately, it will be in the Lord Jesus' blood that the acceptance of us as persons finds its full meaning.

And that has to do with Christ's Person – He saves us because of who He is, as the true God man given by God for us. But, as we saw in Reading 1, this was a matter of God seeing us in Him before the foundation of the world.

Abel's animal then, is simply a pattern here, but is not a full declaration of the matter and certainly not the basis of its acceptability to God. It foreshadows a fuller expression. For the blood of bulls and goats does not take away sins, it simply states a principle, a pattern, which is superseded and made full in its impact by the Person of Christ.

15-5 Revelation about drawing near to God for worship.

Abel is not praised for his action, neither is Cain blamed for his; what is learned from God is that He has regard for Abel's offering [it answers to the deeper revelation of forgiveness] and so for Abel. It is not a favouritism of Abel, it is simply the corollary of his offering being acceptable.

And both brothers could have benefited from this. It is as if they both offer, and then they see which one God regards as acceptable, and as a result, change their approach [in the case of Cain] or maintain it [as is the case for Abel]. Cain's response here could have been, "Oh, that is they way to do it. I see that He regards Abel's way of doing it; I shall offer some firstlings myself". It could have gone that way. Indeed, that was the encouragement of God for Cain, he had opportunity to adapt to the revelation of God here [see *atr 17-1*]. But it didn't go that way; Cain became angry and his face fell.

That God is content to "show His mind" about this manner of approach indicates His wonderful openness to us as His creatures. He is a revealing God, He does not withdraw from us or hide.

Note 15-5: Revelation is the basis of all faith and worship

That God reveals is the most basic underpinning of any true knowledge of Him. Only God can reveal God; we cannot force Him out so as to show Himself. It is his total freedom as God, which expresses itself to us here in that He wills to be known. If that were not His character, then we would be left worshipping what we do not know – as Jesus said to the Samaritan woman [John 4.22].

15-6 The principle that Cain refused to see.

What makes Cain's understanding of worship clear to us is his anger and sadness at his offering not being received. It tells us that he was not offering to see the response of God so that he could yield to that; he was offering what he thought was good. So, he was angry when it was not endorsed. His worship was a projection of his own values and what he thought acceptable; it was worship offered on the understanding, "I think this is wonderful and fitting. I value it, I am sure He will because I do."

It is worship that is self-centred, not other-centred. It is not watching to see what God shows He wants. It does not seek the mind of God on what is appropriate; it offers what is considered of value to oneself. It is fleshly - and Cain's response shows his heart.

Cain's heart went on to consider murdering the brother whose offering was regarded by God. Of this, we are not surprised. Because if you worshipped God in the flesh, seeking your own advancement, and not God's pleasure, then when He shows His mind you will persecute the "regarded" one because you sought acceptance by your worship in the first place. So it follows that you will take the regarding of the other as rejection of yourself.

Nor must we think that Abel did any better here [although he might have had revelation concerning the skins for covering; but the text does not say so]. It is the case that the blame or acceptance of either man is not in praise for what they offered, but in God's response to what was offered - that is the main point! There is revelation of God through this episode; and that is the main game.

Note 15-6: Worship that is "self-centred"

We need to see that fleshly worship, which speaks all the time of what it means to me to worship God, is along the line of Cain's offering. It constantly finds itself unacceptable to God because it proceeds from hearts that offer what they think is suitable, instead of offering what God has said brings Him pleasure – our obedience.

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The strong emphasis today upon having a personal relationship with God, which is not wrong of course, often means that we offer what we would like to offer instead of what the Master requires as appropriate to his Person.

15-7 The value of the offering is what it means to God.

What this text teaches us is that God reveals that access to him is not available because of who we are, or what we bring. The offering is what will hold sway and be acceptable to God because of what it means to Him. This is what Christ did for us - He is the perfect offering, and because He is, then we have the access to God that we have. God has had regard for the death of His Son, it atones sufficiently, it deals fully with the conscience of God. The offering of Christ is everything, and everything because of what He is to God.

So we have the powerful truth, it is the offering and what it means to God that brings the acceptance of the person who will come this way. The person does not qualify the offering; it is the offering that qualifies the person. Abel's sacrifice is not acceptable to God because it is Abel's; the situation is the reverse, Abel finds himself accepted by God in the light of the offering he offered because the offering is in accordance with God's mind. But Abel is accepted! He cannot divorce himself from the offering he has made.

Note 15-7: Once Priest and Victim are the same Person it is clear.

This is not clearly laid out to us here but will become obvious when we see that the Offering, offered once and for all, is the Person of Christ and that we shall be found in Him. Then the acceptability of our persons to God is caught up with the one who qualifies the offering because He offers Himself! He is both the Offering as victim and the Offerer as priest - for us.

RECONCILIATION IN CHRIST

Readings in preparation for an applied study of the salvation worked for us through the atoning Incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ.

Week 3: Readings 16-22

Reading 16 – Genesis 4.3-5

*The worship of God is a fundamental matter.
Two contrasts: the holy Bride and the fornicating harlot*

Reading 17 – Genesis 4.6-12

*Sin as a mastering power
The murder of Abel*

Reading 18 – Genesis 4.9-15

Cain living a cursed life, yet attended by God

Reading 19 – Genesis 4.16-24

*Away from the presence: Lamech and polygamy
Emergency protection used as a basis of self-justification*

Reading 20 – Genesis 4.25-5.32

*The response to the word of God yields two lines of people.
Men call on the “Name” of the Lord.*

Reading 21 – Genesis 6.1-4

*The conflict between God’s Spirit and man’s flesh.
The struggle will terminate: God has fixed some boundaries.*

Reading 22 – Genesis 6.5-7.5

Salvation through judgment, once again

Reading 16 – Genesis 4.3-5

The worship of God is a fundamental matter.

Two contrasts: the holy Bride and the fornicating harlot

Read also Ephesians 5.21- end; Romans 12.1-2; Revelation 14.8, 16.19, 17.1-6

16-1 What did the creation of the woman mean for the man?

As we have seen in previous studies, the making of the woman Eve, was from the rib of the man, Adam. She was creatively drawn from the stuff of his body. For her to come into existence involved the experience of what it meant to be drawn from his bodily life. She would know what it was to have been united to Adam.

But, up to this point in our study, we have not touched upon what her creation out of his body meant for the man. How did her creation impact upon him? Indeed, this is a significant issue for him. She was taken from him, from his body and his very life. God had taken her out of man and this was 'good'. It was the source of his reason for such delight in her. She came, as God took from him and having made her, as a present of God to him.

Note 16-1: Knowing as God intended him to know her.

Adam makes no mention of any cost to himself; that would be self-centred; and that will come after the fall. He is 'other' focussed at this point and simply rejoices in the good plan of God and that she was made as God had "taken" from him.

In being set in relation to her, the man experiences himself as a person who, under God's direction, has yielded out of his own bodily so that she might be there. And not just 'there' in the sense of "she exists" only, but 'there', in the sense of presented to the man; she is beside him, as one who already shares his life through her creation.

She knows union. He knows giving of himself, nourishment of her from his bodily life and vitality; indeed, cherishing her as his own flesh. He knows that when God acted to make her, God brought him to know that the giving up of himself for her is foundational to their relating. For him, this is what it is to be a man in relating to the woman.

16-2 Our feminine response to Christ.

Now we need this foundational truth of *atr16-1* to understand what is being revealed through God's response to the worship of Cain and Abel, particularly in relation to what is offered. Bearing in mind, of course, that *atr16-1* is how things stand before the fall, and pertains to creation. But that creation principle will find an expression in redemption as well. For, as we move from the circumstances of creation to the new situation where the redemption is now necessary, we saw that in *atr15-1* & *15-2* that the "offering" of a life foreshadows an infliction of death as it did when Abel offered the firstlings of his flock. God accepts this taking of life and regards it highly when it is a matter of access to Him once we have fallen.

Whenever God takes life that others may live we have the following:

[a] a creative process as with the creation of the woman from the man.

[b] the one from whom life is "taken" is cast in the masculine mode so that a feminine may be created.

[c] the feminine will know her union with the masculine in the receiving of his life.

[d] worship will be the celebration of the union they already have. It is not the worship that establishes the union; rather the worship is the fruit of the union already given.

In circumstances of redemption then, we come to understand that, as Cain and Abel come as worshippers, God is:

[a] disallowing any offering in which there had been no taking of life and, specifically, the shedding of blood.

[b] making it clear that there will need to be a new, redemptive creation for men and women before they can approach Him safely. And that all human approach, both men and women, will need to approach in a feminine way that finds its expression out of a union with God, who will be seen as 'masculine' in that there is a giving of his life so that others may come

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to receive of his life. This theme, seen in Hosea as a covenant relation between God and Israel as Husband and wife, is clearly a foreshadowing Christ and the church.

*Note 16-2: God as the husband of his covenant people:
Christ the Bridegroom/Husband of His Church.*

The prophet Hosea, speaking at a time of Israel's defection from God as a worshipper of other gods, portrays her as an unfaithful and defiled wife in relation to God, who is portrayed as her faithful and holy husband. In Hosea's language, she has taken from the life and provision of her husband and then spent His provision for her upon her lovers. And it was God who had provided this care for her as her own husband. She has dishonoured Him and He makes clear that she will reap a great shame at the hands of her lovers. [Hosea 1.2-3; 2.1-4; 41-19].

Similarly, in the New Testament we see that the life of Christ is given in order that His covenant people may come to life out of His atoning death and His resurrection. This is the same picture as we see in the encouragement for Christian marriage where the provision and care for a wife by her husband leads to a deep and holy union of shared life together [Ephesians 5.21-end, Revelation 21.2,9].

[c] showing unmistakably that Cain and Abel are treated differently according to the different ways of their approach. And this approach is not a matter of their persons but is inherent in the nature of their offering as God looks upon it. It matters whether they have responded to the revelation of God's mind about the matter.

16-3 The Bride and the harlot

Both of these men then are the first in a line of two streams of post-fallen worship. In Abel's acceptance by God there is the beginning of the people of God, as seen in the Old Testament, and as the Church of Jesus Christ, as seen in the New Testament. These are the ones who have revelation that it is the life of another that opens for them the union that is the new creation for them. They have learned from God that it is not just death in itself, but a particular life given or taken on their behalf that is the sole grounds for receiving of the life of God. Their worship is expressed to Him in the yielding of their bodies in reasonable, everyday 'life obedience' [Romans 12.1-2]. Abel here in Genesis anticipates the worshiping community that is the Bride of Christ when viewed in the light of Jesus, the Incarnation of the word of God.

In Cain we see the beginning of the harlot: that worship which is offered in self oriented expression of what the human finds nice and is offered as a favour to God by one who approaches in his own right. It will have all the marks of self as seen as serving God for self-interest.

Note 16-3: The Bride and the Harlot of Revelation 17 and 19.

There are two responses to the preaching of the cross and the insistence upon the glory of Jesus as the One from whom we draw our life alone. There is the glad testimony of the Bride or there is anger with God from the harlot. Eventually this anger of the harlot expresses itself in the persecution of the Bride, Christ's community who know grace.

We are told that in this false feminine response of then harlot lies all the reasons for murder and shedding of blood; particularly of those who have a righteousness, not of their own, but by union with another Who is righteous [Revelation 17.6].

This great theme is developed all the way through Scripture. What a Saviour? What a Husband to us? What a life we have by being united with Him!

Reading 17 – Genesis 4.6-12

*Sin as a mastering power
The murder of Abel*

17-1 "Why are you angry...."

Cain has anger in his heart and a dark face reflects what he has inside him. His response to the revelation of God's mind now brings about a threat from another power.

God's advice to him is that he can still "do well". He stands at that crossroad when he has seen the revelation of God's mind, and he is registering difficulty with it. But how he acts in the light of that revelation is going to be the decisive thing [atr15-1].

It is still possible for him to find his face "lifted up" with the delight of having done the will of the Lord in a matter - the joy of obedience to given light is still possible.

But the Lord gives further revelation to Cain, because he is in danger. He graciously informs him of the presence of sin; which the Lord understands as a power which is like a lion waiting to pounce on him. The Lord makes clear that there is an issue of mastery hanging on what Cain does now.

17-2 Sin "entered the world" [Romans 5.10].

The presence of sin is not attributed by the apostle, Paul, to Cain, but to Adam. The presence of this power that now assaults Cain is a consequence of the fall. Romans also makes clear that death spread to all men for they all sinned. The spread of death is not a sharing in Adam's curse for his activity; it is that Adam, having sinned, experienced the consequences of that sin and died.

"Died" in the sense of in his relation to God and also, in time, he died bodily. The spread of death has to do with the individual activity of each person as a sinner. Whenever we have a death of a person, we may be sure that they have sinned in their lifetime. The universal spread of death over the world indicates the individual's participation in sin.

This is why the Lord deals here with Cain as an individual person, facing an individual crossroads. The power of sin has entered the world through Adam. However, the facing of that power is experienced individually by each person, as something to be overcome.

17-3 The hostile, mastering power at work.

This experience of Cain is instructive for all of us - for that is why it is written. It is that we must take into account that when the "good" is given to us by God to know, there is another lord who wishes to master us lying wait also; not as an equal with God, but as a usurper who has gained a foothold in creation through Adam.

Sin is not Satan. Genesis 3 has shown us the enemy's work in sin's entry, but "sin", understood as a power, is a result of that work of the devil. It stands for the power at work in a man or woman that seeks to master them through the desires of their [now fallen] natural life. Romans 6 will say more of this power within us and how, through Christ's death, it is defeated, but not removed, within the experience of God's children.

17-4 "its desire is for you, but you must master it"

Cain, as informed by the Lord, is now in a conflict situation. The power called sin wants to have a lordship in his life. This can only mean, from what we have seen in Genesis so far, that such a lordship will be expressed by Cain obeying what sin "wants". In this way God informs him of a presence which is contrary to the expressed will of God and which crouches at the door, wanting to gain entry to his personal life.

Further, it is up to Cain to master this power himself; it is by decision to "do well", which in this setting comes to mean that he gets an animal from his younger brother and approaches God through blood sacrifice.

The individual choices and decisions which each of us make have powerful ramifications for our own lives. This gracious, cautionary, revelation from God comes at Cain's indication of anger.

Note 17-4: We are decisive and significant

Cain's disposition, at learning the revelation of God's acceptance of Abel's offering, is to become angry. In the midst of this position, God can address him, caution him and awaken him to the dangers of this place he is now in. But God won't take away his will, nor override it. What Cain decides in this moment will have ramifications but *that* he may decide is clear, in the order of God.

So it is with us. We must never act as if we are zeros; as if our decisions should be rubbed out or annulled. What we must do is accept the significance of ourselves as bearers of God's image, and then use the gracious gift of repentance that has come to us through Christ's work for us. We can change our mind should God offer us the opportunity; as He does through the gospel.

17-5 The detailed individual care of God is assured in all matters of struggle against sin.

The Lord knows our condition and every temptation. It is important here to see that the temptation does not come from God through his word about sacrifice. It comes through the lust in the heart of Cain [James 1.13-15] as its source..

But the presence of sin God alerted him to. This action of the Lord means that He not only reveals his own will on a matter - for that is the expression of his own Lordship and seeks our obedience. He also reveals the presence of other powers and discriminates them for us so that we are warned. He did not leave Cain in the field without revelation of what he faced. He also gave him a clear way forward, it was to "do well" which means to adhere to the word of God given, and not to prefer his own desires in the matter. In that sense the presence of sin did not arise until Cain had expressed the conflict of his own desires with the given word of the Lord [by his anger and face]. When God saw that he warned him of another power which would exploit the conflict.

Notice that the presence of sin here does not effect a change in the word of God given in the first place. God does not accommodate to his enemies.

But at the clear conflict between the desires of Cain and the word of the Lord, there now arose the need to inform him that this was a dangerous situation for him. What he decided would be choice between two masters; one of which was God Himself, the other a usurping power whose presence manifests at the disjunction between Cain's desires and God's. It is a usurping power which only "enters" the world through the sin of Adam. And it would have been defeated in this matter if he had held line with the given word of God; but it was not his desire in the first place. This episode manifested the desires of his heart.

Genesis 4.8

17-6 Cain spoke to his brother, and "in the field" killed him.

We saw above that Cain was faced with a clear decision. We will not know that until we see him act. His action is that he does speak to his brother, we are not told about what. But in the field, where Cain works or his brother grazes his flock, but the "ground" anyway, Cain rises up against his brother and kills him. Why did he do this?

17-7 The teaching of Jesus on the matter.

In an encounter with the Pharisees, in proclaiming his own judgment [woes or curses] against them and their religious actions [Matthew 23], Jesus makes clear that there has been a spilling of blood of the men sent by God to Israel with the word of the Lord - the prophets [Matthew 23.29-35]. And He makes clear that the reason God sent them these folks who they killed was that guilt should fall upon them "of all the righteous blood shed upon the earth "from the blood of Abel..."[23.35]. Similarly, 1 John 3.11-12 speaks of loving one another; and therefore not to do as Cain did. For it is said, he was "of the evil one" and he did it because his deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.

Note 17-7: Worship, religion and righteousness.

This evidence of the NT sets the discussion of Cain's murder of Abel against three background issues: of worship, of the religion of men and what is involved in men being "righteous" or evil.

[1] Worship.

Has to do with the approach to God which sinful men and women make. Shall this be according to the revelation of God, or shall it be according to what man deems right in his own eyes? Which is to say, will it be approached by submission to the gracious word of God to our fallen situation or shall it be another compounding example of men and women doing whatever they want in rebellion against God?

[2] Religion as the traditions of men.

The Pharisees, at the end of the age, when the kingdom of God broke in on them in the Person of Jesus, found themselves pushing a whole set of traditions of men which had grown up on the revealed Word of God.

They looked like they were dealing with the matters God has raised, but there were "additions" to the word of God which Revelation 22.18-19 tells us is a serious business.

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The additions exulted the words of men above the word of God. And so, in Jesus language such religion is cursed; for it leaves the simplicity of what God has said in the past times "through the prophets". The Son of God has a denouncing word for them.

As we have seen, revealed in Cain's response to God's "regard" for each of the offered material, was that he really had offered as one sustaining his own heart rebellion in the matter. The outcome of anger shows that. He was not looking, with a soft heart towards God for His words about the matter.

[3] "Righteous" or "evil".

Previously, we have mentioned how the Bride and the harlot are to be found represented here in the contrastive worship of Cain and Abel. We see then, that there is a place where the traditions of men, the harlot's worship will "rise up" against the men and women of God.

It will have to do with having a righteousness which comes from God, by sharing [participating] in the God's own righteousness - and that comes to us through his Son. But it is a righteousness manifest as a gift based upon the shed blood of God's Son as a propitiation for sin. It is this reality that the offering of Abel's animals points towards.

We are told that Cain is "of the evil one" by the NT. Compare this word of Jesus about the Pharisees that they were "of their father the devil" [John 8.42-47]. They also murdered the prophets and pre-eminently, Jesus. What is this matter which will set brother against brother? People will say to you, "it is amazing what folks will do to one another over religion!" - and they are right about that: but it is not amazing in the light of God's revelation.

For the central question is God Himself. Who He is and how He may be related to are the main questions of all life - it is his worship which is central. This what the world calls religion.

This is what Cain and Abel point us to - their confrontation is a statement of God to us, right at the beginning, that the whole of the world's pre-occupation will be about relationship to God: and on what grounds?

And will it be a righteousness which is a matter of grace, sovereignly given by God Himself; or will it be the presumptive approach to God by men and women who offer what they consider God should like [because they do]?

Ultimately, this will mean that men and women are "righteous" or "evil". That is why Cain slew Abel, the cause is not found in some personal reason within him; it arises from him coming into relationship with the devil as his "father". He slew Abel because his brother was righteous and his own deeds "evil" - this matter is sheeted home, by the Bible to the ultimate source of evil - and those who are of that seed of the serpent do as Satan wants. They "rise up against" their brothers, even their own family given by God, because the destructive personage behind them is manifesting that he has them under his mastery. It is by their fruit, says Jesus, that you know them.

Such serious matters our lives are involved with - for there is a God and we have come to know Him through Christ - let us understand and not be surprised at these great themes of history which repeat again and again in our days. And let us not be alarmed or embarrassed when the world reminds us, as it constantly does, that religion makes for intolerance of one another. They are right! It does, and so it should; for it is the central matter about which people take sides in the whole world.

Pure religion, James writes [1.26], is concerned with care of others who have no one for them and keeping oneself unspotted from the world. It is about the compassion of God expressed and not being drawn into the religion which the world's pressure forces upon us, which has a defiling effect.

It is significant that the Revelation points us to the need to "Come out" from the harlot, lest we be caught up in her sins [18.4].

Reading 18 – Genesis 4.9-15

Cain living a cursed life, yet attended by God

Read 2 Corinthians 7.8-10

18-1 "Where is Abel your brother"?

This is a question from the God that does not seek information. God knows the fate of Abel, for He makes clear that He has registered the voice of Abel, crying from the ground. So the question is really one of accountability. It is God doing what must be done, He is going to

call to account and make a judgment that is 'good'. This is something we see God doing all the time, He deals with sin by calling to account and making a judgment.

Cain's response is an evasion purporting to be based on ignorance. It is followed by a rebellious question back to God that has an edge; he asks, "Am I my brother's keeper?" This, of course, is precisely what he is. As an elder brother, he is to care for his brother and watch over him lest he come to harm. So his question betrays a refusal to accept that his brother is under his care. This rebellion in the face of God is consequent upon his murder of Abel; having taken the life of one made in God's image, Cain has already violated the very creative act of God.

18-2 The ground has received the life of a man.

Genesis 1 and 2 presented to us the garden as being made for the man and the woman. They till it, they eat of its produce, and they rule over it. They use its life to feed themselves. Indeed the man is made from it; he is, in a less personal sense than we have been discussing about the woman in relation to the man, united with the earth by creation. He was formed from the dust of the ground.

We have seen when Adam and Eve went astray, God called her to account, speaking about how the relation between her and her husband was affected as a result. But God spoke to Adam about his relation with the ground and how it was affected. It would yield thorns and thistles, things that were not useful for the man. These words of God are spoken to them both about those things and persons He had related them to by their creation. Both Adam and Eve violated a relation in their rebellion; she that of herself and her husband, he that of himself and God himself. This we have spoken of before.

In this section, Cain has not only violated the relational life he had with Abel in ceasing to act in an appropriate way. He has violated his life itself. And what prompted it was the regard that God had for Abel. This was a regard from which Cain could have learned about God's ways and a regard of God that was also open to Cain if he "did well". And what he had done was to violate the ground that is given to sustain the life of man; he has caused it to receive the life of a man poured out upon it - it has "opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand" [4.11]. The ground had no been put in a 'position' that was contrary to God's place of it. It had been given to bring man life, now a man had made the garden reverse its position; it must now receive the life of man.

The picture here is of the 'ground' as a kind of stage or substrate, a platform on which men and women live out their lives. The ground, as made by God was never intended to have spilt upon it the life of man. Now it must bear such a defiling and terrible event. This view of the ground is also seen when Israel was in the promised land of Canaan; they so worked the ground that it had no rest. God banished them into exile so that the land could have rest from such avaricious and godless workers.

Note 18-2: The deep created link between man and the rest of creation.

This view of the ground reveals an aspect of the inter-connected way that the rest of creation has found itself subject to man. It is the Creator's way for us that, if men and women, as the crown of created life, violate their relationships with one another, so there are ramifications for the rest of the created life. This is the most fundamental thing that is being said here as the 'ground' is forced, as created and subjected to man by God, is now put into an invidious position of having to do what was never in the mind of God for it to do.

18-3 Cain separated from the ground.

As we saw in the very first reading in Genesis, God creates, relates and names things as they are made. He had set the man in relation to the ground. Because of Adam's sin, the ground itself was cursed. Its relation to the man was sustained but impaired. It became less productive for him; now it can be farmed only with great toil.

Here it is not the ground but Cain himself who is cursed; he is "cursed from the ground". It has been impaired under Adam, now it will not yield to Cain at all when he works it. The result of that is stated by God, Cain shall be a "vagrant and a wanderer upon the earth".

18-4 Cain's personal perspective on his punishment.

Cain says that his punishment is more than he can bear; he describes four consequences that are now upon him.

[a] he has been driven by God from the face of the ground; he is no longer in an open, productive, accessible relation to it. In saying he has "been driven" by God, he is right insofar that God has allowed it and has delivered him to it. However, he makes no mention of his deed of murder and its connection with the situation. He focuses on the punishment and looks at the situation from his point of view. He does not keep the other perspective that it is his action that precipitated these consequences.

[b] he says that he shall be hidden from God's face. This seems to be related to the worship issue that began this whole situation. He appears to have drawn the conclusion that he is unacceptable to God because his offering was disregarded - he thinks of himself as "hidden from God" – by which he means "not regarded".

[c] he shall be a vagrant and a wanderer upon the earth. The earth is no longer a comfort or life-giving to him. This is correct; God said the same, this is how it will now be.

[d] he says that whoever finds him will kill him. He fears others' judgments on his action and their retribution. He registers that people are aware that he is not right and they think that something needs to be done about him.

18-5 A remorse-filled 'repentance', based upon consequence.

There is something here in Cain's response that is mirrored in the experience of both Saul [1 Samuel 15.30] and also Judas [Matthew 27.3-4]. Repentance means a change of mind, expressed as a change of direction in life. With Cain there is change of mind, but it will show itself as a 'legal repentance' not a 'godly repentance'.

It is marked by the following:

[a] the wickedness of their sin is perceived but only as the consequences of their punishment is felt.

[b] there is a dread of the divine anger and a thinking of God as Judge and Avenger; these aspects of God's character fill the mind.

[c] the person is overwhelmed with their situation; they cannot bear it.

[d] and so they begin to endure the punishment of an offended God, which is the same thing as being delivered up to their idea of God that He is not gracious [to them].

Note 18-5: Godly sorrow brings repentance [2 Corinthians 7.8-10]

Repentance means a change of mind.

It can be found in the setting of fear of punishment, as it is here for Cain. In that case, it is marked by regret for the consequences that now follow and remorse about Cain's own decisions.

Or, repentance can be a free decision that is a result of the grace of God being known in forgiveness.

The gospel repentance - one that leads to change of life - is drawn from us as we see the costly grace of the work of Christ for us. The repentant life, which is the life that Jesus lived for us, is a gift of God to us. Whenever we turn from what is wrong to what is right, we are sharing in the godly life of the God-man who has turned our rebellious fleshly mind back to being the true mind of godly men and women. He did this in the life He lived and by the death He died which showed us the true forgiveness and love of God for us.

In that sense, godly repentance is a result of being accepted and forgiven by God. Repentance is not the cause of that forgiveness but the result of forgiveness. It is accompanied by grief over our sin and a firm resolve not to travel that way again due to our awareness of the grief that it causes God when we do.

18-6 The mark of Cain: he is protected but insecure.

God protects Cain by making him a marked man, an object of fear for anyone thinking to kill him. Here we see that the sinful man is protected because other men fear a penalty from God if they touch him. This is order set in place in a fallen world by a retribution promise designed to engender fear. It is shown in the authority of the State and its right to not "bear the sword in vain"[Romans 13].

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The human race is now in a situation where the fear of God means a fear of what God can do to you if you do wrong. We saw previously that the curse of God is a delivering of us over to the consequences of our actions. This is also true of Cain, but it is compounded for him. He now lives with massive insecurity - he fears for his life, he actually thinks that people will kill him. Being cursed by God, he has no home and wanders, he is seen by others as deserving death and is given a living death - away from the ground, away from people and guilty.

18-7 What gave rise to this – it is about whether we shall worship.

We must not forget that Cain's situation had arisen in the setting of worship of God. It came out of the two brothers desiring access to the face of God. They each brought something as an offering to God from their labour. God showed how one of them had brought the appropriate offering and so was received. The other was angry at this and was warned by God of the dangerous possibility of being mastered by sin through maintaining his attitude. Cain gave expression to his attitude not toward God directly, but toward his younger brother, whom he saw as 'favoured' and himself as 'rejected'. He takes the life of Abel - the favoured one, who found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

18-8 God's common grace to all men and women.

All of us as rebels with Cain, live under fear of God and of men but also the favour of God's provision of protection. It is the provision of the fear of God's vengeance as promised to any who hurt him. While Cain knows this protection it is not, however, the protection that goes with knowing God as Father. It is the fear of God as a Governor, knowing Him as the brake applied to the compounding chaos of the sin of man.

Cain, like us, recognises his need of protection from hostile people and that only God can arrange it. But it is the knowledge of God's favour as granted to the rebel who has fear in the midst of other rebels. It is the common grace afforded to "children of wrath", which we once were.

This negative form of God's order, which seeks to prevent the impending chaos, preserves the life of some from those who will take life. It represents the mind of God as it brings preventative justice to the fallen world; it is an emergency order given to the disorder of man. But it cannot bring a knowledge of the mind of the Lord as to his own desires and heart for us.

Note 18-8: The Gospel announces His love for us as Father.

Most people fear God as a punishing Governor. However, it is the nature of the case in these gospel days of grace, that the message of Christ is good news to such as Cain, who could stand for all men and women seeking to approach and know God by the flesh. The message is that God was "in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them". [2 Corinthians 5.19]

Those who do not know of this grace of the gospel live under a deception; believing that God is counting their sins against them, when He now says that He is not. Christ dies for the whole world - and you can speak to any human being such good news that God is "not counting" sins. God makes revelation of his love for them as the work of the cross is preached. This is evidenced by faith – a trusting reception - in the word of the cross as the wisdom of God to them. It is a yielding to His great way of reconciling a sinful world to Himself as a holy One.

The only sin God will count at the end of the age is unbelief in the Son of God. Indeed, it is the work of the Holy Spirit that when He convicts the world of sin it is concerning the matter that they "did not believe" on Jesus.

Reading 19 – Genesis 4.16-24

Away from the presence: Lamech and polygamy

Emergency protection used as a basis of self-justification

Read Ezekiel 18

19-1 Out from the presence of the Lord.

Adam and Eve were now committed, rebellious "takers" of any fruit they wanted to take. Lest they eat of the tree of life, and stay in their fallen state forever, the Lord drove them

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from the garden. However, the presence of the Lord remains with them as they exist outside the garden. As we have seen in previous studies, in the period of time from Adam to Cain, man progressively moved away from direct contact with the ground. This increasing alienation was also happening in regard to knowing the Lord's presence. For Adam and Eve to leave the garden was to have an opportunity of life temporarily removed until they could be redeemed.

As Cain leaves the area his parents occupied after they were removed from the garden of Eden for their own safety. It is stated that he "went out" from the presence of the Lord. But Cain's sin, amongst others, is his refusal to approach God, who is present to him, with a blood sacrifice.

For Cain to approach God with a blood sacrifice would imply that :

[a] he needed the life of Another to actually atone for his sin so that God Himself could look upon him as acceptable. The form and meaning of this atonement was God's to set, and He did.

[b] he needed revelation about the mind of God concerning how, and on what grounds, He would be approached. Cain needed to accept his ignorance in this matter and so be willing to be instructed.

[c] he must not cling to his own estimations about what God wanted, based on his own efforts.

[d] direct worship of God was an open possibility at this stage in his life and he could have gone on with it and "done well".

Now we see that he has been denied the presence of God Himself. He interprets what is a consequence of his actions as a punishment. It is a change in circumstances that he registers as a loss of what he once had.

19-2 God preserves us even when we are unable to be with Him.

But the reality that Cain has to deal with is the holiness of God. If Adam and Eve were in danger from the tree of life of living forever as marred persons, Cain is in danger of staying in the presence of a holy God who has declared already that a mediatorial sacrifice is the only way that He may be approached by sinful men such as Cain and Abel. He goes out into the world with the fear that other men and women may kill him; and the Lord protects him from that with a mark.

But he must now go out from the presence of the Lord. He may have stayed in the presence only by sacrifice – 'going out' testified to his own unsuitability. He must leave the presence of God as one who will not approach in the given way. In this sense, the banishment of Cain is another one of those gracious provisions of God for a sinful man. That he must go out from the presence of the Lord is a clear testimony to him of his condition.

19-3 The line of Cain.

In Genesis 4.17-24, the descendants of Cain and their occupations are noted. The account of his line is written before we are returned to Adam and Eve and the birth of Seth. In this way, Genesis shows that each of these early personages had a considerable effect upon their progeny. The tables of genealogy give us the perspective of these folks as representative people. Their actions are not the basis of judgment of their children but their deeds impinge on their lineage in that they are there to be copied and their history impacts the lives of their people through telling of the past.

Note 19-3: Lineage of our forefathers [Ezekiel 18].

We need to be careful how we understand the impact of our forefathers upon our own life.

[a] It is not that the line of descendants is doomed by God to participate in their forefather's sins simply because they were born of his line. Rather, when it says in Scripture that God 'visits the sins of the fathers to the fourth generation' of those who hate Him it arises out of an act of will by each generation. Father's are meant to be copied by their sons. That is the natural outworking of God's order of obedience for children. So that, if the father goes wrong, the natural created order now begins to work for the strong possibility that the children will do the same as their own act of will. To those that hate God, He makes certain that the sins repeat like this, so that the lineage may have an evidence of the fact that the early forefather had not been right. The

consequences for the line would have made that clear over time. So this 'visiting' of the sins simply manifests the revelation of consequences. It is God making things very clear to them.

[b] The great age of the forefathers meant that their influence was powerful because their presence was there for a long time – many generations would have come under their personal influence.

[c] In line with [a] above, Ezekiel 18 makes clear to the Israelites under exile in Babylon that they were not suffering because of what their father's did. They each were accountable for their own sin. God does not blame the later generation for their forefather's sins. Each generation must deal with God and be called to account for what they themselves have done.

The account of Cain's line also prepares us for the line of Adam, which after the birth of Seth recorded in chapter 4, will occupy chapter 5. In this way, the contrast of the two lines, in respect of their worship and relation to God, is continually brought before us as a main theme of the Bible.

The occupations recorded have to do with no longer working the land. Cain [4.17] builds a city and names it after his son, Enoch. Jabal [4.20] begins the tent dwelling, livestock keepers; Jubal, the musicians and entertainers; Tubal-cain, the blacksmith and metal worker.

These occupations are 'once removed' from making a living by working the land. The farmers, by task, are in 'direct taking' from God; their occupation constantly speaks to us of the deep dependence we have upon the Creator, as well as our basic given relations to the ground provided by Him.

These other occupations serve men and women. In doing so, these service- industries are paid, no doubt, in produce from the ground that others farm, so that they may live their life. So in their choice of work, those of Cain's lineage reflect their movement away from the ground. But the issue of food to eat that comes from the working the land is always the base line – if that ever failed, the life of men and women is grievously threatened.

19-4 Lamech: polygamy and self-justification.

Lamech [4.19] took two wives for himself, contrary to the monogamous pattern of the garden. Polygamy is a serious distortion of married life, giving expression to the marriage of Christ and the church, which we have seen is so central to the understanding of marriage presented in the early chapters of Genesis.

Lamech lived in a line of those who are very aware of their forefather's sin and of God's protective promise to take vengeance on those who threatened their life. Lamech had killed a man on the basis that he was first wounded by him. He assured his wives [4.23-4] that if his forefather killed in cold blood and God protected him, then God would defend him 77 times more than He had Cain because Lamech's was a lesser action since it was done in self-defence.

Behind this reasoning for his justifying himself and assuring his wives of his and their security at the hands of God are the following assumptions:

[a] Lamech has drawn a parallel between his actions and Cain's on a comparison based upon "this crime got this action from God: on a parity, my action should merit more protection, because it is not so bad". He judged his forefather's action as worse than his own; so, he already stands as the one judging and prescribing what the result shall be. In his speech, he has actually done the very thing his forefather did - prescribe to God what He should do in respect of his deeds. Cain expected his offering to be accepted; Lamech has rationalised his action as a basis to qualify him to be protected.

[b] Now the taking of a life has relation to the hurt done to a man. It is a man-centred action now, and so becomes a self-justification, an insurance against the God who gave life.

Cain's lineage tells us much about our own day, and about the state of the world that does not live in the presence of the Lord, while still under the sound of the gospel that comes through Christ.

Note 19-4: The compounding of sin

Notice here that the way that Lamech thinks is that he has taken a natural reasoning attitude to the protection of God for Cain in his terrible situation and then manipulated that as the basis of his own sinful purpose. In this way, even the emergency orders of God are rebelled against.

God's emergency orders – His response to a response - are not for what they were, but taken as something now that can protect us even from God. This is the root

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of what the Israelites did within their covenant relationship to God. They used the Law of Moses to defend themselves against God, as a basis for arguing their own justification.

Reading 20 – Genesis 4.25-5.32

*The response to the word of God yields two lines of people.
Men call on the “Name” of the Lord.*

Read Hebrews 11.4; 1 Kings 8.27-30

20-1 The birth of Seth shows a broader perspective.

In his grace God has continued to bring life. The enemy had tried to destroy God's line. He had deceived man to draw him away from God and had caused man to murder man. But the God who makes life makes again and Seth is born.

The text has recorded for us God's dealing with Cain and Abel. However, once there is a death and God brings to birth again, we are now brought into a wider vista, where we shall have to think of two lines of people - the people of God and the world.

If Adam's name for the woman, Eve, tells us that she is the "mother of all the living", we must understand "living" in the broader sense of given life upon the earth, for she is the mother of Cain as well as Abel.

But Eve also returns us to the promise God gave concerning the "seed of the woman" as those who will have the life of God and come to know Him through grace [4.25]. Eventually, all of these will culminate in the one seed of the woman, who is Christ. Eve gives birth to Seth and calls him another offspring [seed] appointed to her by God. But there is more than this, he is 'appointed' [Heb. shath] by God "in the place of Abel; for Cain killed him."

Seth is the person who replaces the first martyr, or witness, the first man to testify to the grace of God in a fallen world. So Seth is a statement of the life of the ever resurgent people of God, who lose their life only to find it, who are hated by the world and a constant expression of the triumph of grace through suffering, of which Jesus is the pinnacle and source of such open access to the living God, who may be eventually known as Father.

20-2 Two contrasting genealogies.

The genealogy of Cain's line [4.17-24] is now further understood when we consider the line of Adam in Genesis 5.1-32. The two genealogies are linked by the record of the birth of Seth. Cain is not mentioned in the line of Adam - the line runs from Adam directly to Seth who has a son Enosh.[4.24]. Abel is not mentioned, not because he does not stand in this lineage of grace, but because he did not live long enough to have offspring so as to be included in the lineage as a man who sires sons.

The exclusion of Cain then, means that this genealogy is designed and presented to us readers, not as a simple historical record of the line of Adam, but as a record of the line which was built upon the grace of God and culminates with Noah, who "found favour [grace] in the eyes of the Lord" [6.8].

20-3 Adam knows fatherhood by experience.

Adam's generations are introduced by 5.1-3, a number of observations can be made:

[a] a parallel is drawn between God creating someone in his own likeness [5.1] and Adam becoming a father of a son in his own likeness [5.3].

[b] this does not draw the parallel with God and Adam as two creators, but as those who share an experience of fatherhood - seeing someone come into being who is in their likeness. [5.3].

[c] that this is spoken in connection with Seth and not Cain indicates that the likeness extends not simply to bodily likeness but also to character. To be made like God is to answer to him as one who corresponds to his character. Similarly, it is also true of Cain, that he exchanged fathers and now follows the lead, and so the character, of his father the devil.

20-4 Adam the father of all, in the sense of being their Progenitor.

As we have said above, Eve is the mother of all the living in one sense, and the mother of the "seed" as well. As Eve is the mother of all, Adam is the Progenitor of all men and women. He is also the father of those who find favour in the eyes of the Lord, because they too, are humans. They are humans who come to know God as Father and so they are part of the race of Adam who know the grace of God. This is what this genealogy in chapter 5 presents.

20-5 God reveals Himself as 'Father', to those who have Adam as their father.

There are two sets of people born of Adam and Eve, who may be regarded as their offspring. The two sets are distinguished by their reception of the word of God; a word that comes to all. It is the power of the word of God that, when it is received – because believed – it engenders in the receiver a knowledge of God as 'Father'. This reception is what makes the two sets of people visible on the earth. So we might say that the Word of God 'begets' its own people for, as it is spoken to us and then received, it leads us to know God as our gracious Father.

Note 20-5: Born of the Word of God 1 Peter 1.23-25

In the New Testament, the letter of 1 Peter makes reference to the Christians that they have been born again not of a seed that is perishable such as an earthly father is, because he dies. Rather, they have been born of the imperishable Word of God that...abides forever [1 Peter 1.23-25]. For the Christians being addressed in the New Testament record, this imperishable word of God was the "word" that was preached to them.

This preached message of God is powerful because of whose Word it is. It draws us to trust it through the revelation that it makes of the character of God and of his kind intentions towards us. In the New Testament, the Word of God is a person - the Lord Jesus Christ. It is He who is, in His person, the direct revelation of God to us. To receive Him, to trust Him and to rely on Him as the declared Son of the Father leads us to be born of God, to be a new creation.

In chapter five, this genealogy of Adam lists the lives of generations of those in whom the knowledge of the gracious word of God was manifested. This is particularly true of Enoch [5.21-24] of whom the NT will make mention.

"By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; and he was not found because God took him up"; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God. [Hebrews 11.5 NASB 1960].

It is true also of Lamech, whose hope concerning his son Noah, as "one who gives us rest", is expressed as a word of faith in the midst of their difficult times [5.25] Lamech expresses the frustration and the exhaustion of working cursed ground. He is a man stating what all fallen men and women feel about the frustration and sorrow of life and work as we know it. All this is coupled with an awareness that once it was not like this.

20-6 Men began to "call on the Name of the Lord". [4.26]

In Genesis 4.26, the son of Seth is born and men began to "call on the name of the Lord". This expression, which is first introduced in Genesis, appears all over the Bible subsequently. It reflects an access to God that men and women assume, through their knowledge of grace, to openly call out to God in their difficulties. It is an expression of the Bible that draws attention to the fact that there are men and women who seek God, not in their own strength and arrogance, but in response to His revelation to them.

[a] To "call " on God conveys the picture of God as not closely present, even as He is conversed with. It reflects a state of affairs when God has withdrawn his presence from the senses.

When man was expelled from the garden a change took place in physically relating with, and worship of, God. In the garden man had spoken with God face to face. After the fall

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and expulsion, this was no longer possible. God withdrew from being sensually met. Cain describes being driven from the face of God. Later, God allowed Moses to see his presence but only his back not his face; and even then God proclaimed the Name of the Lord as He passed by Moses, effectively declaring his character as He made clear that no man has seen his face and live. Compare this in our times when the promise is that we shall serve him and see him face to face [Rev 22.3,4].

[b] When we express our relationship with someone as asking "in the Name", or calling upon "the name", we are registering their bodily absence whilst we are still dealing with them as real and alive and having an effect upon our lives. So, for example, when a person with power of attorney, does something in the name of another; it is understood that the person is absent at the transaction, yet they are dealt with personally, as if present, in that their name is being used.

Note 20-6: 'in the name'.

We see a startling usage of this in the temple of Solomon, when it is clear that there is no presence of God's person there, for He cannot be contained by the house, let alone by the heavens. But He says that He has caused his Name to dwell there - and it is a place where men and women can call upon him and He will answer [1 Kings 8.27-30].

Similarly, when Jesus is about to withdraw his bodily presence from the disciples, he states that up to that point they have asked nothing in his name and so he encourages them from that time on to, "ask in His name" and it will be done for them.

The wonder of the presence of the Spirit of Christ within us is that He even helps us now to pray according to the will of God, while our Man is in heaven and not bodily upon the earth.

Reading 21 – Genesis 6.1-4

The conflict between God's Spirit and man's flesh.

The struggle will terminate: God has fixed some boundaries

Read Numbers 13.33; Ephesians 6.11-12.

21-1 Daughters of men

Up to this section in Genesis, the emphasis has been on sons. They are the ones through whom lineage is outlined, because they beget others in their likeness. There has been no record of women or daughters, even though they must have been there for the men must have had wives to bear them sons and daughters.

But 6.1-2 observes that the multiplication of men and women brought about daughters and that they were very beautiful in the eyes of the sons of God. How we understand the expression "sons of God" will influence our understanding of this section of Genesis one way or the other.

The emphasis in the grammar falls not upon the daughters but upon the action of the sons of God when the daughters were born and when it was seen that they were beautiful. Their action was that they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. And we are left in no doubt that it was the beauty of the women, which was the primary motivator.

Also, this union between the sons of God and the daughters of men led to the birth of the Nephilim [6.4], who were called the mighty men [giants] of the earth. So the product of the union was unusual.

21-2 Spirit and flesh.

As a result of the sons of God taking wives, the Lord indicated that his Spirit would not strive with man forever because man is flesh. This struggle will not be prolonged but it will have an end in judgment. Nevertheless, God set the number of human days to be 120 years.

In the light of the great ages to which the generations of Adam listed in chapter 5 lived, this life span of 120 years might be understood as a limitation. On the other hand, it was a gracious gift to man that he was even given such a length of time during which God's spirit would struggle against his fleshy, fallen life

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Note 21-2: Spirit and flesh

This way of speaking of the constant sustained conflict, described as a 'struggle' from God's side, indicates a state of affairs that, if it does not compromise God, certainly is distasteful and dishonouring to Him. It is tolerated rather than accepted.

It is described from the point of view of man being weak in sustaining a godly life, or in the making of right decisions; witness Jesus speaking to the inner three disciples at Gethsemane when they fall asleep. He says the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

It is also used to say, as here in Genesis 6, that the desires of the flesh are opposite to the Spirit; they lust against each other [Galatians 5].

The struggle is maintained in the NT, but from a different basis following our reception of the Holy Spirit in union with our spirit [1 Corinthians 6.17]. Now, the struggle of the Spirit against our flesh has a proper goading and restraining function for us – so that we would not do that to which we would be naturally inclined to do.

The rest of this chapter goes on to speak of how God was grieved and sorry of heart that He made man, and that the end of all flesh was about to happen [6.12-13]. So the striving of God's Spirit was about to come to an end with man through judgment.

There are two assertions,

[a] that God will not strive forever, and

[b] there will be a significant time for man to experience the struggle of God's Spirit with him.

The first indicates that the rebellion of man will not be a permanent matter; it will not go on forever, God will resolve it. It further states that the cost of the struggle is to God and is a state of affairs that, as Creator, He will not tolerate to go on indefinitely. He fixes a boundary.

The second assertion speaks of that boundary insofar that it comes to every man - it is fixed at the length of his bodily life.

Why such a statement of the Lord's is made in this setting of the sons of God taking wives depends on how we understand that expression.

21-3 Sons of God

We have two options before us, as I see it.

[a] We can think of "sons of God" to mean the line of Adam which is given in chapter 5, who know the grace of God and have revelation of Him and call on His Name. If the expression was taken this way, then it would mean that there was intermarriage among the two lines and that the product born was an unusual person.

[b] Or we can think of "sons of God" as angelic, spiritual beings who had intercourse with human women. The OT Scripture uses this expression to mean the angelic beings around God's throne [Job 1.6,2.1, Psalm 29.1, 89.6, Daniel 3.5]. And, the NT gives a treatment of this situation in Jude 6, making a parallel between the angels seeking strange flesh and the unnatural sins of homosexual practice that seeks strange flesh – flesh not appointed by God to unite with. If we read it in this way, then it would mean there was further angelic interference coming to the world by evil angels seeking "strange flesh" and not maintaining their proper abode was set by God. 'Strange' in the sense of their actions being a violation of a natural, created boundary. Such a movement by evil angels does not surprise us as Satan had already interfered in the world of men and women.

The Nephilim are mentioned here in Genesis 6.4 and also in Numbers 13.33. where it is said,

"And there we saw the Nephilim, sons of Anak of the Nephilim; and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight and so we were in their sight."

The Authorised Version translates the nephilim as "giants". Here in Numbers, they are trying to express the terribleness of the Anakim and the fact that there was something uncanny or supernatural about them. They were, as our text describes them, "men of renown" [6.4].

We would understand our Genesis text then to mean that God saw the interference of the angelic beings upon the earth and expressed the fact that this could not go on forever. The NT will tell us that there is wickedness in heavenly places that must be contended with, and that this heavenly wickedness affects the lives of men and women - we are caught up in it [Ephesians 6.11-12].

Both option [a] and option [b] above have their proponents. I have always been impressed by [b] myself although the intermarriage of both lineages presented in Genesis [a],

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has the advantage of making sense of the immediate context, and is a repeated theme of God's forbidding later Israel to marry into other races, and the NT forbidding marriage of believers and unbelievers.

Both understandings have some scriptural support and add to the whole tapestry of Scripture truth; both making valid inferences from other parts of Scripture. We pray for understanding and light on what this statement 6.1-4 means here in the immediate setting of Genesis.

Reading 22 – Genesis 6.5-7.5

Salvation through judgment, once again.

Read 1 Peter 3.20;

22-1 The sorrow and deep grief of God.

Great wickedness is seen as acts done upon the earth, and these proceed from the heart of man. God, looking on the heart, sees that the thoughts there are constantly evil. This is registered in the God's heart as sorrow at making man and grief that such a situation should be so. God takes a decision to blot out the man, and this includes the animals and creeping things that He made along with him. This is consistent with God's order, as the authority of man over beasts and earth is given, should the man fall then his fall takes the others with it.

It is not, strictly speaking, hierarchical in its order but relational. We need to constantly be on our guard in our thinking about authority to not see it as hierarchical only for all relationships are authority relations - but not all are hierarchical or imply that sort of structure.

Note 22-1: The inner heart of God: the pain of God.

We should not miss here the poignant opening of God's own person to us. That human beings He has made should now be fallen into such disorder and brokenness, and are now forfeiting the life He intended for them, and further, that there is a pre-occupation of the heart of men and women upon matters that never entered God's mind; all this just grieves Him.

When we speak of God's grief the word communicates to us a parallel to our own grief at such loss. However, the relationship is reciprocal. We cannot get into another person's skin, we cannot stand where they stand in relation to us. They are in relation to us but not identical in feeling nor in initiative taking.

Neither we, nor He, have an experience of grief that is identical. We, for our part and from our side, register the situation as tragic; it speaks to us of a longing for that which was intended for us, and we know it as a loss of glory, a matter of shame. God, for His part and from his side of the relationship, experiences grief that is proper to a Creator, a majestic and loving One who has not seen his purposes realised for us.

Genesis here opens for us the motivation of God as grief. His loving purposes for us have been spurned and his response to our response to his initial love, leads to a desire to effect a change. We should not think that He is vindictive here, we are to see and understand, as much as we are able, the grief of God. He has a deep sorrow and is acquainted with grief in His dealings with us as humans right from the very start.

It will not surprise us that His Son, when sent to us as the suffering Messiah of the Jewish people, was also a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief [Isaiah 53.3]. However, as the God-man He knows the grief of God from the side of God and can reveal that to us as the only man who knows it. At the same time, from our side, He has taken our fallen and mortal flesh and has lived out the grief that men and women know as creatures. He has participated in both sides of the reciprocal equation as the true Mediator between God and creaturely men and women.

As Christians, as we receive the Spirit of Christ, one of the deepest motivations of our hearts encouraging us to live a godly life is that we should please Him and not bring Him grief. To experience guilt for our sins is proper to God's righteousness and holiness; to experience grief over our sins is to participate, or share, in the life of God as Father.

22-2 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

In the midst of all flesh, there is a man who approaches God rightly. We see this aspect of Noah's worship later when he, like Abel, sacrifices [8.20]. And for Noah to find grace

[favour] will be the same as him being seen as righteous before God in his time, blameless and a man who "walked with God" [6.9, 7.1].

This last expression gives us the clue to Enoch in chapter 5.22 who it is also said of him that he "walked with God"; and so we can reason that the other statements also apply to him.

To find grace is simply to be seen by God, by His own free act, as acceptable to him: it speaks of how the Lord looked upon him.

22-3 The earth as seen by God; corrupt and violent

The two main issues which offend God about the earth are that it is corrupt and that it is filled with violence [6.11-12] - all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. This speaks of some facets of God's character which are expressing his heart reaction to such a situation - his purity is offended by the defilement and corruption of the flesh of the earth, and the violence offends his loving care and provision, and his requirement that we honour one another as they in the Trinity of the Godhead do. Violence offends the freedom to move in obedience to God; it is compulsion to do or not do rather than the joy of free obedience.

Note 22-3: The Lamb and the Beast

At the end of the age, in which we live, Revelation speaks of the contrasts of the Lamb, who through His death and sacrifice has purchased, by His life, people for God. He is contrasted with a ferocious beast that, like those who rise up out of the Gentile nations in Daniel, exploits and pressures people of the earth and persecutes the people of God.

The solution to this way of life upon the earth is that God will destroy them because they are destroying themselves and one another. So He is simply handing them over to the results of their own desires; but not quite. He is going to send them to a violent death but by his own sovereign hand. It will be seen to be unmistakably an act of God because it will have to do with the rain coming and water flooding the earth. It is a violent death, consistent with their desires, but in such a way that it is unmistakably a judgment of God.

22-4 It is for Noah, a salvation through judgment.

As we shall see again and again, God will work salvation through judgment. This will be seen in the Exodus; what is salvation for Hebrews is, at the same time, judgment on Egypt. Also at the exile, what is a judgment on the Babylonians, Medes and Persians is salvation for Israel. And it will be seen in the death of the Lord Jesus; what is salvation for men and women is worked through a judgment upon Him Who died for them as their Representative and Substitute.

So, as God prepares a flood, He is also giving 'a man of grace' instructions about an ark. And as with the cross of Jesus, the instrument of judgment, the water, is also the instrument of salvation. For many will die through the water, but Noah and his family will be preserved through water [1 Peter 3.20].

As the flood declares God's mind about the evil heart of man, the corruption and violence on the earth, so it also declares his grace to man as well.

22-5 His grace is expressed through covenant.

Here we see that God enters into covenant with a few among the many whilst his will is expressed upon the earth clearly and powerfully. What Noah is to do with this is that he shall have to believe the word of God about his promise. He will act in faith according to this word. This is what Hebrews 11.7 makes clear - that like all of God's faithful ones Noah believed in things not seen and acted in faith on what was revealed to him. In this way, expressed as a contrast, he saved his family and condemned the world. We shall see more about this covenant with Noah later.

RECONCILIATION IN CHRIST

Readings in preparation for an applied study of the salvation worked for us through the atoning Incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ.

Week 3: Readings 23-29

Reading 23 – Genesis 5.18 -7.5

Salvation through righteous judgment, once again.

Reading 24 – Genesis 7.2; 8.20-21

Clean animals indicate a salvation to the freedom of open worship and shared life with God.

Reading 25 – Genesis 7.6-24

Judgment follows gracious warnings and obvious preparation. The perishing of people, unchanged in life, is an awesome matter, yet honouring to the Creator. The current discipline of a father is not a final matter.

Reading 26 – Genesis 8.1-9.7

The Flood subsides: a new beginning, new promises, a universal covenant. The forbearance of God and His opening of mercy to us through judgment.

Reading 27 – Genesis 9.18-19

*Restored order and the punishment of wrongdoers.
But restored order is not redemption.
The cross brings inward restoration; it satisfies God.*

Reading 28 – Genesis 9.18-29

*Relational glory and relational shame
Cursing of Ham: the inability to occupy two relational places.
The God-man occupies both places at once, so as to save us.*

Reading 29 – Genesis 9.18-27

*Proper clothing.
“Put on Christ...”*

Reading 23 – Genesis 5.18 -7.5

Salvation through righteous judgment, once again.

Read Luke 17.20-18.8; 1 Peter 3.20; 1 Peter 4.3-19 and 2 Peter 3.3-13

23-1 The long lives of the people before the flood.

While we have seen that, those who lived before the flood lived long lives [chapter 5], nevertheless, with the exception of Enoch, they did die.

This is, simultaneously, both terrible and wonderful. The great age of these people would have meant that they were always there, stabilising the culture, and bearing witness to those truths which had gone before.

But equally clearly, it is recorded that they died. Their deaths would have been a terrible thing for those who had drawn from their wisdom and then found that they were no longer among them. Their confidants and younger generations would have powerfully felt their absence when they left. This inexorable march of death testified to the fallen situation in which their lives were lived.

23-2 The limit of one hundred and twenty years - a public warning.

This was a warning to everyone who was around - the patience of God was moving towards its allotted end. No longer would people have 800-900 years to live, they would live a shorter time. The decrease in their life span warned of God's disturbance with men and women. A numerical ratio to our own days would be that men and women would have their life span decreased by a factor of 7 or 8. This would have the impact of God saying "People shall only live ten years now". Everyone would come to a quick understanding of impending disturbance from God.

23-3 The building of the ark - a second public warning.

Noah was a public figure, and marked out as a preacher of God. He was known as one who was associated with God's purposes and cause. When the Lord announced the impending judgment of the earth, He instructed Noah to build the ark [Genesis 6.13-22]. We have no sense of how long it took to build the ark but it would have been some considerable time - for it was a very large vessel. The length of time spent in building, gave the surrounding people time to see what this righteous man was doing; time to see and heed a warning. But they didn't draw any conclusion, they kept on with life as usual, doing what they always did. But as we shall see in the days of the son of Man, people just kept on doing what they did.

Note 23-3: The day of the Son of Man in Luke 17.22-37 [Intg 172].

Our Lord's teaching about the time of his imminent return, was to alert the disciples that such is the terrible judgment that accompanies that day, that they would long for the clock to be turned back to the "days" of the Son of Man before His return.

For, it is the fact that in the case of Noah who on that day "entered the ark" and in the case of Lot who "went out" of Sodom, the departure of the people of God took place before the judgment fell. In fact, we could say that, in Jesus' teaching, the departure of the people of God is the terrible, and only, premonition that the world had, and now has, of the immanent judgment that awaits them as they keep on eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage.

He said that it would be "just the same" on the day that the Son of Man is revealed [verse30]. In this way, he assured the disciples that they would be safe – He was coming for them and they would be gathered to him on that day. To prepare them for that exciting event he now warns them of an attitude that they must settle even as they listened to him.

23-4 "After seven more days" [Gen 7.4]- the third public warning.

Finally, the family of Noah and all the animals entered the ark. That must have been a sight to behold as well. All these species of animals being loaded into this massive vessel must surely have registered in the eyes of those who saw it. And it probably did - and they disregarded it!

23-5 But these "warnings" are not so that men should repent - but that God's righteous judgment is seen to be true.

We can see parallels in the days in which we live. For it is only those who take the grace of God seriously who see the warnings of God as well. So we need to see a certain perspective here.

What we mustn't miss is that the judgment of God had been pronounced. There is no hint that Noah is to warn others at all. As a matter of fact, he is to build the ark because God has signalled His intention to destroy all flesh. What Noah had to carry was the awful awareness of the total destruction of the whole earth and to know that he alone and his family would survive it. He was looking upon his fellow citizens and creatures, knowing that there was no hope for them at all. He knew that the judgment of God had already been proclaimed. And he had an offer of God for his family, but no hope for anyone else - his preaching had been done before this.

Note 23-6: This is in sharp contrast to the gracious "days" of the Son of Man [Luke 17]. We know that the judgment of the world has taken place already in the cross of Jesus Christ, and that the established judgment is now fixed and definite. However, the times in which we live are the "days of grace" - a time when we can announce that judgment and then call people to avail themselves of the gracious salvation provided for all in the work of the Lord Jesus. We are proclaiming judgment of the world as established but with time to repent.

Noah knew of the judgment of the world as immanent and his preaching – to say nothing of the building of the ark – testified to that. We see a parallel treatment of the great city of Nineveh in the preaching of Jonah. The people of Nineveh did repent, and was preserved. The city itself was later destroyed in 612 BC.

Yet, as the day came the time for repentance had passed. In this way, the time of the flood speaks to us of final judgment, when all decisions have been made - it speaks of the end of the old world by water; but makes clear that the end of the new world is reserved for fire.

23-6 Hardened their hearts.

The actions of God, that we have called three "warnings" above, are signals of impending doom, but they are given to those who are hardened in heart and have no intention of changing. They are hardened people and God has "handed them over" to their desires. So they are not warnings so that they may escape - they are announcements so that when they are lost they may know the rightness of the judgment in which they were involved.

They also serve as vindicating revelations of the righteousness of God - they justify Him in his judgment - for they show that His judgment of the earth was true.

Note 23-6: "So it will be in the days of the son of man" [nt172]

It is this situation that Jesus is describing in Luke 17.20-18.8 when He speaks of "as in the days of Noah", so it is in the "days of the Son of Man". He means that while the salvation of God is paraded as evident before men and women they are, at the same time, ignoring the doom which it signals.

And that this is going on even now - there are folks going to their doom even as the gracious offer is still being made. All this will be revealed in the "day" of the Son of Man [v.24, 30]. The Lord is not speaking of the repentance that is happening, but of the absence of repentance which marks His "days" and which will continue until the coming "day". He makes clear to the elect who call out for justice [Rev. 6.10] that He will speedily vindicate them, but He asks "will He find faith upon the earth?" His implication is that He will not.

It is this setting which 1 Peter 4.3-19 and 2 Peter 3.3-13 mirror in their understanding of the immanent judgment of God being revealed in the way people deal with the Lord in accepting or rejecting Him, and also in the way that the church lives before the watching world.

23-7 How urgent this makes us to declare, and live, the love of God.

We are living in days when the gospel is good news because it announces that the judgment of the world has taken place in Jesus' life, death and resurrection. This is good news in itself, but also as regards its' timing. It calls upon people to repent, to turn from not trusting this wonderful Saviour and to appropriate what He has done for them. As to timing, these 'days' of the Son of Man are truly "days" of grace. And if we, ourselves, have been drawn by God to repent and to embrace this wonderful Saviour and the Father who sent Him for our sakes, then we know truly that these are days of grace. However we are also the custodians of the information that "God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent". The reason that all people should repent is that "God has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." [Acts 17.30-31 NASB]. Let us capture the urgency of this time.

But let us not be those who feel that they must "win souls" for any reason of their own. No one really "wins souls" - they are drawn by God when His love for all is urgently proclaimed. He alone draws them through the revelation He makes to their hearts whenever the gospel is preached.

Let us be urgent to preach accurately, and be faithful to the apostolic message. We are ambassadors for Another, Who loves so much. Praise Him!

Reading 24 – Genesis 7.2; 8.20-21

Clean animals indicate a salvation to the freedom of open worship and shared life with God.

24-1 The clean animals.

In the early sections of Genesis, the animals presented to us as "clean" are exclusively used as the offerings in worship to the Lord. We see this with Abel, and also with Noah [8.20] after the ark has grounded, following the flood. Noah was to take clean animals into the ark by sevens, and the unclean by twos. Clean animals reveal the most important purpose of God in saving the family of Noah while judging the world.

Jewish history ascribes the traditional Mosaic authorship of the first five books of the Bible. Although Moses appears later in history than the matters of which he writes, we understand them to be a matter of revelation given to him. For although Genesis deals with matters of creation and world judgment before the covenant with Abraham, the writing of this material, about earlier times would have to have come to us through those who kept the revelation of these things. So, when issues like "clean" animals are received and developed more full at the time of the Exodus and wilderness wanderings through God's revelation to Moses, we see an anticipation of these matters here.

24-2 "Clean": life-preserving in two senses, for offering and eating.

Clean is applied to animals in two different contexts in the Old Testament. As previously stated, in Genesis clean animals are used in worship and approach to God. They are a sacrificial offering. This is also their use later, when the Law is handed down. In Leviticus, clean animals are required as worship offerings to God.

However, the Law goes a step further in applying the use of clean animals to people. They are to eat only those animals that are called "clean" and forbidden to eat those that are not [Leviticus 11]. This was God's definite command and required obedience, because it expressed being a consecrated people, holy to Him.

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So “clean” animals were involved and required for both worship and eating, taking food into oneself. This is instructive for us.

First, the meaning of “clean” is opposed to “defiled”. And this means that what God finds acceptable as an offering, by way of approach to Him for sinners is called “clean”. It is going to express his holiness in some way; it will have to do with these animals being exclusively reserved and set apart.

Second, what makes an animal “clean” is not some property it has intrinsically of itself, but what God says about it in reference to offering and eating. This word of God speaks of it in relation to offering - it is about worship. In other words, “clean” animals are simply those which God's word reveals to us are the ones He finds acceptable. It is a matter of the sovereign will of God, but it is not arbitrary for, as we shall see, it does reflect his salvation purposes.

Third, the movement from Genesis to Deuteronomy is a movement from people offering clean animals in worship to being required to eat only what is clean. It is not simply that the Levitical priesthood needed to eat the sacrifices to live; for such a diet is imposed on all the covenant people of God and the sojourners among them.

Fourth, another deep matter is involved here. It is that what the people ingest into their bodies as food, sustains their life. And what God is saying here is that only what is acceptable to Him by sinners as mediating between Him and them will be the sole basis for their life as well. He is speaking to them of the connection between their access to Him and their very life being contained in that access. Indeed, if they do not have that access they have died. This is what He said, and meant, to Adam. It is echoed in what Paul, the apostle, tells us when he speaks of us as once being dead in trespasses and sins.

Fifth, so we see that clean animals bring together two ideas. They are the means of access to God by the giving up of their life, and they are the means of sustaining that life as well.

Sixth, this is powerfully illustrated at the time of the Passover. The Passover Lamb's blood had been spilt to shield them from the wrath of God. Then, they were to eat it in haste and to devour it totally. They were to do this before going on their way out [exodus] of slavery. They were, on the basis of that sacrificial lamb, to confidently meet with God in the desert. In the strength of that food the Lamb provided, they would also be strengthened for the maintenance of their life of liberty *from* Egypt, and of their shared life *with* God.

Note 24-2: Jesus blood as true drink and his body as true food [John 6].

Jesus speaks of Himself as true food from heaven, and so uses the image of heavenly manna; but the principle of mediating and being eaten as well is maintained here.

There was not just the message that his shedding of blood would bring access to God, which it did, but that He would have to be ingested, He would be the sustenance of the life of God to those who received Him for Who He is. He is our life and access to God, in that He justifies us from sin through participation in his death; we know this as the experience of forgiveness. He is also our life as we share in his holiness and in His resurrection life: we know this through as the empowerment of the Spirit of Jesus to live as He did for us.

So we rejoice today in the One Who saves us from a living death, a life in rebellion to God and, at the same time, the One who saves us to the constant access in which we stand, rejoicing in knowledge of God. He is One Who, without our doing anything, but through what He has done on our behalf, has brought us near to God. He is to be fed upon as the Saviour, who has brought us life, and the Sustainer of that life by His indwelling of us and by our being brought into union with Him.

To use another, complementary image we have been considering; we have become the woman, the Bride of Christ. Out of his shed life, we have found ourselves created anew, as a new people, in relation to Him, and we have our life from Him, we have experienced union by creation. We do not live off Him, but are found sharing His life, “in Him”.

What a wonderful plan on of God, who chose us, “in Him” before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him” [Ephesians 1.4]?

24-3 Foreshadowing the covenant: offering and eating.

Later, when we come to look at the Covenant with Abraham, we shall see that the same issues return in a different setting. There, we shall see that the covenant also includes “eating” a fellowship meal as a sign of fellowship with the two partners of the covenant.

This will connect up for us with the dual picture we have discovered here of offering and eating – matters uppermost in the Lord’s mind at the Last Supper when He ate with His disciples. Significantly, at that time, He spoke of a “new covenant” in His blood.

Reading 25 – Genesis 7.6-24

Judgment follows gracious warnings and obvious preparation. The perishing of people, unchanged in life, is an awesome matter, yet honouring to the Creator. The current discipline of a father is not a final matter.

25-1 The sustained unbelief in the day of Noah.

The genealogy of Adam's line has been presented to us as a line in contrast to that of Cain. And, in that line we have seen that preachers of righteousness and good men were to be found. But we must not think of Adam's line as a pure line of the saved people of God; for that is not the purpose.

Rather, what is presented is a lineage in which were found recorded, from time to time, men who did call on the Lord and who had knowledge of God and His worship. It is within this setting that the presentation of the flood as a specific judgment and of salvation which is found, by the grace of God, by very few - in fact one man's extended family. What must it have meant for the wives of Noah's sons to see their own families, which they had left, also perish?

To build the ark must have taken a long time; people must have seen such a great undertaking, and they must have asked why it was being built. Perhaps Noah spoke of the impending judgment - but there was no response of turning to God about it. People of that day may have persecuted him and reviled him for such a massive undertaking in constructing the ark.

Throughout the building of the ark, Genesis gives no indication of any access to the ark being offered to others. Noah is presented throughout Scripture as one who trusted the word of God to him, and by doing that condemned the world.

He ‘condemned the world’ in the sense that Hebrews 11 implies, that Noah would have been one of those "of whom the world was not worthy". There is a reason for this - it is because it is a judgment day. We must set out to see what such a day entails.

25-2 The destruction of the world is the main presentation.

What is clear to us is that Genesis is teaching that the destruction of the world is clearly a judgment of God. It tells us something of His nature and Person that He will not be spoken against, or ignored. He will express His judgment, but in due time.

25-3 The unrepentant position of the world at the time of judgement.

Genesis also presents to us the deep penetration of sin into the world and the blindness attending those who do not have God’s revelation about the situation.

As we have seen, it is not that God makes them blind, but that their own actions have that consequence. The apostle Paul works this out in the present situation of people as they live – they are not judged by God in the light of what they do not know, but in the light of that which they did know and yet suppressed [Romans 1.18-32]. This unrepentant position is itself a sign of who is at work in them - indeed, the whole world lay in the hands of the evil one at that time, save for one man and his extended family. He was a man who God saw as "righteous, blameless in his time" and he "walked with God" – he lived in fellowship and obedience to God and did it, as Hebrews 11 makes clear, ‘by faith’ [6.9].

25-4 Judgment is shown to be true according to our deeds...

The flood makes us understand that there is a day of judgment, when people shall be judged according to their deeds. But I do not mean that they shall find that God adds up their merit or their good deeds as grounds for His acceptance or rejection of them.

It is rather that the flood was a judgment according to their deeds *in that their deeds showed where they were already*. Deeds indicate the heart of the man - they do not make him evil, they indicate that he is already evil. They are not the grounds for God calling men evil, but the basis of recognition that they already are so. In this way, we understand that 'judgment' is a right discernment of God; it speaks of His recognition of the heart of man through the observation of what he is doing.

This is clearly brought out in the Genesis material [6.5-7,11] that God declared an understanding of the heart of man on the basis of what their deeds were showing. Now, it is true that because He looks on the heart then He sees anyway. But so that we may know what He sees He gives us the evidence of their deeds so that we can know what He knows and so see that His knowledge is true, faithful and just. It is His understanding of the wickedness of the heart of man that led God to the judgment [6.13].

Note 25-4a: We also, are those upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

This is the basis of the judgment of the world at the end of the age in which we live also. It is a judgment that can come at any time and we live constantly knowing that the Lord can close the curtain on the stage of life whenever the Father declares.

The exhortations in the NT to live according to who we are in Christ then, are not exhortations designed to tell us that our good works will be the basis and grounds of our acceptance with God on the judgement day; but because we are declaring, by our works, that we are already those who know God in our age; and the judgment day will declare it.

Indeed, judgment is according to what is written in the books [Rev. 20.11-15] and what is written in the books is according to deeds. But what is made clear by the presence of another book, which is the "book of life", is that, if your name is not in that book, you will be thrown into the sea of fire. That book records the elect of God and their deeds verify that they were those who had life, who knew the Son. There are two books; the first, which records deeds, is the evidence of the truth of the second. This is why we are to stir each other up to "good works" - works which are good because they issue from the heart of God we have a share in by the Spirit; good works which are put into our hearts by Him to do. These heart motivations and works are consistent with who we are in Christ Jesus.

The deeds are accounted by God, and noted, for they are the basis upon which, when it is clear that someone's name is in the book of life, there is a record of deeds which verifies that recognition to the whole world. The record of deeds indicate that God is just, and verifiable, in his judgment before the whole world. But it is not that the deeds qualify the person, but that the person is found as qualified freely, by God's grace, and this is shown in that they have the deeds. The righteous deeds of the saints accompany the bride as her gorgeous clothing on the wedding day. Gorgeous to Him who is the Bridegroom, because it is white and pure as He is pure. They are deeds she has because she has his new life in that she has been betrothed to Him; and they demonstrate that to all, even those who do not have the life.

Note 25-4b: "...as in the days of Noah... until the day when he entered the ark"

Jesus, in His teaching [nt 172 Luke 17.20-18.8] concerning his own return and the attendant judgment of the world, makes clear that when the judgment of the earth comes people will be found not changing, or taking note of the times but carrying on doing everyday normal things to them as if nothing is about to change. This tells us that the judgment day is not a basis, or a time, for turning to new life. It is rather that the unrepentant lives of the people seen during the "days" is maintained right up to that "day".

This is as we should expect it from our knowledge of Noah and his day - because it was a judgment day. People are not changing then, they are being shown, by the judgment, that their lives are not right and their continuing in it vindicates the very decision of God.

This is why in Noah's days of building and preparing, and on the day when he entered the ark, there was no change; no one crying out in belief and repentance about the impending judgment. This is because a man does not turn way from sin unless he has come to know righteousness, and that by grace. Repentance is a fruit of revelation, not a cause of it being given to him. Indeed, the judgments of God upon the earth even

now, since the days of the Son of Man, do not cause people to repent of what they are doing [Rev.9. 20-21].

25-5 The cross as salvation through judgment.

We need to recognise that unless there is a judgment, the understanding of things as they are can never be seen. This is why a judgment is a great vindication of God, his truth and his holiness.

Note 25-5: For God to be known as a Father implies that He will judge our lives. We need to be clear that the minute we come to know God as Father, through the revelation that comes to us through His Son, we welcome the judgment of God on our lives because it is that of a Father who is looking to bring us to the sonship for which we were made and redeemed. In this way it is not a final judgment, but the temporary discipline of a father who desires that we should share in his life and holiness. This is the teaching of Hebrews 12.1-11. We Christians do not see God as punishing us in the adversities of our life, thinking of Him as stating something final. We see ourselves as open to correction from our Father who is moulding us into the image of his Son. Discipline is not always pleasant, but it is to be endured for the fruits of righteousness that it yields as we live under our Father's hand.

For judgment is inherent in what it is to be a father. A man is not a father because he judges; but he judges because he is a father. Everyman who heads his household, or shares in the government of God's household, knows this.

And this is why God saves through judgment; this is why the Father sent the Son. It is because He loved the world, and it was necessary for it to be reconciled to Himself. For as a father, with wayward children, if you asked him, "Are you reconciled to this behaviour?" He must answer with a judgment. Our Father has done so, and also revealed his mercy at the same time. For mercy is also only ever known where there is judgment.

What God has done in Christ has reconciled the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them [2 Corinthians 5]. There first must be a reconciliation of the world to God, and by God, before the people of the world can come to know that reconciliation for themselves. Every father must find a way, through judgment, to reconciliation with the offenders. This judgment was what took place in the cross of Christ - that is the place where judgment was brought. The cross is the judgment of this world; it is not that which leads to it - it is it! The end of the age, with all its finality, simply makes manifest that the cross of Christ did its work of judgment.

25-6 The judgment at the cross is the grounds for true assurance of mercy.

Our knowledge that the One who died on the cross has drunk the cup of the wrath of God, once for all, is a clear statement to us that the judgment has been enacted on our behalf. It is this trust in the rightness of God, Who judges all things truly, which is the grounds for our surety with Him. The life of an acceptable sacrifice has been offered once for all.

It is our surety that God is totally satisfied in His conscience with the death of Jesus as a full and sufficient atonement for sin that we can receive it for ourselves. We can stake our life on it - and at the judgment day it shall be seen to be so.

Let us daily encourage one another to good works that are the manifestation of it now!

Reading 26 – Genesis 8.1-9.7

*The Flood subsides: a new beginning, new promises, a universal covenant.
The forbearance of God and His opening of mercy to us through judgment.*

Read Romans 2.1-11

26-1 The flood subsiding was for new life to start.

Chapter 7 makes it clear that the judgment of the world and the perishing of all flesh and the creatures took place as the waters rose to deathly heights.

Now we are told that the Lord "remembered" Noah and all those creatures with his family in the ark. [8.1] The water prevailed upon the earth for 150 days, when the rain stopped and the underground fountains were plugged. After 40 days Noah sent out a raven, and then a dove, which returned with an olive leaf. Then, after seven more days, the dove again is sent out and she does not return.

These indications to Noah allow him to take the coverings off the ark, but he does not venture out until the word of God comes to him.

The Lord orders them out so that they may breed and multiply. More of this Adam-like mandate later.

26-2 In Noah's worship of God, He speaks to him.

In Genesis 8.21-22, the Lord conveys to Noah that He will never again curse the ground on account of man; the reason given is that the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth. This implies that the God is limiting for man the natural order of breakdown of his relationships with the ground even though his sin is still there. The first chapters of Genesis have established this powerful, relational connection between man and the ground, and the curse of God made clear the sinful consequences of that relation. Now He will not deliver the ground to his curse; even though the heart of man has not changed.

This is a gracious provision of the forbearance of God [Romans 3.25] to not take the relational interdependence of man and ground to its holy conclusion. Although such a conclusion would be right, as Genesis 1-7 makes clear; now it will be, in the forbearance of God, a promise He enacts with a covenant. God promises that the earth will remain and the cycles of the daily and seasonal changes will continue.

26-3 The covenant of God with Noah.

In Genesis 6.18 the Lord had foreshadowed that he would establish his covenant with Noah. In the way this is done, it is clear that Noah is a representative for the whole of mankind who will follow after him. The parallels between the address to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1.28 and those addressed to Noah [8.20-22; 9.1-3] make it clear that we have a new beginning. Noah stands at the head of the line of all who are descended from him [9.12] and that is all flesh. God "blesses Noah and his sons" by giving them a command that they are empowered to fulfil.

This covenant with Noah sees him as the representative of mankind. Later, we shall see that God elects Israel particularly for His saving purposes. And although this is done with a limited number of mankind, nevertheless it will be through His dealings with Israel that God has a view to the covenant salvation extending to the whole of mankind. The covenant with Noah indicates this for us in advance.

However, there are some differences between Adam's circumstances and Noah's:

[a] the fear and terror that the animals, birds and creeping things [9.2] will have for man testify to the disorder of the universe as it is after the flood. Once at harmony with man, their fear will show that things are not as they once were - and this fear manifests itself as flight or fight in the animal kingdom in respect to man. This is even seen with domestic animals.

[b] the movement from being totally dependant upon the fruit of the ground for food [9.3] and now being given to eat animals is a change to the diet and mandate of man.

[c] but it comes with a limitation. They shall not eat it with its life - its blood. We learn later that this is because God has reserved blood for use as atonement [Leviticus 7.26ff; 17.10-16; Deuteronomy 12.16,23; 15.23].

[d] the life of man is seen as sacrosanct because he is made in the image of God [9.5-6]. And whether it is a beast that slays a man or a man who does so, God will require their life in return. He says that He "requires" it – by which He wants us to know His holiness by the commensurate holiness of those made in his likeness.

26-4 The rainbow. [9.8-17]

Every time the rain began to fall from heaven, men and women would remember the judgment of God - rain is a fearful thing just after the flood.

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The Lord, whenever He makes a covenant gives a sign of it. This is seen as a testimony, or a witness. In later covenants between men that they both look at the sign and remember their vows together. We see that, for example, with boundary markers, a stone set up between their borders. The covenant is said to be "with Noah [6.18,9.9] and his descendants; with God and the earth [9.13] and with every living creature for all successive generations [9.12].

The promise is that never again shall the water become a flood so as to destroy the earth [9.11] or destroy all flesh [9.15].

26-5 The comfort of covenants with God.

Whenever people have the possibility and power to hurt each other, they ensure their comfort and insure themselves against such contingencies by covenants. We see this in the Bible as well.

This covenant of the Lord with the whole world has these marks:

[a] it is given by a sovereign Lord who initiates the covenant Himself; it is not initiated by Noah.

[b] it is given in the situation of a strong power with a moral right over another who is dependant upon him and subject to him.

[c] it is a merciful covenant; for the right to deluge the earth at any time is right and true, given the wickedness of man's heart continually.

[d] it is a self limitation of God for the benefit of man, who is not at rights with God or himself.

Such a covenant brings men and women a consolation of the forbearance of God for a time during which they may see that that which is their proper due, does not immediately befall to them.

As such, it telegraphs that there is a time of forbearance, in which God will work a work of preparation for another judgment of the world, which itself will issue in a new covenant, and one for all mankind.

26-6 The need to be careful with a forbearing God.

Forbearance – the enduring patience - of God declares the fatherly spirit of God. He is no tyrant, looking for an opportunity of instant retribution and punishment. The forbearance of God opens up an important fact to deal with. It is that it can look like God is doing nothing. It presents a set of circumstances that can be misunderstood; for it can seem like the wicked prosper and God does nothing. But we have to understand that the powers that forbear and wait, but do not forget, are not simple or weak because they wait. Their waiting is purposive and clear – they are giving time for consequences of certain actions in life to manifest, so that people may learn through adversity [Romans 2.4].

The non-intervention of God does not signal His disinterest, it has great meaning attached to it. He may move in such a way as to be out of sight and so, to the unwary, out of mind; but He always arrives.

26-7 Judgment of the world opens to us the righteous basis of mercy.

The cross of Jesus marks God's arrival for judgment. It is the end of God's forbearance because He initiates the judgment of the world [Romans 2.1-4]. But it is a judgment in which He stands in for us as a substitute and a representative; as God who is *for us*, even in His judgment against us.

The atonement worked for us in the death of Christ opens up to us the mercy of God for sinners who have not done well. But while it is freely-offered mercy for us yet it is at the great expense of the life of the only Son of God and the commensurate grief and separation between the Father and the Son.

There is a revelation of God, we see something of His character, when He shows mercy that works deeply upon us by its non-infliction of punishment. Mercy never means that the punishment is not due; rather, it is because it is due, that its non-infliction can only be mercy. He who accepts mercy can only do so by admitting the justice of God and knowing that he has also lost his case to any self-justification. It makes us give up on any self-righteousness. That is

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what mercy is about; it is the simultaneous awareness of the kindness of God and the awareness that we are sinful in the midst of that freely given, unmerited kindness.

And now, since the death of Christ, we can know that there has taken place the judgment of sin as sin, and death as death, and that the prince of this world has been judged; all of this has transpired in the cross of Christ. Then, just as the gracious love of our creator God worked six days and then invited Adam and Eve to live off His finished work, so, as our redeemer God He has presented us with His finished, redeeming work done for us. He now asks that we enter into the Sabbath day of his rest – that is, we should take it as a gift and live off His finished work done for us in His Son; and come and share His life to which we now have access as sons.

Shall we spurn that offer? That would open up the scenario of a fearful prospect of a judgment that has its grounds in a costly love refused. In fact, unbelief in Jesus is now, at this time, the only sin that is being counted against anyone - for when the world is convicted of sin, it is that sin of unbelief that the Holy Spirit brings to them [John 16.9]. The eternal judgment of people is fixed now, in this lifetime, by what they do with Jesus. The day of judgment will simply disclose that choice, and anyhow, our works are clearly announcing our response to the Messiah long before that day comes.

Reading 27 – Genesis 9.18-19

Restored order and the punishment of wrongdoers.

But restored order is not redemption.

The cross brings inward restoration; it satisfies God.

27-1 Noah, the head of a new group of men, but not a new Adam.

We have seen that, amongst other things, Noah stands in a place where he is the first of the line of mankind, as Adam had been. He is armed with the similar mandate to Adam, but, as we saw, with some differences. These differences mirror the fallen situation that was not the case for Adam in the first place. So, in one sense, Noah is a new start; in another sense, he stands in the line of Adam, he carries the marks of the fall and the mandate he is given registers a situation that has changed from the original will of God.

27-2 Restoration through imposed order is a temporary relief.

The idea of the new start is conveyed by the judgment of God upon the earth. When we read of this judgment which acted so powerfully into a violence-filled, wicked world of men and women we almost breathe a sigh of relief that Someone has done something.

There is untold refreshment to the spirit of the family of man to know that there is a Father who is present, and that He is not reconciled to our behaviour. He will act, and there shall be some restoration of order in the midst of the mayhem. In this way, the judgments of God in history are awesome, and sobering. It is similar with any father who brings order into a disordered family scene by intervening and stopping certain actions. It is a restoration by command, backed up by punishment. It works from without; it is externally imposed.

But what is clear is that restoration of order to the rebellious chaos is but a temporary clean up of the mess when there is no change in the men and women themselves. And this is what the immediate activities of Noah's family demonstrate. You cannot redeem the structures of human life without having the redemption of men and women. In fact, the order is the reverse, first the people are changed, then the structures - the order of life - follows.

Note 27-2: Restoration from the inside out.

And so, in the coming of the Saviour, the Father can act to bring restoration. Firstly, there are changed hearts by the outpouring of the grace of God; then changed lives result from that; and then a society is altered to reflect the good order of God. This new state of affairs is held and maintained as long as the hearts are sustained and spiritual communion with the Lord is a daily and fresh event. True revival works all the way

through society to bring a restoration that is maintained. It works from within the men and women.

In this way, true restoration is always the fruit of redemption. Redeemed men and women, who have their hearts changed by God towards God and who bear the fruit of repentance in their changed lives, are the agents of the restoration of order.

27-3 God and His Word; a holy relation.

It is the delight of God to work solely through the agency of his Word. Genesis lays out this preference of the Almighty. We learn later in the revelation of God in Scripture, that this comes to mean working exclusively through his Son, who is the word of God incarnate. [John 1.14]. It is the holiness of God that is expressed here in this relationship.

By a holy relationship we understand that the relation between the Father and the Son is total, exclusive and permanent. They will not allow anyone between them save the Spirit, who because He mediates the love of the Son to the Father, as well as mediating the love and honouring of the Father to the Son, He is called the Holy Spirit. He mediates a holy relationship. He never intrudes between them, always serving them in love by communicating the love between the Father and Son which is the obedience of the Son to the Father.

In this way, the Father knows that the obedience of the Son is the Son's expression of love towards Him through the Spirit. The Father's knowledge of his fatherhood comes this way. Similarly, the Son's knowledge that He is a beloved Son of his Father comes through the Spirit.

27-4 The cross is the event of deepest revelation of the loving relation that is between God and His Word.

It is at the cross we see a Son going all the way to death because He wants the whole world to "know that I love the father" [John 14.31]. It is the obedience unto death that demonstrates to the Father that He is truly loved by His Son. In this sense, the Father is "well pleased" with the Son, as He declared when He stood with sinners in baptism in the Jordan, and on the Mount of Transfiguration, a precursor to His ascended glory.

Yet, the place of the death of the Son is also the place where the heart of the Trinity is broken. For it is in a death where this love is shown - a place of pain and abandonment. For it is in the death of Jesus that the Father experiences that He is Sonless, and the Son experiences that He is fatherless and abandoned - and, as we would expect, the Spirit is silent between them.

This extreme cost to God, demonstrates to us, once we know it, the wonderful love that He has towards us. For we see the lengths to which He will go to effect our salvation back to life with Him.

Note 27-4: God is satisfied by suffering obedience of the Son, not the obedient suffering.

Many people, in trying to understand the atonement, have thought of satisfaction to God as it was known in the middle ages. A man, who had been dishonoured by another, 'demanded satisfaction' for his hurt honour. At that time in history, the outcome of demanding satisfaction, if taken up, normally led to a duel. So some Christian people began to think of the cross that way; that God demands a satisfaction to his honour.

They reasoned that men and women, through their sin, had dishonoured God and deserved to suffer for it. It was as if God had 'demanded satisfaction'. And the medieval pattern of 'honour' led them to expect the sort of suffering required of Jesus to be an equivalent suffering that we would have deserved; all of this, they thought is what brings satisfaction to God in the death of His Son. So they saw the infliction of suffering on Christ by God as the redemptive element - because it was the satisfying element to God - in the atonement.

What we see above in our main text, in thinking of the cross as the glory of Jesus, as John's Gospel constantly portrays it, is quite the reverse of this medieval pattern. It sees that the Father did not punish the Son, nor took any joy in inflicting suffering upon Him; but rather, always thought of Him as "My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased".

And correspondingly, as we have seen above in John 14.31, Jesus went to the cross because He loved the Father and that He was obedient to the Father to the end [John 10.17-18] for it was from the Father Jesus had the authority to lay His life down, and take it up again.

So, if we are looking at the atoning element in the death of Christ that moved upon the Father so as to satisfy Him we must find it in the obedience of His Son, not the equivalence of the suffering. True, there was suffering involved in this atoning

work, but that comes from the love of the Father and the Son as the Son stands in our place and in our stead and draws upon Himself, for our sakes, the results of sin and of forfeited life that we incurred.

We might put it in this way, that it was not the obedient suffering that brings satisfaction to the holy Father, and so saves us. It was rather the suffering obedience of Christ that did so.

The mistake here, because it is driven by the medieval understanding of the model a proud man's honour needing to be upheld, is a failure to take into account the fact that our God is humble. The humility in God is that He can decide, out of His own, sovereign freedom, to stoop to engage us, to come in the flesh, take upon Himself our full broken condition and our guilt and so deal with it from a place of humility. All of which is driven by His love for us; for He loves us more than He loves Himself.

27-5 The preaching of the cross changes people's hearts.

Whenever the glorious gospel of the love of God for sinners is expressed, with the cross at its centre communicating the cost of the love of God to the hearts of men - then men's hearts experience the love of God for them, and the deep love of the Saviour and the knowledge of the seeking heart of the Father.

This brings revival - that is, it brings life to those dead in trespasses and sins. It brings conversion to God and so changed people and so a restoration which is liberty, the freedom of sonship experienced by men and women.

Reading 28 – Genesis 9.18-29

Relational glory and relational shame

Cursing of Ham: the inability to occupy two relational places.

The God-man occupies both places at once, so as to save us.

28-1 Relational glory

In the early chapters of Genesis, we saw that relational glory is something that is acted out between persons. When someone honours another person, usually shown in something they do in relation to them, then they are their glory. This we understood to be the relation that operates between the Persons of the Trinity in the Godhead [See Reading 27-4]. Each is the glory of the other. Amongst other matters, it helps us understand why there is subordination in the Trinity without the loss of equality of Persons.

28-2 Relational shame

Therefore, the loss of glory takes place, and is registered, between persons. When we looked at Adam and Eve and attempted to understand their nakedness, we saw that the way they acted towards each other reflected their mutual glory. They were made for each other and their bodily differences were a beautiful thing to them, as they were to God. The text told us that at that time in their journey, they were “naked” and “not ashamed”.

They were, at that former time, accepting of each other's naked bodies. However, when they disobeyed God's command a change took place. They became aware of their nakedness and exposure to each other, not as a matter of mutual glory and beauty, not as a matter for celebration; now they were embarrassed and disturbed. They experienced a lack of mutual honouring. The relational change that took place between them was now reflected in the way that they looked at each other's person.

Loss of glory was now experienced as personal nakedness in the sight of the other. This is why God made them coverings. It was His gracious provision for their fallen state in respect of one another. This covering then, as an emergency order for their broken state, is designed to preserve them in the midst of being ashamed of themselves.

28-3 Noah uncovered and seen by Ham

Noah, in an irresponsible state of drunkenness, was lying in his tent uncovered. What this states is that he failed to act modestly in regard to his own fallen shame. In this state, Ham saw him - and so “saw the nakedness of his father” [9.22]. This is sharply contrasted to the action of Shem and Japheth, who covered their father’s nakedness by averting their eyes from him as they walked backwards to cover him. They did not violate the relation existing between father and son. Here was the violation of Ham - he acted in a way that dishonoured his father in seeing him in such an exposed, drunken and naked state. In doing so, he had taken knowledge of his father such as the other two had not. In this way, a change of relation developed between Noah and Ham.

But before we can understand Noah’s actions that followed, we need to consider the question of relational glory.

28-4 You can only reciprocate in a relationship from your side

Between Ham and his father there was a set relation, given by God and established for them at Ham’s conception and birth. Being sired by his father; he comes through the initiative of his father. As he came to birth, his way of relating to his father was to respond to his father’s initiative by obeying him. He was set under the authority of his father, and had a response to make when his father initiated between them. Whenever he did this, he was honouring his father and so brought him glory as a son. We can say that the glory of Noah was found in his sons. This was their “given” relation in life in respect to Noah - it is an appointment by God for them, just as it is an appointment for Noah to be their father.

By his affirming and approval of them and their actions, Noah had been “given” the position to “glorify “ his sons in their own eyes and the eyes of others. This reciprocal way of relating together means that each must occupy the position given by God and cannot, at the same time, occupy the other’s position. It is for Noah to initiate, his sons to respond; but they couldn’t know both things personally at the same time. This has a corollary. When he uncovered his father’s nakedness, Ham would have been unable to know what that means for his father. This was so precisely because he is not in the position of a father in their relation, but in the position of a son. And it is to this that the Bible wants to direct us to when it introduces Ham twice in this episode as “the father of Canaan” [9.18,22].

28-5 “Ham, the father of Canaan”

When Noah awoke from his wine-induced sleep, the Bible records that he “knew what his youngest son had done to him” [9.24]. Noah knew that he had been dishonoured by his son; he was also aware that this was not something Ham would understand right then, because he was a son and not a father in their relationship. But he would come to understand in time, for he was the “father of Canaan”.

You see, Ham did have a son of his own, Canaan. In that relation, he himself was a father. So it would be there, in that relation, that Ham would come to experience, to take knowledge of, what had happened between him and Noah. For he was to see his own son, Canaan, not lifted up socially but become the servant of Shem and Japheth. In this way, he would be personally embarrassed as a father. His own dishonour would be something brought to him by Canaan. In that relation, he was to become aware of what had transpired for Noah when he, Ham, dishonoured him.

28-6 Noah said, “Cursed be Canaan” [9.25]

Noah’s deep sadness about his own dishonour was not his main theme here, although it was the occasion of what he said. He was not stating any vindictive intention for Canaan, but he was pronouncing a result for Canaan in the light of his own father’s actions. Because Ham had dishonoured his own father, he had entered into a wilful lifestyle that would become the example for his own boy; a boy called to obey, and so copy, his father. Having dishonoured his own father, Noah, Ham would reap the results of that in his own life when Canaan served his brothers. His own son would be a source of dishonour for him; notice, not because Canaan was

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wicked like his father, but because he found himself in a lowly estate that brought his father no joy. His son had no social glory that his father could recognize.

Notice here, that the perspective does not ask, “Is this fair to Canaan?” It is preoccupied with another matter, which is Noah’s dishonour and Ham’s culpability. What Noah saw was that no one else but Canaan was in the position to bring to Ham the knowledge of his own sin.

Fairness is not the issue in the relations given; they are simply God’s apportioning and are neither partial nor unfair. But what is clear is that the father of Canaan was Ham, and Canaan’s father had come from his own relation with his father in such a way that there was a continuity here. Ham could not grieve over his sin until he knew it as a father in his own relation with his own son - for he needed to be on the father-side of the relation to know.

28-7 Empathy & true understanding between humans takes time.

How real this is for us. It takes a change in relation to understand both sides of the relational glory of the world’s order. The man who moves from being the private to the sergeant moves from receiving orders to being one who gives them. The worker who is promoted to management also discovers a different perspective along with a different glory relation. The employer has different things to know and understand that the worker does not. Each of us experiences the changes in relational glory all through our life. We are not always set in the same relations with each person.

It is this which makes the handling of children so important - they are people with a one dimensional understanding; most of their relationships are ordered on the subordinate side. They must not be asked to empathise with mature relationships of which they have had no experience. Experience is only brought through time and the adoption of a new set of relations that the mature have passed through. Precociousness is simply this - the adoption of a relation in which we have not, as yet, been set.

It is not until we are set in the relation with our own children that we come to know the full import of our own actions when we were children in respect to our own parents. We truly learn a great deal about honouring parents after we have our own children. We begin to have empathy and understanding.

28-8 The double sided, reciprocal relation of the God-Man

How powerful this is for us when the Word of God takes flesh and stands with us in our own place of dishonour. He truly knows our side of things in relation to God. But because He is the God-Man He can understand God’s side of the other relation. For He comes from the inner life of God, Father, Son and Spirit. And He knows both at once.

As such, Jesus Christ knows sin and dishonour from God’s side. He knows the deep grief and the affront that sin makes into God’s own life. And He knows this as a Son within the Father-Son relation. He does not know sin by committing it, but in taking our mortal flesh - flesh that can die because it is a body suffering the wages of sin - Jesus experiences the fallen situation of humanity. He takes this into Himself and, at the same time, knows the reaction of God to sin as a fully-functioning eternal Son of the holy Father. So, in His own Person, without ceasing to be God, he draws our experience of sin into his own purity and overcomes it as He wills to live a godly life as a true man should [but which we, as men, never did].

Note 28-8: Our Saviour because of Who He and therefore what He does.

This understanding that we have drawn from Ham and Canaan as a father and a son on reciprocal relationship to one another, allows us to see how the Son of Man works our salvation *within His own Person*. He is a unique person who can stand in two sides of a reciprocal relationship at once. This is vital to understand, for all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him, and because it did, He is our Saviour because of Who He is and then He works what He does out of a full expression of His Person.

[1] This should make as slow to think of the atonement as being explained, or in any way understood, by simple transactions which are done external to His Person. It gives us the central clue, that in order for us to think our way from the death of Christ as that which has been accomplished for us, we must not resort to simple, external, transactional pictures.

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[2] It also requires us to take our view of salvation as based upon what took place at the Incarnation as much as what happened on the cross and the subsequent resurrection. For, if the Person of the Saviour is the decisive factor, then it will not be a transaction of *what takes place on the cross* that saves us; it will be a matter of *who is on the cross* that saves us. Then, but only then, can we begin to think of what that Person's death on the cross means for God and for us men and women. That is, how we understand Jesus of Nazareth to be the true God and true man for us, appointed by God for us, will set how we shall begin to think in what way we shall understand how his birth, baptism, temptation, preaching, transfiguration, trial, death, burial, resurrection and ascension are all done for us and our salvation. We shall have to think of them as done for us "in Him", as a single Christ event.

In the world of fallen men and women, to be the servant of others meant dishonour for Canaan. It was also connected with his own father's sin. Canaan, as a servant of his uncles, meant dishonour for his father Ham, as it reflected on him. In the case of the Son of God, being a servant was not the dishonour it would be amongst proud men and women, for there is submission within the Godhead without inequality. That the Son obeys the Father is the voluntary, honouring way of pleasure that the Son brings to the Father. In the life of God, it is no dishonour or bad thing for the servant of God stands in the highest place.

Further, Canaan's servanthood brings a grieving knowledge of previous error to his own father; it convicts Ham of past sin. In the case of the Son of God, his servanthood brings nothing but pleasure and honour [glory] to his Father, since it accords with their shared eternal Life.

28-9 The shamed man on the cross, for us.

Jesus has dealt with our shame. How wonderful that He has drunk the dregs of shame for us. He was dishonoured publicly, assaulted with beard pulling, slapping, spitting. He was flogged, mocked while being dressed in royal robes. He was crucified naked, a massive dishonour of his person, before his enemies, who mocked him again as abandoned by God.

Hurtful as they were to Him all these things are powerful and precious for us - they are a statement of what God was doing through his willing Son for us. He was exhausting the shame of mankind in the way the God-man died. Trusting that his shaming was for us, we now understand that it is because He was shamed we, inside ourselves, are not experiencing shame concerning our persons. He has drawn that inner experience fully into Himself and drunk its dregs for us. It sets us free to now go "outside the gate" with Him and endure religious shame, as well as with the poor and the lonely and the abandoned [Hebrews 13.11-16]. Praise our Husband, praise our Saviour who saves us from guilt and shame!!

Note 28-9: We are a shameless people.

This inner security allows us to live in the face of what religious or other people might think. It allows us to dress in a way is expressive of the lowest in society. It allows us the freedom to not make our clothing, our life style, our public expression a barrier to others receiving from Jesus. We are an adaptive people, able to become all things to all men to win some. All this is a fruit of the Saviour's person and work.

Reading 29 – Genesis 9.18-27

Proper clothing.

"Put on Christ..."

Read Colossians 3.5,12; Eph 4.22f.

29-1 God's provision for clothing

As we saw in Genesis 2-3, awareness of nakedness is itself knowledge that comes to the man and the woman at the time that they rebelled against the word of God. This change was reflected in their knowing of themselves - they had an awareness that they were not as they once had been; something had happened to their glory. Insofar that their glory was an expression of their relationship one with another, this change was registered in the way they

looked upon each other; they had a shared shame as a twosome. They also registered shame individually in themselves, as they considered their own persons under the gaze of the other.

We saw that their way of dealing with this was to sew fig leaves together so that they could wear them. It was an attempt to cover themselves while experiencing the gaze of the other.

The Lord agreed about their need for covering, but not about the way it should be done. He verified that their perception of shame was real, but indicated that the way of ultimately dealing with an adequate covering would be at the cost of a life - so He prefigured this with the provision of skins of animals for them. Modesty, as expressed through covering, God affirmed as a need for fallen men and women. An immodest person flaunts their loss of glory, as if they do not care; and in this way offends again. All this we have seen in previous studies.

29-2 Shem, Ham and Japheth: a matter of clothing Noah

So, for Noah to be naked in his tent because he was drunk, was not a problem to himself. Indeed, no one is ashamed of being naked in private; which simply illustrates the relational understanding of nakedness, no one else is there to see! But because Noah was drunk, and so out of his senses, he was not able to cover himself when Ham came into his tent.

That is, his accustomed modesty, which was a direct testimony to fallen shame, was not practised at the presence of another. Later, the prophet Habakkuk [2.15] actually proclaims a woe upon those who deliberately make their neighbours drunk in order to look upon their nakedness - an act through which many persons have experienced shame in our day.

Any loss of self-control, though drugs or alcohol, can lead to shame being experienced - for the accustomed modesty can then be removed. Of course, the shame does not come because of what they have done: the loss of glory is always there. It is rather that when people have seen them in an undressed state, the relationship brings an intensification of the experience of shame as a sort of violation.

It is simply the fact that fallen ones are always ashamed, and that clothing serves to cover us. It is the removal of the clothing before others that makes us acutely aware of our existing fallen state. It is through the wearing of clothing that this painful awareness is constantly minimised.

29-3 No longer ashamed.

By the way, it does not follow that when we are restored in Christ that we therefore take our clothes off and parade our restored selves in our nakedness. This is not so - for firstly, we still live in the world and there are others with whom we are in relation. And secondly, while we understand our person as thoroughly acceptable to God 'in Christ' there are other issues in regard to our body. It is not yet redeemed whilst we ourselves are. The distinction between "I" and "my body", which Paul insists upon in Romans 6-8, reflects this 'now, but not yet', position in which we live.

29-4 The clothes do not make the man.

In our plastic world of Gucci, JAG, Yves Saint Laurent, etc., the clothes are said to make the man. The fashion world is working with a powerful matter when it comes to clothing, and they understand that inherently, to say nothing of the powerful commercial motivations of the rag trade.

I do not say that they understand the origins or the true meaning of clothes. It is a masquerade - for the clothes do not make the man; in truth, it is the other way about. In public life, the man in his proper relation is expressed by the clothing he wears - the man makes the clothes. [See 29-6 below for a development of this].

And often the 'art' and the 'daring' of the fashion world is found in clothing that covers, but not too well. In this way a lust for nakedness is generated to the eyes of the beholder. That is, much of the fashion world caters for those whose real desire is to see the nakedness; the clothing is designed as a lure to the mind to be drawn further.

It is also true that, when a person is self-deceived and acts and dresses in a way that is not appropriate to who they are, we see the incongruous statement being made. Their dress

does not fit, they appear out of character. This is particularly true when we see a cross dresser manifesting inner uncertainty about their gender and sexual orientation.

29-5 Clothing as a public expression of God-given relations.

Within his order for mankind, God has graciously placed people in varying positions of authority in communities, such as kings, ministers of state. On public occasions they wear particular clothing associated with their given office or position. This is even seen on other festive occasions such as at weddings with the special effort is taken to dress a bride and bridal parties. This expressive use of clothing serves to honour those who wear it in the sight of others. That is, clothes not only cover us, in the sense of modesty in the light of shame. Clothes also can manifest honour and so express the relation given. Here is a wonderful way in which God has turned an emergency provision of covering into a creative expression of new orders and authorities among men and women.

In the light of this understanding of modesty and shame, we are not surprised that the expression of the new man in the New Testament is very much associated with clothing. Clothing, which had its origins in the covering of relational loss of glory, is now used as a powerful statement of who we are in Christ - as restored ones who no longer need to be ashamed in Him. The changed man implies a change of clothes.

When you dress yourself, you are giving expression to your authority, that is to the God given relations in which He has placed you. It marks an outward expression of your inner understanding of yourself. Small wonder then, that as God does a new thing in bringing to birth a new humanity in Christ, we are told to dress in a way which is appropriate to the changeover - we are told to "put off" the old man and "put on" Christ [Colossians 3.5,12; Eph 4.22f].

Note 29-6: Put on, put off - New man and so new clothes given to wear.

In the NT, the new creation of the new man in Christ is expressed by new clothing. The festive garments that are given to those invited from the streets and alleyways of the city are the essential things for their participation in the marriage feast of the King. Matthew 22.11-14 is not picking up a mistake in etiquette by the dismissed man, but the presumption of the man, who thinks he can come in the old filthy dress of his natural life. His lack of proper dress indicates that he does not come with an understanding of his new status; he does not know who he is.

In the same way, the chosen ones of God are given white robes [Rev. 3.4-5; 6.11; 7.9], the dress of those who are given a new being, with new powers for a new activity.

The armour of God, [Ephesians 6.13ff and 1 Thessalonians 5.8] is a liberty and a strength which a person can never have on the basis of their old life, which was really a captivity and bondage. It is a freedom and a power that he must put on to be able to make the appropriate resistance in the evil day, in which he lives.

29-6 No longer ashamed, because forgiven.

There was a woman who came into Simon the Pharisee's house. She was known as the local prostitute. She stationed herself at Jesus' feet, and, in a way which was totally shameless, began to bodily minister to him the welcome which Simon ought to have given him, by washing his travel-worn, dusty feet with her tears and perfuming them [Luke 7.36f].

Jesus saw this, and he pointed out this contrast in the welcomes for Simon. But then he turned to the woman and explained that Father had done a work in her life which He, Jesus, could see. He did not tell her that her sins were forgiven, or "are now forgiven" because of what she did to Him. He told her that her deeds "are forgiven". And in saying that He made clear that her shameless stance before the well-to-do and religious ones of the village, was a result of that forgiveness; it was not its cause. He had seen that Father had made known to her his forgiveness of her sins; and this was why she welcomed Him. For no one knows the Son except the Father reveal it to them. Jesus simply declared what He had seen the Father had done already.

But what made it clear to Him was that she was secure; without shame in the religious house in which she normally would have expected to be judged as a sinner. Indeed, we the readers know that Simon had so judged her; but as forgiven, she was secure about her lack of shame with God.