

The Broken Curse

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Part 1

***Why Jesus
Had to Die***

Chapter 1

Why Did The Sinner Have to Die?

Why does the sinner have to die? Who made such a rule and why did it have to be made? Could there not have been another, more merciful way? Why is it necessary for a person to have to die even for the tiniest sin? for many years I puzzled over this question and never could get a satisfactory answer. Most Christians seem to be contented with the answer that “God decrees that it must be so,” and that, “justice demands the death of the sinner.” This satisfied me at first, but as I became more mature as a Christian and came to understand the great love which God has for all of us, and as I came to recognize the mercy and tender compassion which He has for all His creatures, including the vilest of sinners, these answers failed to satisfy me and I did a lot of thinking, praying and studying on the issue.

The average Christian will say, “well, the sinner has to die because *the law* proves him guilty and requires his death.” We see his death as completely dependent upon his relationship to the law. This concept is rooted deeply in the thinking of Christians and while in a way, it is correct, this common understanding does not fully explain the truth. Let us consider for a moment what a law really is. A law is basically a principle or a rule which governs behaviour. A law dictates the way we operate.

But when we speak of law, there are two kinds of law which we need to consider. There is natural law and there is judicial law and understanding the difference between the two is critical to a proper appreciation of the reason why the sinner has to die.

Natural Laws

In the case of natural laws, most of us recognize the importance of always working in harmony with them. The rules are built into nature and we cannot change them or adjust them. These laws simply describe the way nature works and they are called laws because they never change. They always work in the same way every time. Nature compels all things to work in harmony with those particular principles. One such law is the law of gravity. This law compels us to behave in a certain way with the sure knowledge that if we change our behaviour, serious consequences will follow. For example, I may not agree with the law of gravity and so may step from the roof of a four story building. I will quickly find out that by not acting in harmony with the law of gravity I will suffer severe consequences. Most

likely I will break my neck. I may not like natural laws, but if I disregard them, unhappy consequences are sure to follow. This is true of all natural laws.

Judicial Laws

Judicial laws on the other hand, are laws which are laid down by a governing authority. They are laws which are considered good or necessary for the harmonious existence of a particular society and they are not necessarily the same in every society. These laws are made, depending on the kind of society and those who govern and make the laws. With these laws, disobedience does not always bring a consequence. In many cases these laws are broken and the offender seems to get away scot-free. The enforcement of these laws is not built into nature as in the case of natural law. With judicial law, the governing authority has to do two things. First they have to make the laws and secondly, they have to enforce these laws. They do this by imposing penalties for transgressing the laws which they themselves must enforce.

Of course, many judicial laws, established by various governments are faulty and even unjust. But God is the author of *all* natural law. Natural law is always good. He designed the universe in a *perfect* way with these natural laws built in to ensure that life would exist and continue in a pattern of balance and harmony.

The nature of moral law

The moral law has been said to be a “transcript” of God’s character. As this moral law is outlined in the Ten Commandments it does not express the fullness of God’s character and may better be described as an “expression” of God’s character, rather than an exact transcript. However, when the moral law is properly understood in all its deeper implications, it certainly gives us a good idea of what God is like in His moral nature. This means that the written moral law is simply an expression of *The true moral law, which is God Himself*. In other words, God did not *make* the moral law, all He did was put into words what He was and gave it to us as the way of life.

To live in harmony with this law is to be in harmony with God. Since God is life, then harmony with Him means to be in harmony with life. However, when a person steps out of harmony with the moral law, he is out of harmony with God and out of harmony with life. Death as a consequence is the inevitable result! God does not have to sentence or kill such a person. He automatically brings death upon himself by choosing to separate from God, in whom alone there is life.

So we see clearly that the moral law is a natural law. It is a law of nature. To walk in harmony with it is to have life. To step aside from it is to embrace death. No one has to sentence you, no one has to kill you. Sin itself will do the job as a natural consequence of the way the law operates.

How Death Came

In the garden of Eden God said to Adam, "... *in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*" (Gen. 2:17). Most people have understood this to mean that God was threatening Adam, that He was saying, "if you eat of this fruit, I will be forced to kill you." Was this how it really was? Was God threatening Adam or was He making a prophecy? Was He stating what He would do, or was He simply making Adam aware of the natural sequence of events which would follow if he stepped out of harmony with God? The apostle Paul says,

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (Rom 5:12)

Notice, one man brought sin into the world. When sin came in, death came with it. It was not God who brought death or imposed it upon man, it was sin which brought death. When sin came in, death came riding on its back! In 1 Cor. 15:56 Paul says that, "the sting of death is sin." When something stings you, a poison begins to work in your body and eventually brings about an end result. Somebody who gets stung by a deadly insect such as a scorpion, for example, has in himself the seed of death. The poison works in him and eventually brings the end result of death. So Paul says, "the sting of death is sin." Sin stings you, it injects you with a poison which begins a deadly work, killing you by degrees until finally, your life departs from you.

So, Paul says, Adam brought sin, which brought death. This death came upon all men, *because* all sinned. All men die *only because* all men have the disease of sin in them (Rom. 5:12). See how Paul proves this. He says,

(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. (Rom 5:13)

When Paul says, "until the law," what time period is he speaking of? He is speaking of the period before the law was given on Mount Sinai, from the time of the creation of the world until the time of the giving of the law to Moses. The law has always existed (since the law is an expression of God's nature and God was always there), but it was not understood by the people of the world in general before it was given on Mount Sinai.

Paul goes on to say, "but sin is not imputed when there is no

law.” What point is he making? His point is, sin was here. Men were sinners, but God did not impute sin to them, that is, God could not charge them with guilt. Why couldn’t he? Because the law was not yet given. Without the law men did not have a clear idea of what was right and what was wrong and therefore, there was no clear way of charging men with wrong doing.

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. (Rom 5:14)

In spite of the fact that the law was not generally known to men before God proclaimed it (that is from the time of Adam to the time of Moses), yet death reigned over men. All men suffered death (excepting Enoch). Since sin was not imputed (charged) to them, then it could not have been God who was judging them and putting them to death. How could He do this if they had no knowledge of the law? Without the knowledge of the law, they had not sinned as Adam had sinned, in deliberate disobedience of a specific command, yet they were dying. What was killing them? It was not God, but sin which was killing them. Even though they did not have a clear definition of right and wrong, yet they were in a state of sin, passed on from Adam to all men and it produced death in all. (Rom. 5:21; 7:24; James 1:15).

Why Judicial law entered

Yet there is no denying the fact that the Bible teaches that men will be judged on the basis of the law and those found guilty will be sentenced to die.

For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. (Eccl 12:14)

So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. (James 2:12)

These, as well as many other verses make it clear that our individual actions are significant, that God will consider every deed in the judgment. How can this be explained? If sin kills those who embrace it and death is the inescapable *consequence* of sin, why did God need to impose a *penalty* upon those who commit sin? Why was there the need of a judgment to rehearse and examine the deeds which men have done that each might be rewarded “according to his works?” Why did God not just leave the sinner alone in his dying state, knowing that sin would eventually kill him? Why did God place the issues in a judicial framework, why did He establish judicial law with penalties, instead of simply leaving it the way things were naturally, leaving sin itself to eventually destroy those who embraced it?

In Romans 5:20 we are told,

Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: (Rom 5:20)

The law entered for the purpose of making the offence increase, or so that it might multiply. That is, that men could become aware of just how great was the power of the sin which existed in them.

Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. (Rom 7:13)

In other words, when Adam sinned, sin came upon all men. As a result men became involved in vile and evil deeds and all men eventually died as a result of sin. But most men had no true concept of how sinful they really were. Men came to regard death as the normal way of life, they made no connection between the kind of life which they possessed and lived and the death which came upon them all. God, in love, had to find a way to make men appreciate what really existed in their natures and to make them see that there was a connection between that nature and death – that sin was the cause of death, so that they might learn to fear and hate sin. He had to set a system in place “*that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.*” He expressed the law in a judicial formula so that man could understand the true nature of sin.

The “Discovery” of The Law

The story goes that Isaac Newton was sitting under an apple tree one day when an apple fell on his head. To the inquiring mind of this scientific genius, this simple event opened the door to an amazing “discovery.” He wondered, “Why did the apple fall on my head? Why did the apple fall down instead of up?” In considering this he became aware of the fact that this was the way things always behaved, every time, in every circumstance. This led him to formulate what is called the law of gravity and so it is said that he discovered this law.

Of course this law was in existence long before Isaac Newton arrived on the scene, but when he discovered it, for him and for the world, it seemed an amazing thing. For him it came as a complete surprise. Isaac Newton expressed this law in words and referred to it as “the law of gravity.” But although he expressed it in words, this was only a way of describing what was always there long before he or anybody else recognized it. When he expressed this law in words, it did not create or establish the law, it only made it known and understandable to some degree.

In the same way, the moral law of God always existed. All the

angels obeyed it naturally with never a second thought. Lucifer was the first one who discovered and pointed out to the angels that their behaviour was always in one direction, always in keeping with what God wanted. As it were, Lucifer “discovered” the moral law and determined that he was not going to submit to it.

In order to enable man to understand the way the moral law works so that man might be able to discover the power of sin and to see the connection between it and death, God had to formulate this law, or in other words to express it in a formula which man could understand. This is what He did at Mount Sinai.

Let us look at an illustration which may help us to understand this matter better:

An Illustration

Suppose there are a group of people marooned on the top of a mountain. All around there are precipices with no way off the mountain. On looking down into these precipices, all one can see is darkness, the bottom is too far away to be seen. In actual fact, at the bottom there are jagged rocks waiting to pulverize anyone who falls or is foolish enough to jump from this mountain.

One day, a strange man appears out of nowhere and begins to persuade the people that down below, beyond the darkness there is a land of great beauty and full of good things – a true paradise. He explains that there is a system in place by which those who jump from above suddenly slow down as soon as they pass through the darkness and eventually land as gently as a feather in this paradise. This strange person even takes a leap or two from the top of this mountain and returns with his arms laden with lovely fruit. Gradually the people are persuaded. One after another people start jumping. Nobody can see what happens to these people. Actually they are being ripped to pieces when they fall on the rocks below, but the strange man continues to assure those remaining that those who jumped are now enjoying the paradise below in perfect safety.

However, there is one man who knows exactly what is waiting below. Frantically he pleads with the people not to jump and warns them of the horrible fate awaiting them, but all in vain. The people continue to jump. Finally this man, who is aware of the danger, pulls a gun and stands off to one side. He says, “I am going to shoot anyone who jumps.” A couple of people decide to take the risk and jump. To all intents and purposes, these people are already dead, but regardless of this, this man immediately shoots them dead.

Now the scenario changes. At first it was the fall that was

killing the people when they jumped, but now it is this man who is killing them. Instead of the law of action and consequence working, instead of the law of gravity killing the people, now it is this man. He has changed the situation. He has now established a system where they must conform to his rule or face a penalty and this system has taken the place of the law of action and consequence. Now it is a judicial law (“you shall not jump or I will shoot you”) instead of a natural law (if you jump, gravity will kill you). The law of nature, is a higher law and it always exists, but because of peoples’ ignorance and their actions of self-destructiveness, this man who understands, has set up this judicial system within the natural system in order to save those whom he can. In actual fact he is only killing those who are already certain to die and in shooting them rather than waiting for them to be crushed on the rocks he is actually acting in mercy, because now, he will achieve several positive things.

1. He will make those who remain afraid of jumping. By this means he will give the people an opportunity of living a little longer with the hope that they will discover for themselves the true nature of what lies below and the character of the being who deceived them.
2. He will prevent the suffering of those who are smashed on the rocks but who do not die immediately.

Of course, all the people will become scared of the man with the gun. They may call him a tyrant and seek for a chance to jump when he is not looking. They will resent his presence and blame him for depriving them of happiness although in reality he is only working for their good.

Can you see the parallel? This is why God has put the issues in the framework of judicial law, along with the necessary penalties. In giving the law God was saying, “if you jump, I will shoot you.” Although sin was always killing men, they did not recognize it and did not fear it. They accepted their corrupt lifestyle and their subsequent death as just the way life was and saw no reason to be afraid of sin or to change their ways. This is why God established a judicial system. He set up a framework in which if you transgressed the stated laws He would require your death. Now men feared sin, because they associated it with death and in trying to put it away from them they came to recognize how totally it was integrated into their nature. They came to recognize that they needed supernatural help if they were ever to be rid of it and thus, the law became their schoolmaster to lead them to Christ. (Gal. 3:24).

Unfortunately, with many people, God came to be regarded as

the real problem since He had given these rules and required that they be obeyed on pain of death. Men would have preferred to be rid of God rather than to be rid of their sins and they chafed under His rules and blamed Him for the fact that those who disobeyed had to die. The fact is that whether or not God had sentenced the transgressor to death it would not have mattered. Sin would have inevitably killed him anyway.

Consider the case of the antediluvians or the Sodomites. God sent a flood in one case and fire in the other to wipe out those hardened sinners. If God had not done this, what would have happened to these people? Well, in a few more years that generation would all have been dead anyway! Sin, working in them would have killed them as it does all men! And they would have been just as dead as the flood or the fire made them! So why did God kill them a few years early? What difference did it make? It was because God wanted to make a statement so that others would learn to be afraid of sin. It was also because God had to prevent sin from taking over humanity completely. If He had not done this then there would have been no hope for those who desired something better. The tide of wickedness would have become so strong that none could have been able to escape it.

Three levels

In our attitude and relationship to God, men are at basically three levels.

1. At the first and lowest level, men believe, “if I disobey God, He will kill me.” So they are afraid of God and seek to please Him from fear of punishment. This is the basis of the pagan religions, but many times the Israelites also worshipped from this warped motivation and sadly, many “Christians” today are still at this primitive level of understanding. These people see the problem as being, God, and they wish they could change Him.
2. At the secondary level, people believe it is not God who is the problem, it is their actions. God does not want to kill them, but He will have to if they don’t change their actions. Justice will require that He destroy them. These have a better concept of God but they still have not come to grips with the real problem and they see death as God’s necessary action because He is controlled by justice. They regard the real problem as the deeds which they do. The effort must be to change their *works* so that they can meet the requirements of the *law*. On this level, the sinner sees the issue as a question of satisfying justice.

3. But at the third level, finally we understand. There is one problem and one problem only. It is that separation from God has resulted in a disease in me called sin and it is eating out my life, it is producing evil deeds in me and is killing me. This is the true destroyer and it is not a judicial law that demands the sinner's death, it is a law of nature – a law of consequence. Now we recognize that the real problem is, sin in me, and what I need is not to change my actions merely, but to change my nature. I must seek life in the only One who is able to accomplish this for me. On this level, the believer finally operates on the basis of righteousness by faith.

We need to understand this because when our understanding reaches only to the secondary level, then our relationship to sin and to God is always viewed and experienced from a legal framework. We think of sin as something which is related to the details of the law, salvation is related to obedience to the rules. God's favour, and life itself are all related to the rules. In actual fact, this is the foundation of legalism – it is viewing salvation and life in terms of a relationship to rules.

Not my works, my nature

When we come to the third level, when we are no longer children or servants, but sons (Gal. 4:3,7), then we understand. The real problem is not what I *do*. It is not a problem of my works, it is what I *am*. It is a problem of my nature. I realize that God's effort is not to change my works, but to give me a new heart, to deliver me from the sinful nature which is killing me and to give me a new nature by means of which my works will change. Now I am not afraid of God, I am not even afraid of my actions, I am afraid of myself! Now I no longer struggle to change my *works*, but I seek with all my heart to find and to submit to Christ by faith, who alone is capable of changing my *nature*! It is not God, or even justice which requires my death. It is my sin cursed nature which is working death in me, and while the law of God has brought me to that realization, it is powerless to solve the problem. I must come to Christ (not the written law but the living law) that I may have life (Gal. 3:24), that I may have a new nature.

God set the controversy in a judicial framework. He established laws and penalties, but this is not the whole picture, this is the picture within the picture, the secondary level. The true issues exist on a higher level, not on the judicial level, but on the level of natural law where we are involved with the principles which are built into the very existence of the universe.

Chapter 2

Why Did Jesus Have to Die?

I once heard the host of a popular talk-show in Jamaica describe God as a “blood-thirsty” being. His reason for coming to this conclusion was that he could not understand why God should demand death for the smallest act of transgression, and why He should be so inflexible in His demand that the only way He will forgive us is if His own Son should die instead. The way he explained it, it was God’s demand for retribution which made it necessary for the sinner to die and if the sinner was to live, then the only thing which God would accept was that His own Son should be sacrificed instead.

This man, clearly was in great darkness, yet he highlighted an issue which had been a nagging one with me for many years and for which I had heard many explanations, but none which really was in harmony with the concept of a God of infinite mercy.

I have heard it said that “the law demanded the death of the sinner,” that justice required that if man was to be spared, then one had to die in man’s place, and not just anyone, but one who was a divine Being – one who was equal to the law – the lawgiver himself.

But my question was, what law, what judicial system will accept that one person shall be punished for the sins of another? Who does this satisfy?

Let me explain what I mean by using an illustration. If I instruct my son not to pick any of my mangoes and he disobeys, then in order to make my instructions meaningful, I need to impose a penalty. This is for two reasons, first that my authority may be maintained and secondly that he may learn, for his own good that obeying me is important. Disobedience could get him into serious trouble some time. But in punishing my son these are the issues I consider. It is never an issue of vengeance, it is not to satisfy some desire in me for retribution, it is not to make him suffer for daring to go against my will. Furthermore, I would *never* say to my son, “If you pick the mangoes I will kill you!!” My punishment would be aimed at correcting and changing him. It would be for the purpose of making him a better person, of saving his life, not destroying it. Furthermore, if my son is truly sorry for what he did and demonstrates that he deeply regrets his actions, would it still be necessary to punish him? Why would I need to say, “well son, I see that you are sorry and I want to forgive you, but I cannot do that unless somebody is punished. You disobeyed my instructions and before I can forgive, some-

body has to be punished. I see that you are sorry so I will not punish you, I will punish your brother instead.” Does this make sense?

This is an area of the plan of redemption which I found difficult to understand. I accepted the fact that there was a good reason why Christ had to die, and I accepted that it could not have been God who demanded His blood, but I could not understand or explain the reasons why it all was necessary. But thankfully, I have finally seen the reason why it was essential, and I have come to appreciate what a wonderful plan it really was!!

Legal fiction?

Not too long ago I came upon a question in browsing the internet which intrigued me. The question was, “*is the gospel legal fiction?*” The basis of the question is this: When men believe in Christ (accept Him as Saviour) then they are justified. That is, they are declared just, God forgives all their sins and regards them as being as righteous as Christ Himself. However, popular Christianity teaches that such a person is not actually in himself, in his nature and actions as righteous as Christ. Thus the gospel is open to the charge of being, “legal fiction.” It is seen as a legal transaction by which God “legally” accepts what is not true. He accepts us as righteous when in actual fact we are not. The theoretical issues, the legal arguments become the focus, they become the important things rather than the reality of what our condition actually is!

I have to be honest and say that such a concept presents a picture of God which is not fitting of the pure King of the universe. It depicts Him as one of the tricky, fast-talking lawyers who use legal loopholes to free the vilest criminals, setting them loose on society only to repeat their crimes again and again. Is this to be accepted as the best “plan of salvation,” that God could offer? Is the gospel about legal arguments, or is it about the real problem of freeing man from actual sin?

We have already established the fact that it is sin which kills men. Sin has in it the seed of death. The opposite is true. Righteousness is life. When we understand this, the death of Christ takes on a completely different complexion.

How life is transmitted

First, we must make note of an important fundamental principle which is critical to our understanding of this issue. It is this; once God has created life, it can only be passed on by birth (or by division as in the case of Eve who came from Adam’s own life by way of his rib). Every creature receives his fundamental nature when he is born and it determines what he is, whether

dog, cat, lion, wolf, human etc. Within the framework of that nature, each develops a character, but the nature is what determines the kind of creature it is.

As human beings we are all born with a spiritual, as well as a physical nature. All who come of Adam's race, are born with a sin-weakened, feeble, degenerate, dying body (sinful flesh) and a carnal, sin-enslaved, unrighteous spirit (a carnal mind). This is what we receive at birth, and none of the devices of men – medical science, psychology, education, re-socialization, religion etc. can change this nature, physically or spiritually, although man may subdue or disguise some of its manifestations. Nature is only transmitted by birth!! Man is born with a nature which, spiritually is dead. The Bible describes him as, “dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1,5).” He is born with a body which is dying, and a corrupt, spiritually dead mind. If he is ever to escape the power of this double death (physical and spiritual) which is at work in him, then man *must* be born *again!* Because nature is *only* transmitted by birth! (It cannot be obtained by imitating another).

A New Source of Life

But let us remember that when birth takes place, there is always an original source of life. There is always a parent, one who passes life on to the other. If there was ever to be a new birth for man, if he was to receive a new life, a new nature, then there had to be an original source, there had to be a parent in whom this new life existed. Furthermore, all the vital attributes, the characteristic qualities of this new life, this new nature had to be intrinsically woven into the original life. They had to be first a part of the life of the parent before they could be passed on to the offspring.

What was it that God wanted to do for man? He wanted to give him a life in which sin had been defeated and destroyed, a life in which the nature turned to God and His righteousness as naturally as the flower turns towards the sun. Only by receiving such a life could man be redeemed from the awful destiny imposed upon him by the life passed on from Adam.

This is what God proposed to do in Christ. Jesus was to be the second Adam, the second prototype of humanity. He was to be “the everlasting Father (Isa. 9:6),” of a new humanity who could pass on a life in which sin had been conquered and destroyed and righteousness was a natural reality. But in order to have such a life to pass on, what qualifications did Jesus need to have?

a. He needed to have taken sin upon Himself, experienced its power and to have defeated and destroyed it. Only in this way

could He have a victorious life to pass on to His offspring.

- b. He needed to be a divine being, One who was, in His very nature, equal to the law. One who was the very reality of the living law. Only if He was such a Being would He be able to transmit a nature in which harmony with the law was a natural and perfect reality. An angel could have given instructions as to how to obey the law, he could even have given us an example, but only the Lawgiver, Himself the living law, could pass on a nature in which the deep principles of that law were built in.

This is exactly the kind of Saviour that Jesus is and these are His exact qualifications. It is awesome when we understand the wonder and the perfection of the plan of salvation. Jesus had to be human, completely human, or else He could not have taken our sin upon Himself. He could not have taken our disease so that He could destroy it. Yet at the same time, salvation could not come from one who was only a son of Adam. By the law of heredity all that Adam could transmit to his offspring was sin and death. If Jesus were only a son of Adam that is all He could pass on. In order to give life, He had to be from out of this world. He had to be of another race so that He could be able to bring a new element into humanity. More than this, Jesus had to be fully divine!! Only by being a divine Being, one equal with God, could He impart a life of perfect righteousness, one which did not only conform to rules, but which was in itself, by nature, pure, righteous and holy.

Made to be sin

So the word of God tells us,

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (2 Cor 5:21)

Notice what the word of God says; this is much stronger than saying that Jesus died for our sins. It says, He was "MADE" to be sin. How was this possible for a Being who was sinless? How was He made sin? How could it be that as Peter says,

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree . . . (1 Pet 2:24)

Because we have not properly understood the true nature of sin we have always misunderstood this. Some have believed that He bore our sins and was made sin, simply by the fact that He came with a degenerate human body and had the weaknesses of the flesh common to all men. Others, because they limit sin to acts of transgression, have supposed that He bore our sins in that every single wrong act ever committed in the history of mankind was in some mysterious way gathered together and

piled up upon Christ. However, when we have a proper understanding of what sin really is, suddenly we understand what happened when Jesus became sin for us. Suddenly it makes crystal clear sense. We see the wonderful truth which is at the same time, awful, and yet, awesome.

The root of all sin is unbelief, resulting in separation from God. In every being who has ever experienced this separation, whether it be Lucifer and the fallen angels or Adam, Eve and their offspring, this separation has, in every case immediately resulted in the *manifestation* of sin, that is, in the performance of sinful deeds. It is important that we understand the steps in this downward process of sin so that we may fully grasp what happened when Jesus bore our sins.

1. First there is unbelief – an unwillingness to trust God.
2. This results in separation from God.
3. The immediate consequence is a totally selfish nature.
4. The natural and unavoidable result is the committing of sinful actions.

Each of these stages has been referred to as sin because they are all related, with each one being either the cause or the result of the other.

The generally held belief is that Jesus only took the last one of these stages of sin, (the sinful actions) when He bore our sins. But since He Himself never committed a single act of sin, then it must have been simply the *penalty* of those sins which He bore. Thus our idea is that when Jesus bore our sins, God took every single wrong act which has ever been committed in the history of the world and laid the penalty of those wrong actions upon Him. This again has made us view salvation as a legal issue, something which relates to paper-work, the balancing of the books. We see Jesus bearing the penalty so that in letting us off, God may legally balance the books. We think that God satisfies the demands of the legal system by punishing somebody instead of us. The law demands a penalty, but does not really care who pays it, does not care who suffers, as long as the penalty is paid. We do not see the sins which Christ bore as an actual reality which affects the very lives in which we exist in a real and practical way.

But it was our *sin* which God laid upon Christ. Not sin in its end-result of sinful *actions*, not sin in its third stage of selfish nature, but sin in its very origins, in its basic principle, where it begins. Of course, Jesus did not lose faith in God. He never chose his own way (the first step) so He did not separate Himself from God (the second step). But God *laid our sin upon Him* (Isa.

53:6). God imposed the second step, (separation from Himself), upon Christ. He turned His back upon His Son and left him alone. He had to do this in order that Christ could destroy the sin principle!

Sin Condemned

As God withdrew Himself from His Son, Jesus suffered the full *consequences* of sin. The agony of that separation was more than Christ could endure and it broke His heart. But let us consider what Christ did. In every other being who had ever been separated from God the immediate result had been selfishness. The third step in sin had followed rapidly. The desire for self-preservation had immediately become the ruling principle of the heart. Even Adam, who found his whole joy in Eve, found himself immediately accusing her in order to save his own skin after he sinned and became separated from God!

Now God left Jesus alone and immediately a horror of great darkness came upon Him. Without the comforting assurance of God's spirit everything looked uncertain and foreboding. Even the prophecies which related to His resurrection looked vague and intangible. The thought pressed upon His darkened and confused mind that if He died, it would be forever. Let us remember that Jesus was not in the comfort of His bedroom studying His Bible with the holy spirit illuminating His mind. He was a tortured human being, suffering greatly, deprived of sleep for probably more than twenty-four hours, suffering from loss of blood, bordering on hallucination and now, worst of all, *abandoned by the spirit of God!* There was no ray of light to shine into His mind, no comforter to bring the prophecies back to His thoughts with fresh power. In addition Satan assaulted Him with wave upon wave of doubt.

The logical, the natural, seemingly, the inevitable result, was that Jesus would take the next step in the path of sin and turn to selfishness, that He would seek to preserve His own life. Any other being in the universe would have done this. The holiest angel in the same situation would have done this. But Jesus was fully divine. Though He had laid aside His divine power, yet He had not laid aside His pure, holy nature of perfect goodness. He could not have done this and still have retained His identity. He was God's *begotten* Son, of the same pure, holy, selfless nature of God and even when His powers were taken away, when the holy spirit was taken away, when hope was taken away, He could not stop being Himself. He could not become selfish for He was God by nature, and God is *wholly* good! Hallelujah!

Instead of turning to self, instead of taking the next step in

sin, instead of bowing to Satan's principle, Jesus died to sin. He resisted sin in Himself and resisted it unto death, thus destroying sin forever in human flesh.

.... God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (Rom 8:3)

It was in His flesh, in His human flesh that Jesus condemned sin. He took it on Himself and condemned it. Now there is a humanity in which sin has been destroyed. Now there is a humanity in which the enmity between man and God has been removed. There is a human life over which sin has no more dominion, a life in which sin put forth its best effort, but was defeated and destroyed. Where is this life? Where is this humanity? It is in the second Adam, the new creation, it is in Jesus Christ (1 John 5:11).

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Rom 8:1)

Sin in us condemned us and produced death in us. Separation from God produced selfish natures and selfish actions. But Jesus took this condemnation upon Himself, He bore the curse in His own body (Gal. 3:13) and there, destroyed this condemnation. This is the life which Jesus now imparts to all who will believe. A life in which separation from God, selfishness, selfish deeds, have all been abolished. *And this is why Jesus had to die.*

In all human beings there is a natural law at work implanted and inherited from Adam. This dreadful law is called "the law of sin and death," and the apostle Paul describes the way it works in Romans 7:14-24. No man can, by any human device or effort overcome the effects of this law. It is a principle built into the lives of all who come of Adam's race. It is a natural law, a law of nature. Rules and regulations cannot cancel or override natural law, so the Ten Commandments, God's law expressed in judicial form, is helpless to solve the problem. Judicial law is never the real answer. Because law (judicial law) is weak, through the flesh (Rom. 8:2). A greater law than judicial law is at work in the flesh and judicial law cannot overcome that. If I should command a man, "when you leap into the air you shall not fall again to the earth." All my commands would be useless. My orders could not overthrow the natural law of gravity, no matter how much I pleaded or threatened, or how hard this man tried. If natural law is to be overcome, a higher natural law must be introduced to counteract the previous law.

Gravity is a natural law which demands that all things remain bound to the earth. However, the effects of the law of grav-

ity may be overcome by the law of aerodynamics. This is another law which, when applied may enable a person to rise above the law of gravity. This is demonstrated every day when we fly in airplanes. We overcome gravity by applying a higher law. Though this man would find my command impossible to obey in himself, yet if he were to apply the law of aerodynamics he would be able to obey my command.

The Law of the Spirit

So the word of God says, “the law of the spirit of life (natural law - the law of Christ’s righteous nature) in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death (natural law - the law of my sinful nature).” (Rom 8:2)

... what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (Rom 8:3)

The law of sin and death ruled in my being and I was helpless to resist it. The ten commandments could not produce the strength necessary to overcome it. But there is another law, the law of the spirit of life and where does this law exist? It is in Christ Jesus!! It may be found and experienced in Christ. What God did was to introduce another natural law to cancel the effects of the first law. Those who experience this natural law fulfill the righteousness of the law, they mind the things of the spirit, they have life and peace, their bodies are dead to sin and alive to righteousness, they are the sons of God (Rom. 8:4-14).

Part 2

The Broken Curse

Chapter 3:

What is a Curse?

Why is the cross so important in Christian teaching? A person cannot read through the New Testament without recognizing this. 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, but in spite of this, even today there is much which we can learn 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)

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.

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? 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 which stood in their way and Moab was next in line. Balak was aware that every-

thing 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 place upon another. A person can *express* a curse, he may speak the words of a curse, 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 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, so 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 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, 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 placed 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. 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.

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 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 pleading 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 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. many of Ham's descendants were taken 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 today, a great many of those who are descended from these slaves are committed Christians, servants of the true God. So the circumstances brought a change, some new element came into the depraved life of Ham and the curse was broken in the experience of those who came under the influence of this new element.

Chapter 4:

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. If 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. (James 2:10). 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 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 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 ended, 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)

There is none good, no, not one, except God. God alone is good. Therefore, 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. We can't find goodness anywhere except in God.

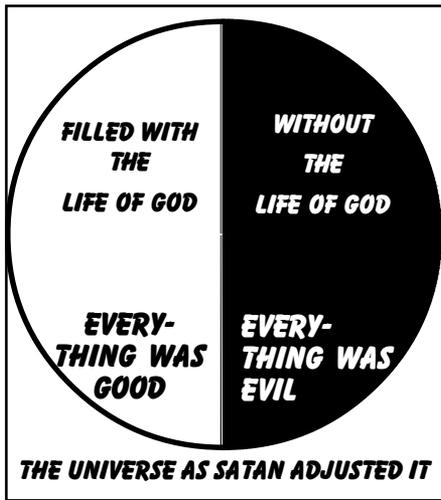
In the beginning God made the universe and it was good. He created a world and it was all very good! So we may conclude that this entire universe, was filled with the presence of the good God. It is clear that God designed this world to be an expression of Himself. He designed it to be a place through 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.



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!" 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 diagram shown here 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.

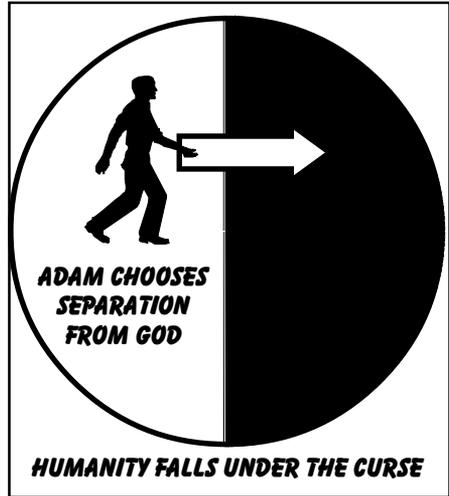
Let us remember that when we speak of this division, it was not a physical division. The main element which divided one side from the other was the element of the life of God. Anywhere good existed, there was the life of God! But on the other side there was no life of God. Those who were there, were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

A Ray of Hope

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.



But right at the beginning, there in the garden, God said something that filled Satan with 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 that a Seed was coming who would crush his head and Satan felt fear in his heart because although he had his world, and he had established his government, God's words meant that someone was coming who would bring disaster upon him. What God was saying was that somebody was going to come who would break this curse!

Chapter 5:

Christ made a curse

Free choice

In the beginning when God created man, He created Him 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 allow man to make up his own mind?

This is why God had to put the tree in the Garden. It was God's way of giving mankind 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. God wants a universe where everyone is totally free, where He is worshipped by free choice and not by force. 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 decision 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 evil side without violating man's freedom. 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.



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.

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! 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.

Please remember that we are looking at it from the perspective of mankind's true situation, 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.

If He was to save man, God had to reintroduce His good life into the human lifestream, but He would have to do it *without overriding man's free will!* It would have to be by man's choice. But the problem is that fallen man cannot make that choice. Without the influence of God's spirit, he cannot choose God.

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 wrong and the judge punishes my son because of what I did, 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 a question of who is at fault, it is simply 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 normally 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, separated from God, 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 only 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 fallen 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. This demonstrates the fact that Jesus had to be 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 was made to be sin (2 Cor. 5:21)
- e. He bore our sins ... on the tree (1 Pet. 2:24)
- 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 we may 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 chose death, the other one was a dead tree and there Christ chose 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 de-

feated 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 were already living, who already had life could 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 being 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 "quickenning 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. 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 approach the question of salvation with a perspective that man must become acceptable to God by behaving in an acceptable way. It is tragic and impossible. Before a person can do right he must first receive Christ's life and when he receives this life he will do right.

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

The host of a popular Jamaican talk-show once described God as a “blood-thirsty” Being. His reason for coming to this conclusion was that he could not understand why God should demand death for the smallest act of transgression, and why He should be so inflexible in His demand that the only way He can forgive man is if His own Son should die instead of man. This man believed that it was God’s demand for retribution which made it necessary for the sinner to die and that it was God’s desire for blood which made it possible for man to escape the death sentence **only** if God’s own Son should be sacrificed instead.

Does this concept present an accurate picture of the truth?

Christians respond by saying that “the law demanded the death of the sinner,” that justice required that if man was to be spared, then one had to die in man’s place, and not just anyone, but one who was a divine Being – one who was equal to the law – the Lawgiver himself.

But the question is, what law, or judicial system will accept that one person shall be punished for the sins of another? Who does this satisfy? Is it good enough for Christians to respond to questions like this with the vague answer that “Justice demanded it?” Whose justice demands it? If God’s justice is an expression of God’s nature, is this the way God is?

This little booklet examines these fundamental questions and presents revolutionary answers some of which have been obscured for hundreds if not thousands of years, yet, which are plainly taught in the word of God.

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