

- THE BOOK OF GENESIS -

"Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?"

(Isaiah 40:21)

*"He SHALL
crush you on
the HEAD,
And you shall
bruise HIM on
the heel."*

(Genesis 3:15b)



Berean Lamp Ministries
For the Body of Christ

Vol. 48

Jan/Mar 2019

The Seven Churches (Revelation 2-3)

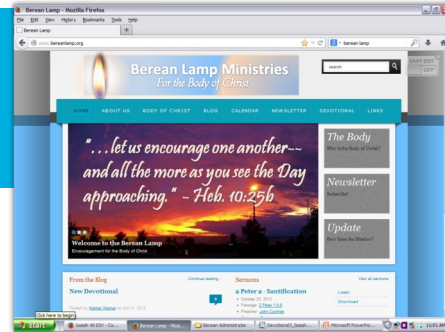


TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Millennial Promise to Abraham

by Scott Moller - Page 3

The Promise of Man-Yahweh, the Messiah

by Nathan Warner - Page 4

Let There Be Light

by Ginny Larsen - Page 12

Life Lessons from Joseph

by Beth Moller - Page 13

Adam, Eve, and Original Sin

by Jane Titrud - Page 15

Christ Gives Us Mastery Over Sin

by Maggie Fischer - Page 20

The Berean Lamp Newsletter is a bi-monthly publication of Berean Lamp Ministries. Visit us at www.bereanlamp.org.

The Berean Lamp Ministry is a service of the Berean Christian Fellowship of Zimmerman, MN.

The Berean Lamp Ministry seeks to:

1. Encourage and strengthen the Body of Christ by providing the means for each of its members to share their spiritual gifts with one another, rooted in the Word of God, thereby growing into deeper union with one another and with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
2. Minister to non-believers; be a witness for Christ and a testimony to His Body in the world.

We would appreciate your help in contributing to the content and in spreading the work of this ministry. Thank you, and God bless.

- Pastor Scott Moller

Visit www.bereanlamp.org/lampstand/ for an explanation of the cover art.

Administrator: Nathan Warner
Oversight Committee: Pastor Scott Moller, Deacon Bob Larsen, Nathan Warner
Editors: Natalie Warner



*"He SHALL
crush you on
the HEAD,
And you shall
bruise HIM on
the heel."
(Genesis 3:15b)*



The Millennial Promise to Abraham

By Scott Moller (transcribed by Nathan Warner)

The literal reign of Jesus Christ on this earth is not a new idea. God first promised the future eternal Kingdom of the Messiah to Abraham back in the book of Genesis.

In chapter 15, God first makes His covenant with Abraham: *"To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates—the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites"* (Genesis 15:18-21 NIV). This land is referred to often in Scripture as the *"land the Lord promised"* (Deuteronomy 6:18b) to Abraham and his descendants. Today, we call it the Promised Land.

There is something interesting about this geography. To this day, Israel has never possessed all these lands. Not even under King David or Solomon did Israel extend so far as the Euphrates River. Some might wonder if the promise included Abraham's son Ishmael, via Hagar, *"but God said, 'No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him'"* (Genesis 17:19 NASB). It is first through Abraham's son Isaac, then Israel, that the blessing and the covenant came: *"Remember Your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom You swore by Your own self: 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever'"* (Exodus 32:13 NIV).

God's promise had some further details that are very important. He told Abraham, *"The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God"* (Genesis 17:8). As we pointed out earlier with the geography, Israel never possessed all of Canaan. This has not happened yet. But more importantly is the time God says they will pos-

sess the land. Here, God promised that the whole land of Canaan would be an "everlasting" possession to Abraham's descendants, according to the promise, *"their inheritance forever"* (Exodus 32:13). Anyone who studies history knows that Israel was dispossessed of their land from 70AD to 1948AD. That means for 1,878 years, Israel did not possess the Promised Land. This everlasting possession clearly has not been instituted yet.

So, when will Israel possess the Promised Land forever as an everlasting possession? Hundreds of years after Abraham died, the prophet Daniel saw a vision of a distant future: *"Before me was one like a Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed"* (Daniel 7:13b-14). Who is this "one like a Son of Man"? and where will the capitol of His kingdom be? We find our answer in the Gospels: *"Jesus said to them, 'Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel'"* (Matthew 19:28). It is of this future time that Jesus told them, *"I confer on you a kingdom, just as My Father conferred one on Me, so that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"* (Luke 22:28b-29). Indeed, those who attain to the first resurrection *"will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years"* (Revelation 20:6), ruling from Israel over the entire Earth during the Millennial reign of Christ.

From this point on, Jesus' Kingdom shall never end, fulfilling the promise made to Abraham all the way back in the Book of Genesis. How beautiful it is that in 2019 we can answer Isaiah's question: *"Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning?"* (Isaiah 40:21) Indeed, it has. Praise God for His faithfulness! Amen.

The Promise of Man-Yahweh, the Messiah

By Nathan Warner

When did God announce the Messiah (His “anointed one”) to mankind? Was it a surprise that no one knew about or an afterthought that He revealed only to the Prophets? No, it is literally written on the first pages of His testimony to mankind – wrapped up in the story of the Fall of mankind found in the book of Genesis.

Here, God promised that He would come into the world as a literal man immediately after the Fall in the Garden. In response to what the serpent had done, God told satan (the serpent), *“I will put enmity Between you and the woman [Eve], And between your seed and her seed; He shall crush you [the serpent] on the head, and you [the serpent] shall bruise Him on the heel”* (Genesis 3:15 NASB). It is understood that this promised seed of Eve would be wounded by satan but that the child would deliver a mortal blow to satan and defeat him.

Did Adam and Eve understand that God was promising a Messiah—even God in the flesh? Yes, they did. Shortly after this promise, Eve *“conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, ‘I have gotten a manchild with*

the help of the Lord” (Genesis 4:1b). Most Bible translations express her words in this way, and because of this, many merely see Eve giving thanks here to God for her child. However, if we look at it in the Hebrew text, we see that this simple expression holds some of the richest words in all of Genesis. It reads literally, *“I have gotten (or made) man Yahweh,”* which is why some translations put it thus: *“I have given birth to a male child—the LORD”* (Genesis 4:1b International Standard Version). This is a radically different meaning from what many of us have read here before!

It makes so much more sense to see this in the original language. Eve had clearly understood the promise of God concerning the coming of the Messiah—even God—through the woman’s seed. The Messiah would be more than a spiritual being, for He would physically enter the world. Eve believed Cain was that promised “seed” who would crush the serpent’s head. After all, it is no accident that the root of Cain’s name can mean “to acquire” as in a “transaction or purchase-price of slaves.” It seems likely that Eve saw Cain as the “redeemer” of mankind from its slavery to sin! Like Abraham after her, she was *“fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform”* (Romans 4:21).

“Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit....”



“...Then in that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious.” (Isaiah 11:1, 11)

But then, oddly enough, Eve gave birth to a second son. Perhaps this confused her, which is why she named him “Abel,” signifying “a breath or vanity.” Given that Cain “was” the Messiah, Eve probably thought Abel “unessential” or “extra” – a bonus but not key to their redemption. Eve must have been devastated when Cain killed Abel and was cursed by God. How could it be that she had been so wrong? Neither of her two sons were the Messiah, after all. Like many after her, she did not consider *“that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day”* (2 Peter 3:8b).

It is interesting to note that satan clearly inspired Cain to murder his brother, thus “killing two birds with one stone” by neutralizing them both from God’s promise of the Messiah.

After Cain proved he was not the Messiah through his unrighteous behavior, Eve surely was confused about God’s purpose. So, then *“Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for, she said, ‘God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel, for Cain killed him’”* (Genesis 4:25).

Seth’s name means “appointed, anointed, or compensation.” Most people interpret this to mean that God was “compensating” Eve for the death of Abel, but it seems more likely in the context and etymology that Eve was referring yet again to the Messiah (which literally means “anointed one”) — who would be the compensation for sin. It seems clear that Eve genuinely believed Seth was God’s replacement for Cain and Abel’s failure to be the Messiah. But as he grew up, Seth did not restore the fallen nature. The cycle of fallen life continued unabated, and *“men began to multiply on the face of the land”* (Genesis 6:1b).

Eve’s understanding of the promise of the Messiah also makes much sense of why male children are the focus of the genealogies in the Old Testament, for the promise had been clear that “He” would crush the serpent’s head. There was much expectation for the “He” that would be born to do this, and a precise record of all male children and what they did in their lives was important. It is not that women weren’t valued but that there was great expectation for the Messiah’s arrival.

It was soon after Seth proved not to be the Messiah that the angels rebelled against God.

Why is this important to the story? Because their actions show they knew of the promised Messiah also. They proved this by leaving their first estate and coming down to earth to produce their own “god-men” through the seed of human women:

Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose... The Nephilim [or giants] were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. (Genesis 6:1-2, 4)

Have you ever wondered where the angels got this idea? How did they know it was even possible to produce children with the seed of women? It seems clear that they had been witnesses to the promise given to Eve by God that the Lord would enter His creation physically through the woman’s seed to restore it.

It is most illuminating that the writer of Genesis does not even bother sharing more details about the angels’ children, because they were universally well-known, even in his day: *“mighty men who were of old, men of renown.”* Basically, he is saying, “Everyone knows who I’m talking about, so enough said.” What men were so well known to the ancient world that they needed no explanation? There is only one clear answer—the demi-gods of the pagan histories – the famous children that the ancient “gods” sired through mortal women, as recorded in the ancient myths and legends of the Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and every other people group that reach back to the earliest times.

A small sampling of these half-god/half-man legends reveal such famous figures as the mighty Hercules of Greece, Gilgamesh of Sumaria, Cu Chulainn of the Celts, Saeminger of the Norse, and Arjuna of the Hindu. The list of these “mighty men,” demi-gods, or god-men and their perverse deeds are remembered in the most ancient mythologies and historical legends all around the world, whether from isolat-

ed island tribes or massive land-locked empires from China to the Americas.

It seems fairly clear that the fallen angels are the “gods” of old mythology and their children with mortals are the “demi-gods” of legend. But they were no Messiahs – quite the opposite, for their deeds on the earth were wicked and evil. Scripture does not give us much detail on this, but Jewish history speaks of how the angels perverted mankind and taught them great sin. It tells how their children sinned against all that is natural.

While it is not necessary to invoke Jewish historical texts, such as the Book of Enoch, to arrive at this understanding of the Scriptures, we should note that they do support this interpretation of these passages in Genesis. As Bereans, we cannot believe this information like we believe Scripture – it is Jewish history, which may have error in it as any human history does, but it is still valuable in seeking to better understand these events.

However, Jewish history does harmonize with Scripture in regard to the angels’ harmful role in shaping the pre-Flood world, for immediately after the Nephilim are introduced as *the* major players on earth, this very same time is described as abundantly evil:

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The Lord said, ‘I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.’ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord....Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. Then God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.’ (Genesis 6:5-8, 11-13)

The Nephilim were born into the world,

they became its chief characters, and then the earth was filled with all manner of sin and violence. Coincidence? Unlikely.

We do not know from Scripture what the motives of the angels were in rebelling against God and producing demi-gods among mankind, but we know that the judgement for what they did was severe. The *“angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day”* (Jude 6), for *“God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment”* (2 Peter 2:4). It was for this judgment that hell was created: the *“eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels”* (Matthew 25:41b). Both Jude and Peter recall these events to their reader’s memory: *“I desire to remind you”* (Jude 5a), meaning these events were so well known to the Jewish readers who knew their own history that they did not need to get into the details.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of humanity continues to worship the “gods” and “demi-gods” from before the Flood. Jewish history describes how the spirits of the Nephilim (whose bodies died in the Flood) are the “evil spirits” or demons that enslave mankind and are worshipped as gods with the fallen angels by the pagans and even the modern occult. Paul explained to the Galatians that *“when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods”* (Galatians 4:8), *“so also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things [spirits or heavenly bodies] of the world”* (Galatians 4:3), *“but now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things [spirits or heavenly bodies], to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?”* (Galatians 4:9). We are freed in Christ from the enslavement of our ancestors to these *“so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him”* (1 Corinthians 8:5-6).

For thousands of years, up until modern times, people all over the world still called on

the names of these “gods.” Today, the old pagan religions are reinventing themselves through the occult and will likely have a huge hand to play in the end when the angel satan brings forth the anti-Christ – the ultimate “man-god” who will challenge Jesus Christ’s authority and inheritance (His seat in the temple and His rule over the world).

God promised the serpent that He would put enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of woman. Today, we know that the seed of the woman is Jesus. So, the seed of the serpent (a fallen angel) seems to be the Nephilim, children of fallen angels and women – the god-men who received mankind as their “inheritance” through their fathers’ violent rebellion against God’s purpose. These angels attempted to steal the Messiah’s inheritance soon after the Fall of man, *“for it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come”* (Hebrews 2:5) – it was to mankind, but more specifically, the Messiah who will yet rule over mankind (Hebrews 2:2-18).

This understanding makes much sense of the “enmity” between the demons and Jesus Christ in the New Testament: *“And they cried out, saying, ‘What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?’”* (Matthew 8:29) The evil spirits know there is a time

coming when they will finally pay for all the harm they have done to mankind – an inheritance they had stolen until the Flood took them away. In the meantime, they harm humanity and lead them astray from knowing the true Heir and future King, Jesus Christ.

So, what is the point of studying all this about the angels? It is incredibly valuable, for it seems obvious from the Scriptures that even the angels understood God’s promise to Adam, Eve, and satan of the one true God-man that would come through Eve’s seed to set right the Fall and inherit the world as His Kingdom. Clearly, from these passages, everyone involved in these events understood that the Messiah would be more than a mighty political leader, as some Jews argue erroneously to this day. He would be the very Son of God, Who would inherit the world. Indeed, so transparent was the promise that it seems the angels invoked eternal judgment on themselves when they produced their own “god-men” in an attempt to seize the Messiah’s birthright.

Ultimately, satan was the architect of the angels’ deeds, for we are told that he inspired their rebellion – we see him being described as the great dragon in the book of Revelation, whose *“tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth”* (Revelation 12:4). The hierarchy is clear, for he is



described as “*the devil and his angels*” (Matthew 25:41b), suggesting they owe their allegiance to him. Perhaps by leading the angels into rebellion and terrible sin, satan was attempting to snuff out the promise of the Messiah and rob him of his inheritance – to pollute mankind so thoroughly that the complete destruction of the world would be the only answer possible from God’s Holy throne. Satan almost succeeded, for only one man among all mankind was found who had not been perverted: “*Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God. Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth*” (Genesis 6:9b-10).

Indeed, the fallen angels’ children, the Nephilim, were destroyed by the Flood, for only Noah and his family survived that judgment as Scripture clearly teaches: “*By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith*” (Hebrews 11:7). The promise of the Messiah – the man-Yahweh – passed through Noah and was again invoked to his great, great...great-grandson Abraham: “*I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the sea-*

shore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice” (Genesis 22:17-18).

“*Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever’*” (Exodus 32:13).

These promises to Abraham have not been completely fulfilled even today, for they are promises contingent on the eternal rule of the Messiah – promises that we see expounded on by the Prophets later: “*In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever*” (Daniel 2:44).

Who would rule this unending Kingdom set up on earth? Speaking of the future, God says through King David:

But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain. I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I



will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.’ Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. Worship the Lord with reverence And rejoice with trembling. Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! (Psalm 2:6-12)

As we expected, the king that will rule this unending Kingdom in the future is God’s own Son – the promised manifestation of Himself in human history through the woman’s seed, Who will restore all things. He would be a descendant of Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob, then David – a narrowing of the lineage of the Messiah as time went on into the nation of Israel and the kingly line of the tribe of Judah.

The Jews of Jesus’ time (primarily descendants of the tribe of Judah) understood this much, for it was clearly stated that this promised Son of God would sit on His father David’s throne and rule the world. But they could not differentiate or reconcile in the prophecies that the Messiah would have two nexuses in human history – two central and most important points in this saga. The first would be when God was made flesh, born as a child through woman, fulfilling the first part of the promise that God would come into the world through the seed of the woman. He would suffer and die for the sins of the people – the moment when the serpent bruised His heel. This refers to a non-life-threatening blow, for death could not keep Him. As we shall see, this has already happened. The second nexus, however, is still ahead of us in human history as of 2018 AD when the Messiah will appear a second time, now as the returning, conquering King Who will crush the serpent’s head, restore nature, and set up an eternal Kingdom that will rule the entire world without end. This will fulfill the promise of God made in the presence of Adam, Eve, and satan thousands of years ago.

Little did Eve know that it would take thousands of years for the promised seed – the Messiah – to be born. Neither Eve, Noah,

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or David ever lived to see their great, great...great-grandson, the Son of God – the promised One Who could save them from their sin and restore all things. That honor would come 4,000 years later to Eve’s descendant Mary, for when *“the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons”* (Galatians 4:4-5). This is *“the good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘You are My Son; today I have begotten You’”* (Acts 13:32-33), *“for all the promises of God find their Yes in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our Amen to God for His glory”* (2 Corinthians 1:20).

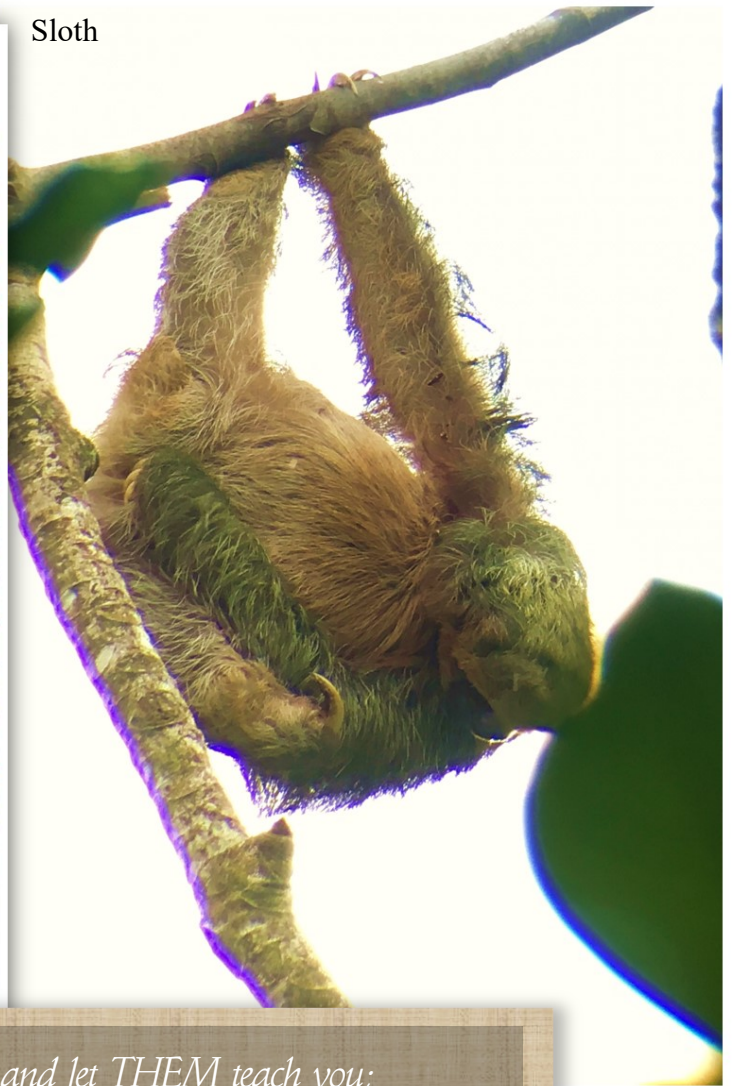
The Jews did not understand that the Messiah would have to atone for the sins of all mankind first, both Jew and Gentile – to reconcile a remnant of mankind back to justification with God, before God would restore the fallen world. The original sin of man’s Fall would have to be undone first, and that would require the Messiah’s substitution of Himself in every man’s place of judgement for original sin and the sins we have all committed, which deserves eternal separation from the presence of God. Only the Son of God could atone for this. Anyone who accepts this substitution of God’s Son in their place of condemnation and entrusts themselves to His kingship (believing on His name) will be saved from the judgment and will be apportioned an eternal inheritance in the eternal Kingdom of God. This is the Gospel, *“things into which angels long to look”* (1 Peter 1:12).

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water (1 Peter 3:18-20).



Toucan

Sloth



*"But now ask the BEASTS, and let THEM teach you;
And the BIRDS of the heavens, and let THEM tell you." (Job 12:7)*



Tree Frog

CORINTHIA

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, born through Mary's seed did not first come as the conquering king the Jews expected Him to be. Instead, He came to die for the sins of the people (when the serpent bruised His heel), but death could not keep Jesus in the grave, and He rose on the third day, ascending into Heaven. In the near future, He will come a second time from Heaven to conquer the world from the anti-Christ (when Jesus will crush the serpent's head). This anti-Christ is the false messiah who will lay claim to Christ's seat in the future Temple and try to steal His inheritance of rightful rule over the world. This is the angel satan's final attempt to personally lay claim to the inheritance of Christ through the man of lawlessness (perhaps a demi-god?).

It may be soon in human history when "the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" (2 Thessalonians 2:3b-4).

Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness...God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us. (2 Thessalonians 2:8-15)

All of this leads us inexorably to the understanding that Jesus Christ was not an after-

thought revealed to the Prophets thousands of years after the Fall. God promised the Son of God from the very day of mankind's rebellion. It took much longer for Him to appear than many expected, but we know *"the Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance"* (2 Peter 3:9). We too need this encouragement as we wait for Jesus to return, for *"in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation'"* (2 Peter 3:3b-4). Yet, *"just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man"* (Luke 17:26). It is possible that Eve's great-grandchildren mocked the promise of the Son of God to her in her later life (especially leading up to the days of Noah) after time proved that neither Cain, Abel, nor Seth were the Messiah. The Scriptures do not tell us if Eve maintained her faith like those of her future descendants who *"died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance"* (Hebrews 11:13).

Like the men and women of faith before us, we must be fully assured that God will perform what He has promised in His timing, for *"He who promised is faithful"* (Hebrews 10:23b), and Jesus Himself has promised, *"I am coming quickly"* (Revelation 3:11a).

Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. (Revelation 1:4-7)

Even so, Amen.

Let There Be Light

By Ginny Larsen

“And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” (Genesis 1:3 ESV)

God said, and there was – and this is how it is today and forever. Man thinks he can create the world the way he wants, but it is only as God says it will be in the end. It is only God Who brings light into the world. Man does not like His light. It exposes man’s lies and his evil intentions. So he seeks to counterfeit or snuff out the light. But that’s impossible. Not only is God the Creator of light but He Himself is the light. All who want His true light may have it if they ask in humility and faith.

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. **The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.** There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the*

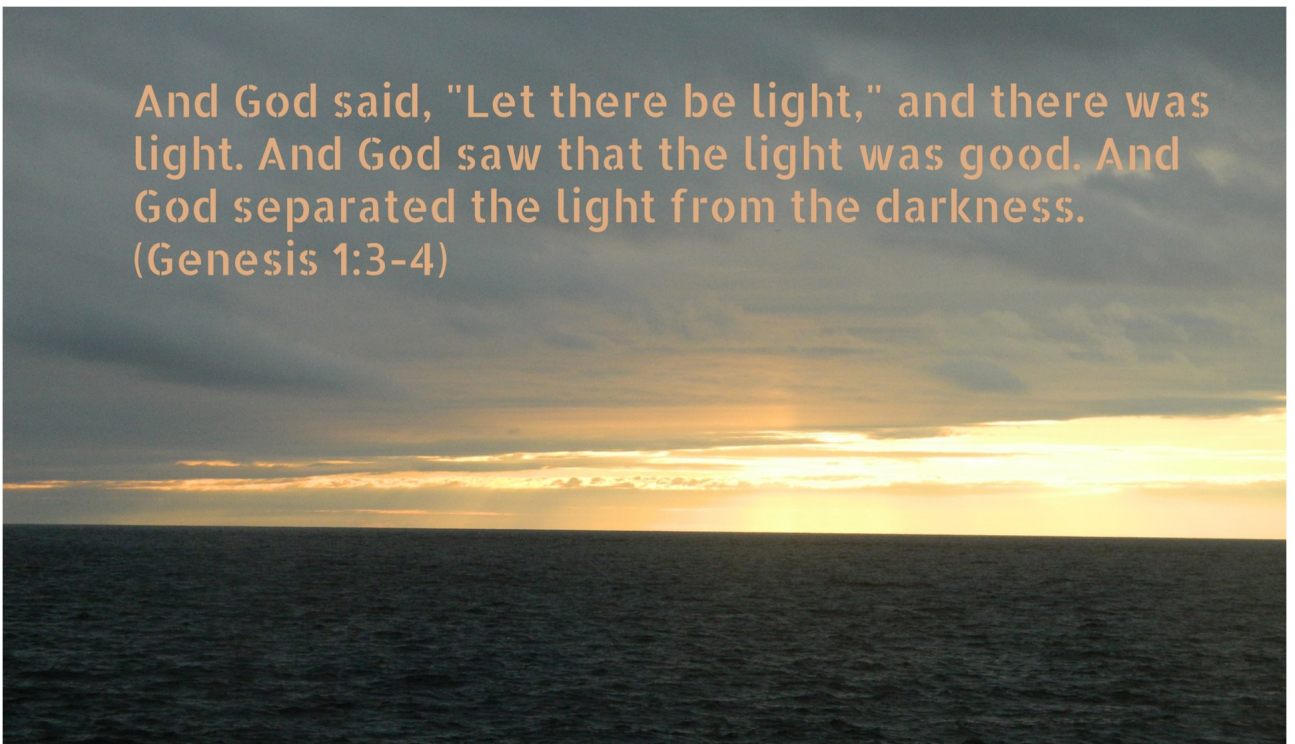
light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him” (John 1:1-10).

“And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it” (Revelation 21:23-24). “And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever” (Revelation 22:5).

From the beginning, satan has tried to snuff out that light or counterfeit it. But God separates the light from the darkness and makes all things clear. *“And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil” (John 3:19).*

In the beginning God said...and there was. In the end, also, it is God Who “says.” It is God Who has the final say. It is God Who destroys the darkness. God—our Creator, our Redeemer, our Savior—will Himself, being the light, dwell with us forever.

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.
(Genesis 1:3-4)



Life Lessons from Joseph

By Beth Moller

As college graduation grew ever nearer, I started worrying and wondering about the future. For the past three years my life had revolved around studying, track practice, violin lessons, teaching assistant jobs, and various other college things. But very quickly, that period of my life would be ending and I would be embarking on a new stage of life. During times of change, I have found it to be incredibly easy to let fear and doubts take hold and overpower faith and trust in God. However, our trust in God is not blind trust. We have so many reasons to be confident in our faith and confident that God will see us through every different stage or trial of life.

Throughout the Bible, God provides examples of men and women who were tested by having to patiently wait for fulfillment of promises, deliverance from difficulties, and direction regarding the next step in life. They were required to trust God through good times and bad. In hindsight, we can see there is evidence of God's faithfulness to His people despite periods of apparent silence. In our own lives, we can be assured that God is there for us as well, even when it seems like nothing is happening to change our circumstances. He is faithfully preparing us for His plans for our future.

One of my favorite people in the book of Genesis is Joseph. Through his life, we can see that he was not perfect but that he used difficult situations to learn what God wanted to teach him and that he faithfully waited for God's deliverance. Joseph waited patiently on the Lord's timing and guidance and worked for the Lord wherever he was placed. My mom likes to remind me to be faithful where I am placed in whatever season of life I am in. Joseph is a perfect example of that advice being played out. We can imagine some of the things Joseph felt going from his father's favorite son to the slave of an Egyptian. Yet in Genesis 39 we see that Joseph was faithful in the new role he was thrust into.

Genesis 39:2-4 says, *"The LORD was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the*

LORD gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned" (NIV). The passage makes a point of noting that God blessed the household of Potiphar because of Joseph. I also find it interesting how it notes in verse 2 that Potiphar saw that God was with Joseph. If we are living for God, even during times when we feel like our work is mundane or beneath us, we can be an incredible witness for God. In a land filled with false gods, Potiphar recognized the true God's hand of guidance with Joseph.

Despite his success, I wonder if Joseph thought the rest of his life was going to be spent serving as a slave. However, as we know from Genesis, Joseph's status declined even more. Due to Potiphar's wife, Joseph traded his life of some standing for the life of an imprisoned slave. Once again, in this new situation Joseph trusted God and was faithful in the little things to the point where the guard had complete confidence in him. Scripture is very clear where Joseph's success came from as well. Verse 21b of Genesis 39 says, *"The LORD was with him; He showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden."*

If I put myself in Joseph's place, I am pretty sure I would be very discouraged by now. Getting pulled away from your family to being a slave and then a prisoner seems like ample reasons to be discouraged and lose sight of God having a plan for your life. But Joseph shows us that if we keep being faithful, keep moving ahead, and keep trusting in God, His plan for our lives will be revealed.

I struggle with patience at times and human nature says we want to be satisfied now. However, Joseph's life shows us that God requires us to wait for His blessings to be revealed, often, if not always, so He can adequately prepare us for what He has for us. After Joseph seemingly had a way out of prison through the cupbearer, he was forgotten by the cupbearer for two years, so we know he was in prison for over two years. Yet in God's perfect timing He raised Joseph up to be second-in-command in Egypt, gave him a wife and children, and allowed Joseph to be the one to provide for his family as well as the people of Egypt and surrounding nations.

Since hindsight is 20/20, I wonder what Joseph thought reflecting on his life. Having his life recorded for us to read in Genesis should encourage us to keep being faithful where we are placed and strive to trust God even when fear may be our default. Through the life of Joseph, we can have assurance that God is faithful to us and gives us blessings more abundant than we can imagine. Joseph's life is also a good illustration of how God prepares us for specific roles at specific times in our lives.

If you are in a season of waiting, a time of trial, or are feeling stuck in a certain place in life, I encourage you to look to the example that Joseph left for us and marvel at God's provision and goodness. He is always there for us even when we cannot see the purpose for what He is taking us through. When Joseph revealed himself to his brothers he told them, *"But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives*

by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God" (Genesis 45:7-8a). I sometimes marvel at how God has worked in my life, and I look forward to being able to look back later in my life and recognize God's hand at work even more as Joseph did when he looked back on his life. He continually gave credit to God and reminded his brothers that what they meant for evil, God used for good.

*"As for YOU, you
meant EVIL against
me, but God meant it
for GOOD."
(Genesis 50:20a)*



Adam, Eve, and Original Sin

By Jane Titrud

People who move in Christian circles are generally familiar with the Biblical story of man's Fall into sin. Familiarity, however, does not mean that all "Christians" share a common understanding and belief when it comes to the principle of original sin. Part of the problem is that there has been an influx of worldly ideas into the Church. Acceptance of the theory of evolution, for instance, has led many to relegate the Biblical accounts of Creation and the Fall to the realm of myth. The concept of original sin is thereby undermined in that it is rendered meaningless without a literal Adam. When people see death as a driving force of evolution and a completely natural occurrence, they also tend to disregard the truth that death is a consequence of sin. The field of counseling psychology likewise challenges true Bibli-

cal understanding in this case by portraying people as basically good and redefining human failure in terms of "sickness" rather than sin.

The truth of Genesis is important to the subject of original sin because the foundational information necessary for understanding in this case is basically found in Genesis. Certain other Old Testament passages, such as Jeremiah 17:9, hint at the common existence of a corrupt sin nature in the inner man as well. It is just that the formulation of specific doctrine with respect to original sin being a spiritual condition that requires salvation by faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ had to wait until the New Testament. That is because the revelation of Christ and the work of Christ play a role in explaining it.

The passage that specifically teaches on original sin is Romans 5:12–21. Some of this is a bit obscure and subject to disagreement, but the most important aspects of the passage will be covered here. Verse 12 says that



As the hart PANTETH after the water brooks, So panteth my SOUL after Thee, O God. My soul THIRSTETH for God, for the LIVING God: WHEN shall I come and APPEAR before God?" (Psalm 42:1-2)

By Betty Harstad

“through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned” (NASB). The one man, of course, is Adam, and the fact that sin and death entered the world through this one man has to do with his disobedience to God in the Garden of Eden. Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, and the result was just what God said it would be—namely, death (Genesis 2:17). Physical death did not happen until later, but spiritual death or separation from God was immediate. The question is how did *“death spread to all men”* and what is the meaning of *“all sinned”*? These matters will be addressed shortly.

Verse 14 describes Adam as *“a type of Him who was to come,”* namely, Christ, and subsequent verses help to clarify what this means. But first note the following verses: *“by the transgression of the one the many died”* (v. 15b), *“the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation”* (v. 16b), *“by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one”* (v. 17a), *“through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men”* (v. 18a), and *“through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners”* (v. 19a). These phrases consistently show that Adam held a unique relationship with all of mankind. What he did affected all. Death, judgment, condemnation, and even the fact that men were generally made sinners came as the result of this one man’s sin and somehow *“because all sinned”* (v. 12). This situation, moreover, has left mankind in need of God’s salvation, for no one is able to escape the resulting condemnation apart from His saving grace. Within the same context, much of the passage therefore draws a parallel, albeit a negative one, between the adverse effects of Adam’s sin and the results of the one righteous act of Christ (vv. 15–21), which brought salvation. This correlation, in turn, shows how Adam was a “type” of Christ. Note especially verse 18: *“So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.”* The negative correspondence here shows that Christ’s one act of righteousness worked to undo the condemning aspect of original sin. Similar correlations exist in the other passages cited as well.

It is important to understand, however, that original sin is different from the personal transgressions we all commit. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament make statements to the effect that there is no one who does not sin (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Psalms 14:2-3; Romans 3:23). Yet, these statements have to do with personal acts of sin or “sins” (plural). “Sin,” “the principle of sin,” or “original sin” (singular), by contrast, has to do with an underlying, inner propensity to commit such acts that stems from the fall and the relationship Adam held in connection with all of humanity from the beginning.

A corrupt sin nature exists in all of us and leads to the virtual inevitability of committing sins. Romans 7:14–23 describes how this underlying sin nature even results in a form of bondage: *“But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good.”*

Yet, how is it that one act of sin by the first man came to be the basis for the sinfulness of the rest of humanity? Moreover, how is it that *“death spread to all men, because all sinned”* (Romans 5:12)? Since the excerpts from verses 15–19 quoted earlier consistently associate the sin of Adam with the sin of all, surely this is part of the answer.

Some say that we were all present “in Adam” in seminal form from the beginning. His sin was therefore our sin, and all thereby share his guilt because we “all sinned” by being “in Adam” from the beginning. From the point of Adam’s original sin, a sin nature or propensity to sin was then transmitted to all of mankind by means of a natural line of descent from our original ancestor.

Yet, an opposing view says that Adam held a form of federal or representative headship over all mankind such that when he sinned, he acted on behalf of everyone else who would ever exist. In other words, when he sinned *“all sinned”* — because all were “in Adam” via his representation (Roman 5:12). In this view, the consequences of sin and death thereby fell to everyone just as they fell to Adam. Adam’s personal guilt, however, did not. Guilt is acquired as each one commits his or her own individual acts of sin. These then are two main ways of explaining the phrase *“all sinned.”*

Differences of opinion in this matter have become defining factors in some major schools of theology, which is another reason why there is no general agreement over the exact nature of “original sin.” Nevertheless, the question of how original sin has come to affect all of mankind is a fair one that deserves careful consideration.

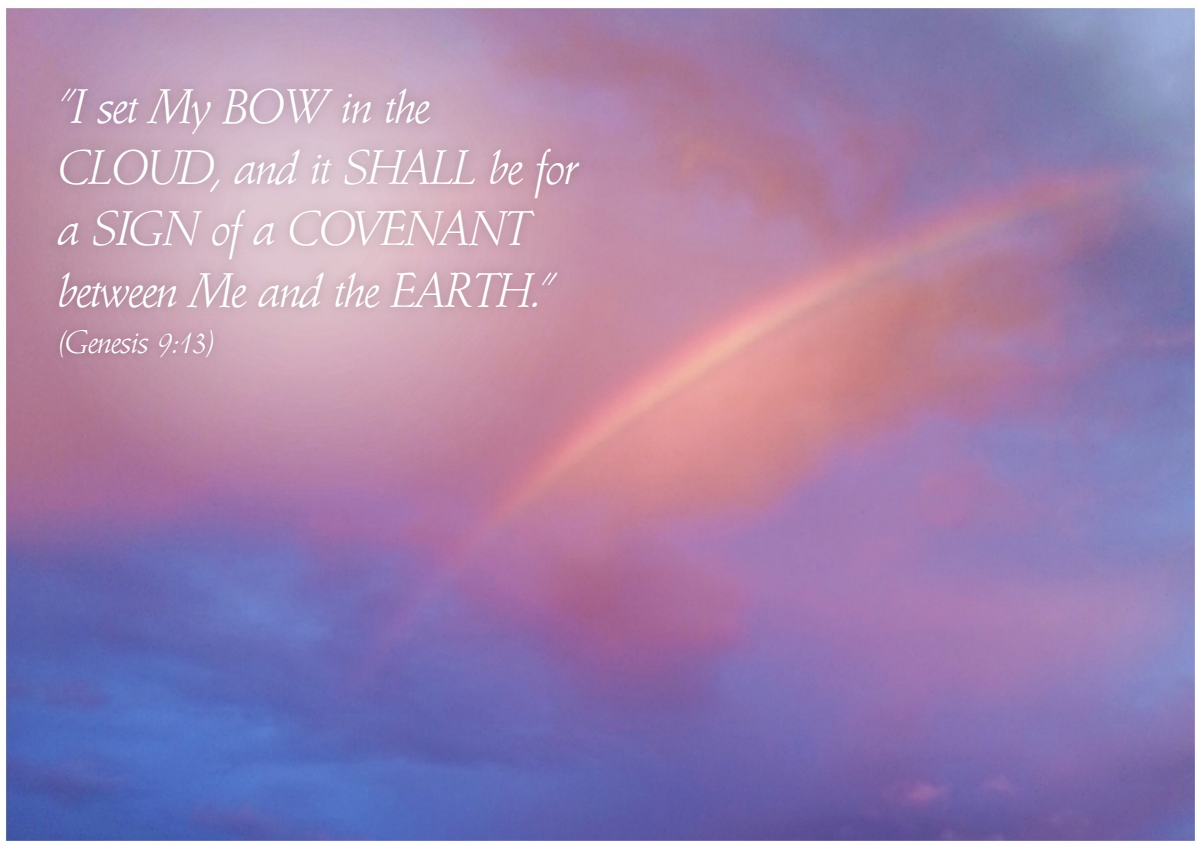
Looking at the issue from a different perspective may well shed new light on this subject. So far, this article has focused on Adam and his relationship to original sin. It is time now to change course and consider the situation with respect to Eve. In other words, how did Adam’s sin relate to Eve—or did it?

In Genesis 1:26-27, we are told that when God created man in His image, He created them male and female. That is to say, the woman was created as part of mankind from the beginning and should be considered as such. In chapter 2, which gives a more detailed account of human creation, we learn that Eve was even made from the flesh of the man (Genesis 2:21–23). A very real physical connection, therefore, existed between the two of them from the onset. At the same time, she

was obviously not Adam’s descendant.

In Genesis 2, we also learn that God made a covenant with Adam alone before the creation of Eve (vv. 15–18). This covenant included a warning for him not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or he would surely die (Genesis 2:16-17). It mentions nothing about whether this restriction would apply to Eve, however, since she was not party to God originally giving this covenant to Adam. She did not even exist at the time.

In Genesis 3:2-3, Eve states the terms of this covenant to the serpent, so we know that she knew about it then. Still, there is no direct indication in Scripture that God reiterated the same covenant He made with Adam to her. The fact that she knew about it does not necessarily mean that God extended the covenant to include her either. It is possible—even likely—that Adam merely passed this information along to Eve himself. And yet, the fact is that she died. She is obviously not living with us today. Merely keep this fact in mind for now as the basis for her death still needs to be determined.



*"I set My BOW in the
CLOUD, and it SHALL be for
a SIGN of a COVENANT
between Me and the EARTH."*

(Genesis 9:13)

The continuing storyline of Genesis reveals that Eve was tempted by the serpent, ate some of the forbidden fruit, and then gave some to her husband with her (v. 6). Thus, one might be tempted to think that sin and death ultimately entered the world through Eve rather than Adam. Yet, we have already seen that the Bible says the opposite (Romans 5:12). One can also observe that it was only after both had eaten of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that they became aware of their nakedness and grew fearful. That is, the Fall required the involvement of Adam.

Keeping this information in mind, it is time to consider the New Testament. Specifically, these facts will now be compared with what one finds in Romans 5:12–21.

As mentioned previously, Paul referred to Adam in Romans 5:14 as *“a type of Him who was to come,”* that is, Christ. A “type” is a historical fact that illustrates a spiritual truth. Types are generally found in the Old Testament but not revealed until the New Testament when they become fulfilled. Here again is another reason why specific doctrine relating to original sin had to await the coming and work of Jesus Christ. The explanation required the fulfillment of the typology pertaining to Christ.

Let us look again at verse 18: *“as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.”* Notice that “one” relates to “one,” and “all” relates to “all.” This defines the nature of the type. The results of each one’s action affected all of humanity in a negative, or positive, but correlating way. Any theory concerning the relationship between Adam and all of mankind in the matter of original sin, therefore, must include Eve, for she was certainly part of the “all” of corporate humanity. She, like Adam, is even our common ancestor.

Based on Romans 5:12–21, therefore, it would seem the most reasonable to conclude that Eve came under the condemnation of sin, died spiritually (the same as Adam), and eventually died physically because of her relationship via creation to Adam, rather than her personal act of disobedience. For if one were to say that the condemnation of sin and death came unto Eve because of her own transgression, then her situation would negate several of the statements in Romans 5. Condemnation

and death would then not have come to *“the many”* (v. 15) or especially to *“all”* (v. 18) through the *“one”* [transgression of Adam]. Eve would be the exception. The typology between Adam and Christ would likewise be irrelevant in the case of Eve because her act of sin was independent of Adam’s. Indeed, her sin came first. In addition, the results of the work of Christ would then correspondingly fail to parallel and undo the negative effects caused by Eve’s transgression for she was not a type of Christ. Most of the statements in the passage of Romans 5:12–21 would thus break down. Furthermore, if one were to think in terms of original sin passing from one generation to another by way of heredity through Eve’s sin as well as Adam’s, then there would be two lines of descent to consider with respect to original sin, not just one. Her relationship to this situation might seem to even negate God’s entire plan of salvation since Eve too was an original ancestor of all. But of course, this is ridiculous and so is the scenario of her coming under condemnation for her own sin.

The idea of natural descent is problematic in the case of Eve in yet another way as well. The sin nature could not have transferred from Adam to Eve via natural descent, for she was not a descendant of Adam. She was supernaturally created from his flesh and created *before* Adam sinned (Genesis 2:21–24).

Since she was related by flesh to Adam, however, this gives one a valid reason to think that she died both spiritually and physically by coming under judgment for the sin of Adam through a form of federal or representative headship. This would put Eve’s relationship to original sin in the same category as everyone else’s. The typology between Adam and Christ would thus apply, and so would God’s plan of salvation. Perhaps she was even created subsequent to Adam and from his flesh primarily for this purpose—to be included in God’s plan of salvation.

We do not know whether Eve believed God in the sense that she was saved or not. What we do know, however, is that one righteous act of Christ achieved justification of life for *“all men”* (Romans 5:18). This truth just needs to be appropriated by faith. Since a federal or representative headship of Adam would have included Eve, she would thus have had at least the potential to be saved. And this would not

have been so if she had died based upon condemnation for her own transgression.

The case of Eve would thus seem to supply a basis for proper understanding. The idea that Adam held a form of representative or federal headship over mankind from the beginning would seem to be the only option that fits the situation with respect to Eve. And realizing that God orchestrated His plan of salvation from the beginning to include all who would believe is indeed a blessing. It speaks of God's wisdom and foreknowledge as well as His mercy and love for all mankind.

Finally, the work of Christ not only resulted in justification for both sins and sin. If that were the end of it, then people in general would still be left in bondage to the principle of sin. When a person believes in Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior, however, he or she becomes a new creation in Christ, receives eternal life, and receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit then enables the believer to live apart from the bondage of sin and to walk in newness of life (Romans 8:1–4, 12–14). The sin nature still remains within, but one no longer has to obey it. The work of Christ in relation to original sin is, consequently, both sufficient and complete when it comes to salvation. And to this I say, Amen! And Praise God!

"The MAN gave names to ALL the CATTLE, and to the BIRDS of the SKY, and to every BEAST of the FIELD, but for ADAM there was not FOUND a HELPER suitable for HIM."

(Genesis 2:20)

"But GOD remembered NOAH and all the BEASTS and all the cattle THAT were with HIM in the ARK."

(Genesis 8:1a)



By Patty Buswell

Christ Gives Us Mastery Over Sin

By Maggie Fischer

“If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”
(Genesis 4:7 NIV)

As a young child, my parents had my sisters and I memorize Genesis 4:7 to teach us the important lesson of mastery over sin. They would remind us of this verse when we were tempted to fall into the sins that children often give into: sibling tiffs, selfishness in wanting our own way, and talking back to our parents, just to name a few. I am thankful for my parents’ wisdom in taking this approach with teaching us this important life lesson that is just as applicable in my life today as it was when I was 8 years old. But now seeing this verse as an adult, I can see even more depth and richness in the lessons it has to teach. Isn’t this the beauty of Scripture? Basic truths we learn in the infancy of our faith continue to grow and expand as we mature in our Christian walk.

The basic message of this verse is, as I mentioned just previously, mastery over sin. But studied more intensely, I can see God’s message to Cain can be delved into much more deeply. The first thing that caught my attention is the word “accepted.” Our world today is full of talk of acceptance and loving without judgement. This can be a very controversial topic and it is not my intent to open up that discussion in the context of this article. But I think it is important to note that it is a “hot” topic among Christians and unbelievers alike. From a human perspective, each one of us would be lying to say we did not care about our standing before our fellow man. Desire for acceptance is a concept instilled within us from our earliest days. But Christ tells us in Matthew 10:28 our focus should not be on our standing before our fellow man but rather on our standing before the Lord of All. He [Christ] says, *“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both the soul and body in hell.”* In this statement, Christ is reminding us whose opinion really

matters. It should be of little importance to us what the world thinks of us. What should be of first importance is how acceptable we are before God. Yet for me, and many others, this can often be easy to accept as the truth but much harder to put into practice. I challenge you to prayerfully ask the Lord to remind you to “[fix] our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith” (Hebrews 12:2) and to be freed from the burden of striving for the acceptance of man. Paul reminds us in Romans 8:34: *“Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus Who died – more than that, Who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”* If we are right before God, then no one has any right to speak against us. And this truth should spur us on!

The second message I find in this verse is victory over sin. Sin is a disease we are all dying from. But Christ came to earth with the life-giving vaccine: His own life blood. And even though Christians have received this salvation, we are all still affected by the sin nature we were physically born into. Yet all hope is not lost. Christ gives us the ability to fight sin and overcome it. Satan wants to deceive us into thinking our sins have victory over us. But this is not what Christ tells us! Paul teaches us in Romans 8:37 that *“in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him [Christ] Who loved us”* and also in Philippians 1:6 that *“He [Christ] Who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”* On our own, we cannot have mastery over our sins. But through Christ we can. He gives us the strength we need to fight against the attacks of Satan and our own sinful desires and come out victorious. When you are tempted to fall into discouragement over sin’s hold on an area of your life, remind yourself of these teachings and ask God to give you strength to fight the devil’s attacks.

I am so thankful to have this verse written on my heart. I am far from being able to say man’s opinion does not matter to me or that I always have victory over sins in my life. But by memorizing Scriptures such as this one, I am more prone to ground myself back in the Truth and Word of God when I fall short. Our Christian walk is a life-long journey and the seeds planted in us along the way will grow

and develop in maturity if we allow the Holy Spirit to cultivate and nurture them in our lives. I thank God every day for blessing me with Godly parents who planted so many of these seeds in my heart. I pray that the message of this verse has encouraged you today as much as it has encouraged me throughout the years.



*"God blessed
THEM, saying
Be FRUITFUL
AND multiply...
and let BIRDS
multiply on the
EARTH."*

(Genesis 1:22)



By Jackie Hansen

April-June Newsletter Theme: THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

Submission Deadline: April 28

Publish Date: May 7

Themes to think about in the Book of Matthew:

What is the significance of Jesus' genealogy in Matthew? Why does it differ from the genealogy given in Luke? Can any Jew today give their genealogy back to King David?

What was John the Baptist's work? How was he laying the foundation for belief in Jesus, and why is this still important today?

Why did Jesus need to be baptized by his cousin, John the Baptist?

What do we learn from the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness?

Why did Jesus call twelve disciples? What are their future roles? What were the backgrounds and characters of the disciples?

What is the significance of the Sermon on the Mount?

List the prophecies Jesus fulfilled in His life.

Why did Jesus speak in parables or stories? Why did the Gospel come to us as a story, instead of a proclamation or instruction manual?

Is there any significance to the miracles Jesus performed? What was Jesus demonstrating with each miracle? How do they relate to His Millennial Kingdom?

Why did Jesus say His Father had abandoned Him on the cross—why is this significant to the Gospel?

Why did Jesus have to die?

Why is it so important that Jesus was resurrected bodily and that He didn't simply spiritually ascend into Heaven?