



2 Cor. 5:18

Open Face

One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness

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The Broken Curse

Part 1: What is a Curse?

David Clayton



The cross plays a central part in the salvation of humanity. A person cannot read through the New Testament without recognizing this. The crucifixion of Jesus was a pre-determined aspect of the plan of salvation, something designed by God and His Son before the ages. The apostles understood the significance of the cross and it was always at the centre of their teaching. Paul wrote,

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; (1 Cor 1:23)

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. (1 Cor 2:2)

Paul preached Christ, but notice his emphasis, it was not just Christ who was at the center of his message, but Christ at a certain point in His experience – **Christ crucified**.

Why is Calvary so significant? What really happened there on the cross? This is a question which will require all the years of eternity for us to fully answer it, but in spite of this, even today

there is much which we can glean by studying this subject carefully.

Redeemed from the curse

Let us begin by considering Galatians 3:13:

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: (Gal 3:13)

It is not possible to mistake what it says here although it is possible to misunderstand what it means. The apostle Paul says that Christ redeemed us from a certain curse, and that this curse was, “the curse of the law.” Christ bought us back from this curse. But how did he do it? He did it by himself becoming a curse. By taking this curse upon Himself. In proving the point, Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 21:23 which states that everyone who hangs on a tree is accursed of God. Christ was hanged on a tree, therefore he was cursed, in this way he bore the curse and that is the way he delivered us from the curse.

There are a few questions which we must ask ourselves if we are to understand this issue properly. What is a curse? What does it mean that we were under the curse of the law? And how did Christ take this curse thereby delivering us from it?

What is a curse?

As I examined the concept of a curse in the Bible, I came to the conclusion

that a curse is a sentence of disaster. This concept exists even outside of the Bible. Most of us probably know a story about somebody who was cursed and consequently was plagued by all kinds of bad luck. This is a popular theme in storybooks. This idea has some truth to it.

In the book of Numbers in chapter 22, we read that Balak, king of Moab, sent for Balaam to curse Israel. Israel was invading Palestine and defeating every nation that stood in their way and Moab was next in line. Balak was aware that everything that Israel did succeeded and he recognized that he could never defeat these people without special help, so he sent for Balaam, because Balaam had a reputation. He was a prophet of God and whoever he blessed was blessed and whoever he cursed, was cursed.

But when Balaam arrived, every time he opened his mouth to curse Israel, he found himself pronouncing blessings, not curses, and this tells us something else. It tells us that a curse is not something that one person can put upon another. A person can **express** a curse, he may speak the words of a curse,

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion of the truths committed to the Advent movement, as believed and taught by the early Adventist pioneers. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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but one person does not have the ability to bring a sequence of bad events upon another. This idea is common in human thinking, but it is not the biblical idea of a curse at all.

As an example of what I mean let us look at Matthew 23. In this passage it is Christ who is speaking to the Jews.

Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? (34) Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: (35) That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. (36) Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. (Mat 23:33-36)

Never was there a more solemn, a more terrible curse pronounced upon a people! This sentence was fulfilled when the Romans besieged Jerusalem. The conditions which came upon the Jews were so terrible that starving women began to eat their own children! When the Roman armies finally broke into the city, Jewish blood ran in the streets of Jerusalem like water.

Curses are self-imposed

This was a curse, but who was it that cursed Israel? Jesus spoke the words but who was it that cursed them? The fact is, Israel cursed themselves! Was it Christ who brought these disasters upon them? No, it was their own actions that cursed them! All Christ did was tell them the truth before it happened. He only prophesied of what would happen. It was they who turned away from God and rejected Him entirely, insomuch that He was no longer able to protect them. The result was that Satan was able to work his way with them, resulting finally in the destruction of the nation. As Proverbs 26:2 tells us, “the curse causeless shall not come.”

This same truth is illustrated in Genesis chapter 9. Here, we read that after the flood, Noah became drunk and

but the Bible does not specify. In Genesis 9:24,25 we read:

“And Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said unto him, “Cursed be Canaan: a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.” (Genesis 9:24,25)

So Noah awoke and said, “Cursed be Canaan.” Who was it that came and looked at him? It was Ham, but strangely, it was not Ham, but Canaan who was cursed! Who was Canaan? He was the son of Ham. Ham did something and Noah pronounced a curse upon the son of Ham. If Noah had been the person who brought the curse upon Canaan, this would have been a grave injustice on the part of Noah. But it was not Noah who brought this curse upon Canaan! He did not have that power.

So why did Noah, under the inspiration of God’s spirit pronounce a curse upon Ham’s son. What principle are we to learn from these verses?

Simply this: There is a rule of life which is inescapable and it is called the law of consequence. God may pardon the penalty of a person’s sin, but consequences remain. In other words, what we do affects our children! A person who picks up a disease as a result of sinful behaviour, may infect his or her children with the disease. Later, the person may ask God to forgive the sin and of course God will forgive, but the children will not be miraculously healed of the disease just because the person is forgiven. Consequences remain.



lay in his tent naked. We are told that his youngest son Ham went in and saw his father’s nakedness. The Bible doesn’t tell us exactly what he did, but the suggestion is that he mocked his father. Some say he did more than that,

Noah’s son, Ham had something in his character which would be passed on to his son, Canaan. Somewhere in the future these attitudes embedded in the character of Ham’s descendants would result in them becoming servants of his

brother's descendants. So the curse fell upon Canaan not because God arbitrarily decided to punish Canaan but because Ham transmitted his own habits and attitudes to his son, who transmitted it to the next generation. In fact God says it goes on to the third and fourth generation and it really continues for as long as the evil traits remain in the family.

These examples bring out a principle which we need to understand thoroughly. In Exodus 20:5, God says,

... I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; (Exo 20:5)

How can we explain this? Is it God who arbitrarily decides that when a person does wrong He, God, will punish that person's son and his descendants, generation after generation? Is that the way God is? Absolutely not!

One group of people which has suffered a lot is the black race. While it is true that some of the "great" civilizations of the past have been African, yet it is also true that one of the darkest chapters of human history has involved the enslavement and brutal treatment of Africans, in some cases by their own people, but more often by other races. All throughout the history of humanity, man has enslaved his fellow man, but it seems that this evil has been most fully demonstrated in the enslavement of black people. But where did it start? Generally speaking, Africans are descended from the line of Ham.

Ham took a course contrary to God, and led his children into that same course. One of the first great rebels against God was Nimrod, who was a descendant of Ham. He established a kingdom that was in direct rebellion against God (Gen. 10:8-10). The curse (the evil characteristics) passed from father to child, as Ham's descendants drifted further and further away from the true knowledge of God. As they became more confused, they became

more degraded until they eventually began to worship stones and pieces of wood and to engage in some of the most degrading acts.

Where does the downward spiral stop when a person is born in a land where people eat people as a natural way of life, where the only gods known are made of wood and stone, where the most degrading aspects of human nature are common place and are the normal way of life? What hope does a person have of ever breaking the cycle? It only gets worse!

So the curse is really the outworking of natural consequences, and that is one thing we need to understand. Normally God does not interfere with consequence. He may forgive penalty but consequences continue. This is the way it is.

How can a curse be broken?

Let us take note of the fact that God says, He visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, "*Unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.*" Can we see an element of hope in that statement?

In Genesis 27 Jacob came to his father and, by deception and trickery, obtained something that belonged to his brother. He stole his brother's blessing. When Esau came in afterwards to receive his blessings, he found that they were all gone and all his entreaties could not bring them back. Isaac could not change his mind because the blessing, like the curse, was simply a prophecy of the way things would be and under inspiration of the spirit, Isaac could not say what was not true. But in verse 40, he said to Esau,

"and by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shalt come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck." (Gen. 27:40)

How is a curse broken? God told Esau through Isaac that he would serve his

brother, but when the day came that he was able to break Jacob's dominion from his neck then he would be free from this curse. In order to break a curse a person has to first come under its power, and then from that position, defeat that power. That is the only way to break a curse.

Suppose there had been one man worshipping stone and wood, half naked out there in the most primitive part of Africa a thousand years ago. If this man could have come to the knowledge of the true God, what would have happened to his children? The curse would have been broken in his family! There would have arisen in the midst of Africa, a tribe of people surrounded by all this darkness, who were totally different from those around them. In them there would have been manifested the purity and the righteousness of true Christianity despite the surrounding ignorance. But it needed one person to break this curse.

But how could somebody growing up and living all his life in those circumstances break free from that cycle? Somebody grown and bred in that situation could never break out of it under normal circumstances. The only way was if some new element was introduced into his experience.

This is why even though slavery is such an abhorrent thing, I am thankful that God overruled in this terrible evil to bring about some good. Some of my ancestors came to the Caribbean under these terrible conditions but it gave an opportunity for many people of African descent to be exposed to the gospel and because of this, today I am where I am. A child of God and happy with my lot in life. So the circumstances brought a change, some new element came into the depraved life of Ham and so that curse was not passed on to me. That curse on Ham has been broken because some new element came into the experience of my ancestors.



The Broken Curse

Part 2: The Curse of The Law

In Galatians 3:13, the Bible tells us that in order to redeem us, Jesus took the “curse of the law.” What is this curse of the law? In Proverbs 28:9 it says,

He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination. (Prov 28:9)

What does this mean? What is an abomination? An abomination is something which is highly distasteful, something which one finds intolerable. The Webster’s New World Dictionary defines an abomination as “*anything hateful and disgusting.*” The man who closes his ears to the claims of God’s law has brought a great barrier between himself and God. Even his prayer is an abomination what about the person himself? This gives us a clue which helps us to understand what the curse of the law is. The curse of the law comes upon a person when he breaks it. Galatians 3:10 says,

.... Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. (Gal 3:10)

It is those who do not do **ALL** that the law says who are cursed. To avoid the curse of the law a person must do absolutely everything the law says, but as James tells us, if he offends in one point, he is guilty of **ALL**. No human (except Christ) has ever kept the law perfectly. None of us has ever continued in “all things” which are commanded in the law, therefore the curse of the law was upon all humanity. The curse incurred by disobeying, by turning away from the law.

Adam is the person who introduced this curse to humanity and placed the entire race under it. In Genesis 2:17, God gave Adam and Eve a warning. He told them very clearly what the result would be if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Gen 2:17)

The popular opinion is that when God told Adam and Eve that they would die if they ate of the fruit, He was placing a curse upon them. But let us remember the principle we already established: God does not curse anybody. What we regard as a curse on the part of God is really His prediction of what will happen as a **consequence** of a person’s choices and behaviour.

When God said, “if you eat, you shall surely die,” he was not saying, “if you eat, I will kill you!” Absolutely not! He was saying, “if you take the fruit, you are going to bring something into your experience that is going to kill you. He warned them in love. But they said, “we don’t think you are telling the truth, this snake seems to have a good understanding of what is really going on here.” So they rejected God’s counsel and took the fruit.

But God does not remain where He is not wanted. The moment that Adam deliberately, knowingly, consciously chose that he did not want God, God had to turn away from Adam. God had to allow Adam to be free and He had to respect his choice. Adam chose separation from God. In this condition, there is nothing but death, physical and spiritual death. ***This is the curse of the law, the curse which comes from rejecting God, manifested by disobedience to His law.***

It is true that Adam did not die that day, but this was only because the moment he sinned, Christ took his sentence and pledged to die in his place. He immediately began to benefit from Christ’s sacrifice, even though Christ had not actually died yet. The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ is *the lamb slain from the foundation of the world*

(Rev. 13:8).

Because grace immediately intervened, it is difficult for many of us to really understand what man brought upon himself that day. But if we take a step a few years down into the future and consider the condition which will prevail when probation closes and the spirit of God is withdrawn from the earth we will get a better picture of where man really deserved to be. The Bible says of men at that time,

(They) blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. (Rev 16:11)

Why won’t they repent? It is because the spirit of God will have departed from the earth. Without God they cannot repent. They have no desire to turn to God, their probation is closed, they have no benefit, no grace, no light from God, they cannot turn to God. The people who go through the last seven plaques will experience what it means to be fully under the curse. They will seek for death and not be able to die because Christ will no longer stand between man and the full effects of the curse.

This is where Adam and Eve should have been that day! This is what they chose! But God continued to bring blessings to the human race because Christ intervened that day.

God alone is good

In Matthew 19:17 we find what I consider to be the first great fundamental of the Christian faith. This is what Jesus tells us:

.... there is none good but one, that is, God (Mat 19:17)

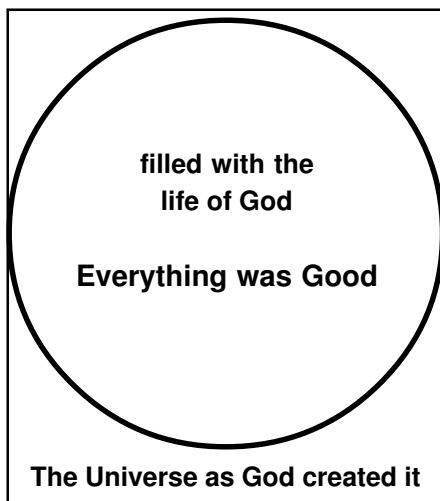
This truth is repeated in Revelation 15:4 where it says of God,

.... thou only art holy (Rev 15:4)

The word, “**Only**” signifies that there is no other. There is none good, no, not one, except God. God alone is good. Another truth arises automatically from this great fundamental truth. It is this: Any place in the universe where good is found, we can be sure that the presence of God is there. When a person finds what is truly good, he has truly found the presence of God! If one were able to find goodness outside of God, then it would mean that there is more than one God because God **alone** is good. This is a fundamental principle and if we don’t understand this, nothing that we believe concerning righteousness is going to be correct. This is one of the foundation stones: We can’t find goodness anywhere except in God.

So in the beginning God made the universe and it was good. He created a world and it was all very good! What conclusion may we come to then? We may conclude that this entire universe, was filled with the presence of the good God. It is clear that God designed this world to be an expression of Himself. He designed it to be a place through which His life would flow and be manifested in every tree, every leaf, every bud, every flower. In addition to this, the living, intelligent beings were to be dwelling places for the living God. Their bodies were to be temples in which He would live and express himself. Ellen White put it very well when she said:

From eternal ages it was God’s



purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. (DA 161)

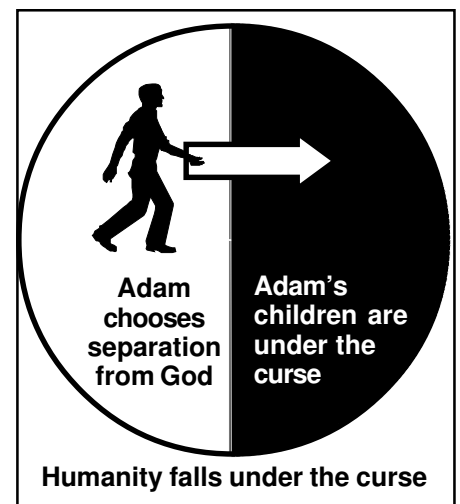
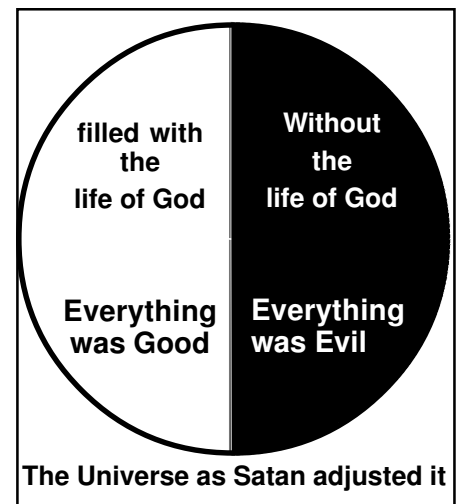
That is the plan which God had in mind when He designed this world and created it. In this condition everything was good.

But Lucifer introduced something into the universe, which had not been included in the original plan. For the first time Lucifer divided the universe into two. It was not a physical division, it was an ideological division. Lucifer introduced the idea that it was possible to live better without God.

As we read in Genesis, Satan said to the woman (paraphrasing), “God is not telling the truth! God knows that if you eat of the tree in that day you shall become like God!” The essential element which God brought into their lives was that they were good. But in essence, Satan was telling them, “you don’t need God to be good. All you need is to know right and wrong. If you have a knowledge of good and evil this will make you like God!” In essence he was suggesting that God’s main purpose is to give an understanding of morality and that if a person understands good and evil, then God becomes irrelevant.

This erroneous teaching lies at the root of all false religion on this planet. Every false religion teaches that what a person really needs is moral education and he is able to do the rest. It is not the truth. Every false religion builds on the principle that if you have the right moral education, you already have the equipment to be good. But God alone is good! And without God we, “can do nothing.” In order to do good a person’s life must be united with God’s life.

So the person who begins to seek for righteousness must begin to seek for God, it is folly to seek within himself. The person who seeks to do right of himself will find a lie, something that may have an appearance of righteousness but is really a satanic counterfeit.



The curse enters

In the top diagram above, we can see the way the universe was after Satan introduced his new principles. We see that Satan introduced something called, “evil”, which divided the universe into two. Now there were two alternatives to life in the universe: On the one side was a life filled with God’s presence in which everything was good. On the other side was a life separated from God in which nothing was good. All was evil.

Let us remember that when we speak of this division, it was not a physical division. The main element which divided one side from the other was the element of the life of God. Anywhere good existed, there was the life of God! But on the other side there was no life of God. Those who are there, are dead in trespasses and sins. They are car-

nal, and the carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God and it cannot be.

We can understand then that a person who is **fully** separated from God is not partially evil. He is totally evil, for there is no good apart from God. By the same token, a person who is totally united to God will be a totally good person (as Adam was at the beginning) for there is no evil in God.

At first man was over on one side, with God where all was good, while Lucifer and his angels were on the other side, where all was evil and there was no good. But when Adam made the choice to reject God, he transferred himself over to where Satan was, the side without God. Thus Adam brought humanity under the curse, the curse of separation from God.

A Ray of Hope

Let us look at humanity for a moment, as it would have been had Christ not intervened. We must do this if we are

really going to understand what Christ did.

When a person moves from the good side over to the evil side, the natural result will be that all of his children will be born on that evil side, separated from God and void of His spirit. The consequences of his actions will affect his descendants. They will be born under the curse.

How can that curse be broken? Well, it is simple, somebody has to go back to the other side. Somebody has to make a decision to return to the side where God is. But is it possible for anybody to move from the right side, the evil side to the good side?

The answer is, no. Why not? Because everyone there is without God, there is no pleading influence of God's spirit, and nobody, without God, can choose God, or God's way! So humanity was in a dilemma and Satan felt sure that he had us. Satan felt sure that once we accepted his principle, the principle of independence of God, we would be

His forever! But right at the beginning, there in the garden, God said something that filled him with a strange fear. He said:

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (Gen 3:15)

God promised that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head. Satan's head represents his principles, his philosophies, the foundation on which his government is built, the principle of independence of God, or, separation from God. God said the Seed would crush his head and Satan felt a fear in his heart because although he had his world, and he had established his government, God's words meant that something was in the works that was going to bring disaster upon him. What God was saying was that somebody was going to come who would break this curse!



The Broken Curse

Part 3: Christ made a curse



Free choice

In the beginning, God Created man good. Man was not given the choice to determine whether he should be created good, in union with God, or evil, separated from God. It was God who chose for him. But there were already, at that time, two options in the universe, good and evil, life with God, and life without God.

Why didn't He give man the option to choose, since God believes in freedom and believes in being fair? This was Satan's argument. If God was fair and there were two opposing philosophies

present in the universe, why didn't God allow man to decide which way he wanted? Why didn't God present man with an option so he could make up his own mind?

This is why God had to put the tree in the Garden. It was God's way of giving them the option to make a choice. It was giving them the option to choose to be separated from God if this was what they wanted. God had created them already good. Now He had to give them the option to choose evil if this was what they preferred.

As we consider this we realize that the whole controversy is based on the principle of free choice, because God is a God who will not rule in a universe where He is not wanted. This is why God gave man free choice. Unfortunately man used this freedom to put

himself on Satan's side. Now if man was to come back to God's side, again, it had to be on the basis of free choice!

God could not interfere when man stepped over onto the evil side. It was man who had freely made his choice to be there and God had to respect that choice! God wanted to save man but He could not interfere with man over on that side without violating man's freedom of choice. Yet now, man was in a terrible predicament for in this position he could not choose God. Having stepped over to the evil side, it was impossible for man to step back. Why is this so? Because when man chose to separate from God, God no longer had the right to influence man through His holy spirit. He did not have the right to plead with man and to lead him to repentance for it was by man's own choice that he was separated from God.

Yet, without the influence of God's spirit, no sinner can come to God. The carnal mind is enmity against God, it has no desire for God, men were enemies of God, and had no desire to escape from that position. Free-will had set man free from God's control, but now free-will kept him in a place where he was a slave and God could not interfere.

God had to reintroduce His life into the human lifestream - by man's choice - ***without overriding man's free will!*** But fallen man cannot choose God. Therefore, the only way God could do this, was by sending His Son to become man, and making the choice on behalf of mankind.

Please remember that we are looking at it from the perspective of mankind's true dilemma, as mankind would have been, without Christ's intervention. This is the reality, this was what happened to humanity, we chose to put ourselves in a hole not knowing what we were doing and when we got there we could not get out! Man freely chose sin and now man had to come back of his own free will, but it was impossible.

One on behalf of all

Perhaps someone may say, "it is not fair that Adam should make a decision and I suffer for it." But is it a question of fairness or justice? If I do something and the judge sentences my son, that is injustice, but if I do something and the consequences pass on to my son that is not injustice, that is the reality of how life is. It is not somebody's fault, it's the way nature works. Consequences pass on, naturally affecting even those who are not guilty. It is the way the universe works, God does not step in and interfere with consequence, even though He forgives.

So Adam brought these consequences upon all humanity and when they came upon humanity, there was no way Adam could reverse them because now that man was on the evil side, he had no ability to come back to the good side. So every life that was born from the life of Adam on this evil side was

doomed to eternal death, separated from God. That was the reality.

What did God have to do? If God could find one single human being who could make the choice to come back to the good side, God could find a way to save one man. If one man could be found who did love God, then human life could be brought back to the place of union with God. In that one life, the curse would be broken. Of course it wouldn't solve the problem fully because if one man came back, that one man could only bring himself back. But let us begin with first things first.

Qualifications of the Deliverer

Let us ask, was it possible for the curse to be broken? Could God devise a means by which the curse could be broken for one person? What would this person have to do or have to be in order to break the curse?

Firstly, he would have to be intrinsically good. He would have to be a person who was good in himself, by nature, and not simply by association with God. Why is this so? Because the condition of the curse is separation from God, and the consequence of this is that those under it are completely evil, incapable of choosing good, or of choosing God. So if anybody under the curse was able to still choose God, it could only be if that person could remain a good person, while still separated from God.

But who can be separated from God and remain good?

There is one person in the universe who qualifies. This person is somebody who is just like God. This person of course, is the Son of God. He can be separated from God and yet still remain good, because He is the only begotten Son of God, of the same nature as God! He, being divine, is good in Himself. Though human nature failed in Eden, human nature combined with divine nature would succeed, even when the spirit of God was withdrawn.

What other qualifications did he have to have in order to bring humanity

back? Well, He also had to be human! What kind of human did he have to be? He had to be a human on the fallen side, suffering all the effects which came upon man when he chose to be independent of God.

But more than this, He had to be not just man, he had to be man ***under the curse***, and in that condition, separated from God, where everybody else in the universe fails, he had to succeed. And the only reason why he could succeed is because He had in him the one element of life which could enable him to break the curse! This new element, never before inherent in humanity, was the element of divinity.

Thank God for Jesus! God Himself couldn't do it, for He could not be separated from Himself. He could not take the curse. Nobody else could do it. That proves to me again that Jesus is the true Son of God. The truth that Jesus had to be fallen man is absolute truth, but let us not deny the other truth that He was also absolutely divine because both things have to be true!

Christ's qualifications

- a. Christ was a divine being (John 1:14; 1 John 1:1,2)
- b. Therefore, He was intrinsically good. (Luke 1:35)
- c. He took fallen human nature. (Gal.4:4; Heb. 2:16; Rom. 8:3)
- d. He bore our sins ... on the tree (1 Pet. 2:24)
- e. He was made to be sin on the cross (2 Cor. 5:21)
- f. He was made a curse on the tree. (Gal. 3:13)
- g. He was accursed of God on the cross. (Deut. 21:23)
- h. He was separated from God on the cross (Matt. 27:46)
- i. He condemned sin in fallen flesh. (Rom. 8:3)

Christ Made a Curse

So Jesus came to this earth and the Bible says that he became a curse for us, but where did he become a curse? It was "on the tree!" "*Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*" (Gal.

3:13). Some have the belief that Jesus took the curse from the moment that He was born and that this curse consisted of the fallen flesh which He took, but this is not what the Bible says. In 1 Peter 2:24, we are told that He bore our sins in His own body *on the tree!* It was on the tree that he was made a curse.

When Paul said, “*cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree*”, he was quoting from Deuteronomy 21:32 which says,

His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance. (Deu 21:23)

Is it really literally true that every person who was ever hanged on a tree was cursed by God? Of course not, there are many people who have been hanged who were not guilty of any crime. So what does the verse mean? The fact is that this verse has specific reference to Christ.

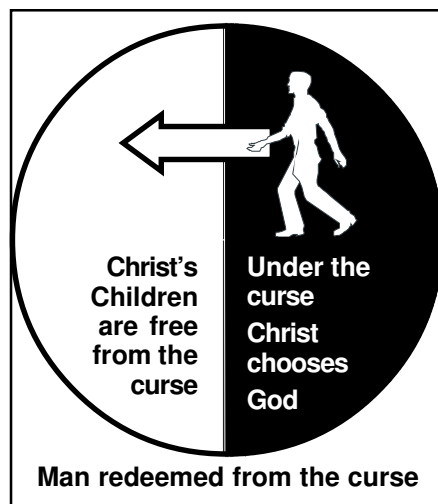
Notice what the verse says: “*He that is hanged is accursed of God.*” Every person in the universe who ever was separated from God chose that path himself. God does not choose to separate from any being, it is we who choose to leave Him. It is always God’s desire to remain with us, no matter what the circumstances. This is the way of love. However, in the case of Christ, let us note that it was God who laid this curse upon His Son. For the first time in the history of the universe, God cursed someone. He chose to leave someone who desired to remain in union with Him. This was the way it had to be, this was what our salvation cost!

This agrees with Isaiah 53 which tells us that, “*we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted,*” “*the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all,*” “*it pleased the Lord to bruise him.* (Isa. 53:4,6,10). God brought all this upon his son, He turned

his back upon Him. His Son had never broken the law but *God put the curse of the law upon him*, turned his back upon him and left Him all alone in the universe.

Now I realize how completely God did indeed place His Son in jeopardy, because on the cross God turned his back on Jesus, He put Him under the power of Satan, under the full power of the curse and left Him to see if He could make that choice again for humanity. When it came upon Jesus it was totally unexpected. In His bewilderment He cried out, “*my God, My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?*” (Matt. 27:46).

Satan must have thought, “This is it! I have won at last! Nobody ever was separated from God who was able to remain loyal to God. Even though He is the Son of God He is still limited by degenerate human weakness and it is not possible for Him to choose God’s way.” But at that moment Satan’s kingdom was destroyed, at that moment his head was crushed, because Jesus defied the curse! The curse had compelled all who came under it to choose self and not God, but Jesus defied it. As a human being under the power of the curse, He said, “I choose God!”



Two trees

There were two trees at which mankind’s fate was decided. One was a living tree, and there Adam choose

death, the other one was a dead tree and there Christ choose life! The cross was really the second “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”

When Adam came to the tree where mankind was sold to sin’s dominion, the place was a paradise, all the conditions were perfect. Adam and his surroundings were the epitome of life and beauty. Adam had every inducement to serve and obey God forever. But when Jesus came to the tree on the hill, where mankind’s destiny was rewritten, it was a fearful place encircled by all the signs of death and decay. The very name of the place was suggestive: Golgotha, “the place of a skull.” A symbol of the dead, hopeless humanity that Christ represented.

At the tree in the garden Satan said, “if you disobey God you will live forever.” At the tree on the hill he said to Jesus, “If you obey God you will die forever.” Adam listened to him, Christ defeated him, Christ destroyed his principle.

So now there is a human life in which the curse has been broken, thank God! There is a life in which Satan’s power does not reign! One man is free, but what does it have to do with the rest of us?

A life-giving spirit

In the same way that Adam passed on his defeated, corrupted life to his children, this one man had to find a way to take his victorious life and pass it on to others. Upon the same principle by which all humanity became corrupted, this man had to restore humanity. This is why He is called the “last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45). Now that He had defeated the curse and restored humanity to loyalty and fellowship with God, God had to devise a way that people who are already living, who already have life can receive His restored life. God had to find a way to infuse this redeemed life into others and make them into new creatures.

This is why Jesus had to go back to heaven and be glorified. As long as He remained merely a flesh and blood be-

ing he could never give life to anyone except Himself. He had to receive the ability to pass on His life to others. So the Scriptures tell us;

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. (1 Cor 15:45)

He was made a “quickening spirit,” or, a “life-giving spirit.” This is one vital aspect of the life of Christ which many do not understand. One of the reasons why this truth is veiled in obscurity is the fact that few people understand that the holy spirit is the very life of Jesus Christ. That in receiving the holy spirit, men receive the very life of Jesus. The life which was victorious over the curse, the life which is united to the life of God. Ellen White put it this way:

Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally; therefore it was alto-

gether for their advantage that He should leave them, go to His father, and send the Holy Spirit to be His successor on earth. The Holy Spirit is Himself divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof. He would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent. {14MR 23.3}

This agrees with what the apostle Paul says in Ephesians 4:10,

He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) (Eph 4:10)

Why did Jesus go back to heaven? So that He might fill all things. When he was on earth Jesus could fill one man and that was Himself! He had to go back and be glorified with the Father so that now He is able to take that life and pass it on to every one of us. Now

all who will believe in God and in the gift He has given in His Son, will receive that life. All such will indeed be born again! Praise God for the plan!

Believe

And so as by one man death came upon all the human race, even so, by one man life came upon all the human race, to be experienced by all who will believe it. That is where we are. When we understand this, we can see what a tragedy it is that people try to place the plan of salvation upon the basis of human works. It is tragic and impossible. Before a person can do right he must first receive life and when he receives life he will do right.

May God help us to understand the beauty and completeness of what He has done for us through Christ.



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Preventing Osteoporosis

Lenworth frankson

Health is a treasure. Of all temporal possessions it is the most precious. Wealth, learning, and honor are dearly purchased at the loss of the vigor of health. None of these can secure happiness, if health is lacking. (Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 20)

As Christians we must understand and appreciate the essential role the health of our bodies play, in serving our Master efficiently and representing him to the world.

Osteoporosis is a common condition found in many adults where minerals and other substances are lost from the bones causing them to become thinner, more porous, and more easily broken. It is reported that over twenty million Americans, primarily older women, are affected by this bone disease. It attacks 20 to 30 percent of post-menopausal women, and between 5 to 10 percent of men over 50 years old. ***It is the most prevalent metabolic bone disease in developed countries and is a major health problem in older adults.*** There are many plant foods that not only contain calcium but other valuable bone-health promoting nutrients like Potassium, Magnesium, Vitamin C and Soy that can play a valuable role in a diet aimed at preventing osteoporosis.

CALCIUM

Calcium plays a major role in decreasing the risk of osteoporosis. It is a proven fact that calcium deficiency increases the risk of osteoporosis. Calcium supplementation however has been shown to help prevent this problem by increasing bone density. Some studies have shown that supplementing with calcium increases bone density in perimenopausal women (women that are experiencing menopause) and slows bone degeneration in postmenopausal women (women who have already experienced menopause) by an

average of 30-50%. Supplementing calcium can therefore significantly reduce hip fractures, a common problem often seen in people with osteoporosis.

While many people are of the opinion that eating dairy products will prevent osteoporosis, the truth is that this is not necessarily true. A glass of cow's milk contains about 300 milligrams of calcium therefore, cow's milk has traditionally been marketed as a high-calcium, osteoporosis-preventing food. This type of promotion is often done by the dairy industry to make huge financial profits. The truth is that calcium is not the only nutrient involved with osteoporosis risk and there are other healthier sources of calcium that should be considered. There are also other nutrients involved in the determination of a person's risk of osteoporosis.

PROTEIN

Scientists are studying the relationship between protein intake and osteoporosis. It appears that under some circumstances and in certain age-related groups, excess protein intake can increase a person's risk of bone mineral loss. Numerous studies have demonstrated the tendency of a high-protein diet to increase excretion of acids in the urine along with excretion of calcium.

One study showed that an increase in daily protein intake from 47 to 142 grams was found to double the excretion of calcium in the urine. Here is how it works. One glass of cow's milk contains about 8 grams of protein. Three glasses of cow's milk which would provide very close to a day's worth of calcium, would also provide 24 grams of protein. By itself, this amount would not be enough to cause much calcium to be removed from bone. However, in combination with other protein sources, for example, an 8-ounce chicken breast, which would

contain about 56 grams of protein, and a quarter-pound hamburger (which would add another 28 grams), the day's total would be about 108 grams - much closer to the amount in the research study that doubled calcium excretion in the urine and increased the risk of osteoporosis.

Most foods contain at least some protein. Good sources of protein for vegetarians include nuts and seeds, pulses, soya products (tofu, soya milk and textured soya protein such as soya mince) and cereals, such as wheat, oats, and rice. Protein from these sources are not only healthier but much safer to eat. Plant proteins are sometimes referred to as low quality proteins but this does not mean that vegetarians or vegans go short on essential amino acids. Combining plant proteins, such as a grain with a pulse, leads to a high quality protein which is just as good, and in some cases better, than protein from animal foods. Soya is a high quality protein on its own which can be regarded as equal to meat protein.

MAGNESIUM

Another example of a nutrient that plays a role in osteoporosis is magnesium. This mineral appears to be nearly as important as calcium in preventing problems associated with this disease. It appears that women with osteoporosis have low bone magnesium content and other signs of magnesium deficiency.

Insufficient magnesium has also been shown to decrease blood concentrations of the most active form of vitamin D (called D3). This vitamin stimulates the absorption of calcium, increases bone mineral density, and reduces the risk of hip fracture. Magnesium is also required to regulate the body's levels of two important hormones that maintain the proper concentration of calcium in the blood.

Cow's milk, which is a very good

source of calcium, is not a very good source of magnesium. One cup of cow's milk only provides about 33 milligrams or about 10% of the daily requirement for a middle-aged woman. In addition, cow's milk is high in saturated fats and cholesterol.

POTASSIUM

Potassium is a mineral of great importance to the human body. In fact the adult requirement for potassium is nearly four times the amount for cal-

cium. Potassium is important to bone health because it is able to neutralize bone-depleting metabolic acids. This metabolic acid "eats away" at bone much like acid rain eats away at limestone. Metabolic acidosis, however, is largely neutralized, by potassium compounds, and to a lesser degree magnesium compounds. These compounds are obtained from fruits and vegetables.

By neutralizing metabolic acids, potassium conserves calcium within the body and reduces urinary calcium loss.

Fruits, vegetables and seeds contain high amounts of potassium compounds. Fruits and vegetables provide mineral salts with alkalizing compounds useful for neutralizing the acid. In addition to promoting an alkaline environment, a diet high in fruits, vegetables and legumes provides nutrients which promote bone health. Increasing vegetable and fruit intake is the preferred way to increase potassium intake and carries multiple benefits for blood pressure

Continued on back page

The Dual Nature of Christ

The subject of the nature of Christ has been an issue in Adventism for many decades. There have been arguments, debates and quarrels at all levels and among different groups on this question. The root of the conflict lies in the fact that one group of Adventists believe that when He became a man, Jesus took the same nature as Adam had **before** he sinned. The other group insists that this is wrong, and that He actually took the nature of Adam **after** he sinned.

This is a serious question because it affects the way we understand the issue of sin and the question of how to overcome it. Those who say that Jesus took the nature of Adam before he sinned, believe that this is the reason why Jesus never sinned, and as a result, they conclude that since we have a different nature, a fallen nature, we can never overcome sin as Jesus did. On the other hand, those who say that Jesus took the nature of Adam after He sinned say that He was just exactly as we are, fallen in nature, and that in spite of this, He never sinned. But they have not been able to explain why Jesus is the only fallen man who never sinned,

The truth is that every person has both a spiritual as well as a physical nature. In the case of fallen men, we are fallen both physically and spiritually. We are physically fallen because our bodies are degenerate, weak and suffering from the effects of six thou-

sand years of sin. We are spiritually fallen because we are born without the indwelling of the spirit of God and without this, we are naturally selfish and self-centered, capable only of sin.

Jesus was born with a fallen nature, physically, just as all men are, but He did not possess a fallen spiritual nature. This was the great difference between Jesus and all other men. In His spiritual nature, Jesus remained the spotless Son of God, selfless and good by nature, and this is why He never once committed an act of sin, though all other men did. This simple explanation settles the difficulties and arguments which have bothered so many Adventists for so long.

Ellen White made it plain a long time ago, but I suppose these are some of the things which many people just never seemed to notice.

Ellen White wrote:

The apostle would call our attention from ourselves to the Author of our salvation. He presents before us **His two natures**, divine and human. Here is the description of the divine: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." He was "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person."

Now, of the human: He "was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death." He voluntarily assumed human nature. It was His own act, and by His own con-

sent. He clothed His divinity with humanity. **He was all the while as God, but He did not appear as God.** He veiled the demonstrations of Deity, which had commanded the homage, and called forth the admiration, of the universe of God. **He was God while upon earth, but He divested Himself of the form of God,** and in its stead took the form and fashion of a man. He walked the earth as a man. {5BC 1126}

In clothing His divinity with humanity, **He became possessed of two natures, the divine and the human.** And because of this, He was fully able to accomplish for the human race their complete redemption, and their restoration to the privileges of the higher life. {UL 196}

Christ had two natures, the nature of a man and the nature of God. In him divinity and humanity were combined. Upon his mediatorial work hangs the hope of the perishing world. No one but Christ has ever succeeded in living a perfect life, in living a pure, spotless character. **He exhibited a perfect humanity, combined with deity; and by preserving each nature distinct, he has given to the world a representation of the character of God and the character of a perfect man.** He shows us what God is, and what man may become—godlike in character. {GCB, October 1, 1899 par. 20}



normalization, stroke risk reduction and weight control in addition to being bone-protective.

A diet that is high in potassium from fruits and vegetables, followed throughout one's life can help to preserve bone mass thereby preventing bone loss that can lead to osteoporosis.

OTHER NUTRIENTS

Other bone-health promoting nutrients include vitamin D, boron, vitamin K, vitamin C, ipriflavone, silicon, and vitamins B6, B12, and folate. Cow's milk is less than ideal as a good food source of these nutrients, and in the case of some (like vitamin C) it is nearly devoid of the nutrient altogether.

We can get enough of all nutrients, including calcium, without consuming cow's milk, or cow's milk yogurt, or cow's milk cheese. The truth is that most women in the world who do not

develop osteoporosis also do not consume dairy products. Their diet includes foods that are concentrated in calcium and other of the bone-health promoting nutrients mentioned above. It is not very difficult for someone to get enough calcium without consuming dairy products seeing that it is a mineral found in a wide variety of foods besides dairy products. Virtually all dark green leafy vegetables contain calcium.

Nearly all nuts and seeds, especially sesame seeds, contain calcium. Most beans, including navy, pinto, kidney, and black are also calcium-containing foods. Additionally, tofu can also be an important source of calcium, particularly when the tofu has been calcium-precipitated (meaning that calcium was used to help convert the soy milk into tofu) in order to provide a significant amount of calcium.

Osteoporosis is definitely a disease that

can be prevented. Often all that is needed is simply education in this matter and a change in the food choices. This too often however is too much of a challenge for many. What is interesting to note is the fact that some of the largest milk producing and consuming countries in the world, including America, have significantly high cases of osteoporosis. These countries also consume millions of pounds of animal protein annually.

It is often said that "what you don't know won't hurt you" however in this case what you don't know can definitely hurt you. Being informed with the truth, while implementing it can prevent pain, suffering and the degenerating of health as it relates to osteoporosis, as well as preserve our usefulness to God and His cause in this world.



Open Face

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