

THE NATURE OF MAN
PRESENTED BY
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GREEN LAWN CHURCH OF CHRIST
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WE ARE ENTERING TONIGHT INTO THE FINAL SECTION OF OUR RATHER LENGTHY SERIES OF BASIC BIBLE DOCTRINE. WE HAVE LOOKED AT SUCH BASIC THEMES AS GOD, CHRIST, THE BIBLE, THE HOLY SPIRIT, SIN, AND THE CHURCH. I DO NOT KNOW WHAT GENERAL HEADING WE MIGHT GIVE TO THE SECTION INTO WHICH WE ARE GOING OTHER THAN TO SAY THAT THEY ARE GENERAL. BUT THIS IN AND OF ITSELF MIGHT BE MISLEADING, FOR SOMETIMES WHEN WE SAY "GENERAL," WE THINK THAT THESE ARE EITHER UNIMPORTANT OR LESS IMPORTANT. YET THESE SUBJECTS ARE NOT EITHER FOR MANY OF THESE SUBJECTS OF WHICH WE SHALL BE SPEAKING OF IN THIS SECTION ARE NOTHING MORE THAN SHORTHAND WORDS FOR THE ENTIRE THEME OF SCRIPTURE. AND I WOULD EMPHASIZE AS WE COME INTO THIS SECTION OF OUR STUDY THAT WE SHALL NOT BE ATTEMPTING TO EXHAUST THE POSSIBILITIES OF ANY ONE OF THEM. IT WOULD BE RIDICULOUS REALLY FOR US TO PRESUME THAT WE COULD EXHAUST THESE SUBJECTS ANYWAY, MUCH LESS PRESUME TO EXHAUST SOME OF THESE SUBJECTS OR ANY OF THESE SUBJECTS COMPLETELY IN ONE SERMON. SUCH IS NOT POSSIBLE AND SUCH IS NOT OUR PURPOSE. OUR PURPOSE IS MERELY TO SET BEFORE YOU SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES THAT WILL HELP YOU AND GUIDE YOU IN STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD AND IN APPRECIATING SOME OF THE SUBJECTS THAT ARE DISCUSSED THEREIN, AND TO GIVE YOU SOME OF THE BASIC PRINCIPLES THAT ARE TO GUIDE YOU IN DETERMINING YOUR FAITH AND IN APPRECIATING THE OBJECT OF YOUR FAITH, JESUS CHRIST.

OUR LESSON TONIGHT DEALS WITH "THE NATURE OF MAN." AS I SUGGESTED A MOMENT AGO, IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO DISCUSS COMPLETELY THE NATURE OF MAN FROM EITHER A BIBLICAL OR A PHILOSOPHICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL STANDPOINT. WE ARE ELIMINATING SEVERAL OF THOSE FIELDS IN THE BEGINNING BECAUSE, IN THIS CONTEXT, WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN EITHER PSYCHOLOGY'S APPRAISAL OR PHILOSOPHY'S APPRAISAL. WE ARE INTERESTED IN GOD'S APPRAISAL AND GOD'S DISCLOSURE OF THE NATURE OF MAN. BUT EVEN HERE WE COULD NOT BEGIN TO BE EXHAUSTIVE BECAUSE MAN IS SUCH A DIVERSE CREATURE IN MANY RESPECTS. HE IS A BEING WHO HAS (OR SHOULD WE SAY "IS") BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT (1 THESS. 5:23). YET THERE IS SOME QUESTION AS TO WHETHER HE IS A THREE-FOLD BEING OR A TWO-FOLD BEING, BOTH SOUL AND SPIRIT BEING SIMPLY DIFFERENT WAYS OF LOOKING AT THE ETERNAL ASPECTS OF MAN. THERE ARE QUESTIONS AS TO WHERE MAN GOT AND GETS HIS SPIRIT. IS THAT SPIRIT PRE-EXISTENT? IS IT PUT INTO HIM AFTER CONCEPTION BY THE POWER OF GOD? OR IS IT GIVEN TO HIM BY HIS PARENTS WHEN THEY CONCEIVE HIM? THESE QUESTIONS ARE INTERESTING QUESTIONS AND THERE ARE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE WHICH GIVE US SOME INSIGHT INTO WHAT MIGHT POSSIBLY BE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS. BUT INSTEAD OF DEALING WITH AREAS LIKE THIS WHERE THERE ARE PERHAPS MORE QUESTIONS RAISED THAN ANSWERED, WE PASS BY THEM AND LOOK AT MAN AS HE IS DESCRIBED IN THE SCRIPTURE, PARTICULARLY HIS NATURE AS IT IS RELATED TO GOD.

FOR A TEXT, I WANT TO TURN TO THE O.T.—GENESIS 1:26-28. "AND GOD SAID, LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, AFTER OUR LIKENESS; AND LET THEM HAVE DOMINION OVER THE FISH OF THE SEA, AND OVER THE FOWL OF THE AIR, AND OVER THE CATTLE, AND OVER ALL THE EARTH, AND OVER EVERY CREEPING THING THAT CREEPETH UPON THE EARTH. SO GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE, IN THE IMAGE OF GOD CREATED HE HIM; MALE AND FEMALE CREATED HE THEM. AND GOD BLESSED THEM, AND GOD SAID UNTO THEM, BE FRUITFUL, AND MULTIPLY, AND REPLENISH THE EARTH, AND SUBDUCE IT; AND HAVE DOMINION OVER THE FISH OF THE SEA, AND OVER THE FOWL OF THE AIR, AND OVER EVERY LIVING THING THAT MOVETH UPON THE EARTH." I THINK PERHAPS BETTER THAN ANY OTHER EXPRESSION THE UNIQUE NATURE OF MAN IS DESCRIBED IN THAT PHRASE, "IN OUR IMAGE." THIS IMMEDIATELY LETS US KNOW THAT THERE IS SUCH AN INTER-RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF MAN THAT ONE CANNOT REALLY KNOW GOD UNLESS HE KNOWS MAN AND ONE CANNOT REALLY KNOW MAN UNLESS HE KNOWS GOD. IN APPRECIATING THE NATURE OF MAN AS MAN STANDS IN RELATIONSHIP TO GOD, THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF MAN IN THREE SEPERATE AND DISTINCT STATES OR STAGES

AND IT IS IN EACH OF THESE STAGES THAT WE WANT, SEEING MAN, TO APPRECIATE HIS NATURE. THE FIRST OF THESE STAGES IS MAN AS CREATED. THE SECOND OF THESE STAGES IS MAN AS FALLEN. THE THIRD OF THESE STAGES IS MAN AS REDEEMED.

LET US GO FIRST OF ALL TO MAN AS HE CAME FROM THE HAND OF GOD IN CREATION. FIRST OF ALL WE CAN READILY ADMIT, IF WE BELIEVE SCRIPTURE, THAT WHEN MAN HAD BEEN CREATED THERE WAS NEITHER MORAL IMPERFECTION NOR MORAL PURITY WITHIN. IN GENESIS 1:31, WHEN GOD HAD FINISHED HIS CREATION, HE LOOKED AT THAT WHICH HE HAD CREATED AND SAID, "IT IS GOOD." THIS INCLUDED THE CREATION OF MAN. THEREFORE, WHEN MAN HAD BEEN CREATED, THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG EITHER WITH MAN OR IN MAN. THE REASON THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG WITH MAN OR IN MAN WAS BECAUSE MAN HAD BEEN CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD. BUT WHEN WE SAY THAT MAN WAS CREATED IN THE IMAGE OR IN THE LIKENESS OF GOD, JUST EXACTLY WHAT HAVE WE SAID? OR IF WE MIGHT RESTATE THE QUESTION—WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE CREATED IN THE IMAGE AND IN THE LIKENESS OF GOD?

BEFORE WE ANSWER THAT QUESTION POSITIVELY, LET ME TELL YOU SOME THINGS IT DOES NOT MEAN. IN THE FIRST PLACE, IT DOES NOT REFER TO THE BODILY FORM OF MAN. THERE CAN'T BE ANY REFERENCE HERE TO THE BODILY FORM OF MAN BECAUSE GOD DOES NOT POSSESS ANY BODILY FORM. WE KNOW THAT GOD IS PURE SPIRIT AND THAT SPIRIT DOES NOT POSSESS ANY PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS. THUS, A PHYSICAL RESEMBLANCE IS OUT OF THE QUESTION BECAUSE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE. BUT MORE IMPORTANT THAN THAT WHEN THE SCRIPTURES SAYS THAT WE ARE CREATED IN THE IMAGE AND IN THE LIKENESS OF GOD, IT IS NOT SAYING THAT WE HAVE BEEN CREATED IN EVERY RESPECT LIKE GOD. IT IS NOT SAYING THAT WE POSSESS EXACTLY THE SAME POWERS AND THE SAME ABILITIES AND THE SAME CAPACITIES GOD POSSESSES. CERTAINLY MAN IS LIKE GOD, BUT YET WE MUST, HAVING SAID THAT, STRESS THE POINT THAT MAN IS CREATED LIKE GOD, NOT AS GOD. THERE MUST ALWAYS AND EVER BE SOME RESPECTS IN WHICH MAN IS NOT LIKE GOD, FOR GOD IS THE CREATOR, AND MAN IS THE CREATURE. MAN CAN NEVER OUTGROW, MAN CAN NEVER GET AWAY FROM HIS CREATUREHOOD. IF YOU WILL REMEMBER SOME MONTHS AGO WHEN WE STARTED THIS SERIES OF SERMONS, IN OUR DISCUSSION OF GOD WE SPOKE OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD. WE SUGGESTED THAT THE ATTRIBUTES WHICH GOD POSSESSES MAY BE DIVIDED INTO TWO LARGE CATEGORIES. ONE OF THESE CATEGORIES WAS THE "COMMUNICABLE" ATTRIBUTES OF GOD WHICH IS TO SAY THAT THERE ARE SOME ATTRIBUTES THAT GOD CAN COMMUNICATE TO MAN. BUT THERE ARE ALSO SOME ATTRIBUTES OF GOD WHICH ARE "INCOMMUNICABLE," WHICH IS TO SAY THAT THERE ARE SOME ATTRIBUTES OF GOD THAT GOD CANNOT COMMUNICATE TO ANY OF HIS CREATION. THIS MEANS THAT THERE ARE SOME RESPECTS IN WHICH MAN CAN NEVER BE LIKE GOD. MAN CAN NEVER BE LIKE GOD IN THE MANNER OF GOD'S EXISTENCE, FOR MAN IS CREATED AND THAT MEANS THAT MAN'S EXISTENCE IS DERIVED. IT COMES FROM SOMETHING OUTSIDE ITSELF. BUT GOD'S EXISTENCE IS AN UNDERIVED EXISTENCE. HE HAS NO BEGINNING. THERE WAS NO CREATION OF GOD. HE "IS" BY HIS VERY NATURE. MAN CAN NEVER BE LIKE GOD IN GOD'S IMMUTABILITY. MAN CAN NEVER BE LIKE GOD IN GOD'S INFINITY. MAN CAN NEVER BE LIKE GOD IN GOD'S UNITY. YET, THERE IS ^A SENSE IN WHICH MAN IS LIKE GOD.

SOMETIMES THE FACT THAT THERE ARE SOME RESPECTS IN WHICH MAN CANNOT BE LIKE GOD HAS LED US TO SOME MISUNDERSTANDING. I THINK IT HAS CREATED WITHIN US THE ANTICIPATION THAT WE SHALL HAVE SOMETHING IN HEAVEN WHICH IN REALITY WE SHALL NOT HAVE. NOW CERTAINLY I KNOW AND YOU KNOW THAT THE FACT THAT WE ARE CLOTHED WITH IMMORTALITY IN HEAVEN WILL MEAN BY ITS VERY NATURE THAT WE WILL KNOW SOME THINGS THERE THAT WE HAVE NOT KNOWN HERE. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND THERE WILL BE SOME THINGS THAT WE HAVE NOT KNOWN HERE AND THAT WE WILL NOT KNOW THERE. WE WERE NOT CREATED WITH COMPREHENSIVE KNOWLEDGE HERE. WE WERE NOT CREATED WITH INFINITE KNOWLEDGE. MAN WAS CREATED A FINITE BEING EVEN BEFORE HE SINNED. AND THIS FINITENESS WAS NEITHER A BURDEN, A DISGRACE, NOR AN IMPERFECTION IN HIM. THAT MAN IS TAKEN TO HEAVEN DOES NOT MEAN THAT HE SHALL BECOME INFINITE AS GOD IS INFINITE, THAT HE SHALL KNOW AS GOD KNOWS, FOR HE WOULD NOT ONLY HAVE TO BECOME IMMORTAL, HE WOULD HAVE TO BECOME GOD IN ORDER TO KNOW AS GOD KNOWS OR TO KNOW GOD IN THE VERY DEPTHS OF HIS BEING. THIS IS SOMETHING TO WHICH MAN SHALL NEVER ATTAIN. WE WERE NOT CREATED WITH COMPREHENSIVE KNOWLEDGE. WE CERTAINLY HAVE NOT HAD IT SINCE THE FALL. WE DO NOT HAVE IT NOW THAT WE ARE REDEEMED, AND WE SHALL NOT HAVE IT WHEN WE ARE ULTIMATELY SAVED AND ISSUED INTO THE ETERNAL CITY.

IF THEN, WHEN WE SAY THAT WE ARE CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD, IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT THERE IS A BODILY RESEMBLANCE. IF WHEN WE SAY THAT WE HAVE BEEN CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD, IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE ARE LIKE GOD IN EVERY RESPECT. WHEN GOD SAID, "LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE," WHAT DID HE DO? LET ME SUGGEST TWO THINGS. 1. MAN WAS MADE A RATIONAL BEING. GOD IS A RATIONAL BEING AND WHEN MAN WAS MADE IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD, HE WAS MADE A RATIONAL BEING. THIS IS ONE OF THE THINGS THAT DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN MAN AND THE ANIMAL. YOU WILL NOTICE I DID NOT SAY "MAN AND THE LOWER ANIMALS." THERE ARE CERTAINLY SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE PHYSICAL BEING OF MAN AND THE PHYSICAL BEING OF ANIMALS, BUT I BELIEVE IT LEAVES THE WRONG IMPRESSION TO SPEAK OF MAN AS THE "HIGHER" ANIMAL AND THE OTHERS AS THE "LOWER" ANIMALS. SOME MAY QUESTION THIS. THEY LOOK AT THE ANIMALS AND THEY SEE THAT IN MANY RESPECTS THE ANIMALS TEND TO DISPLAY MORE WISDOM THAN MAN DISPLAYS. YET MOST OF THE WISDOM, OR THE SEEMING WISDOM, THAT THE ANIMALS DISPLAY IS WHAT MAY BE REFERRED TO AS INSTINCT. INSTINCT IS NOTHING MORE THAN A PROPENSITY WHICH AN INDIVIDUAL OR AN ANIMAL HAS PRIOR TO EXPERIENCE AND WHICH HE DID NOT NEED TO LEARN. IN OTHER WORDS, AN INSTINCT IS SOMETHING THAT AS WE SAY COMES "NATURALLY." IT IS NOT SOMETHING THAT AN ANIMAL HAS TO BE TAUGHT--HE DOESN'T LEARN IT. INSTINCT IS NOTHING MORE THAN A BLIND, UNREASONING IMPULSE. INSTINCT IS NOT SOMETHING THAT IS CONTROLLED BY THE ANIMAL. INSTINCT IS SOMETHING THAT CONTROLS THE ANIMAL. INSTINCT IS SOMETHING THAT HAS NEVER BEEN AND CANNOT BE IMPROVED. THE SWALLOWS COME BACK TO CAPISTRANO BY THE SAME ROUTE EVERY YEAR. MIGRATORY BIRDS ARE FLYING TODAY JUST EXACTLY AS THEY FLEW A THOUSAND YEARS AGO. THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE, NO IMPROVEMENT. THE BEAVER IS STILL BUILDING HIS DAM JUST EXACTLY AS BEAVERS BUILT DAMS A THOUSAND YEARS AGO. THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE. THERE HAS BEEN NO REASONING ABILITY TO INCREASE THE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN OR TO PUT IT IN A DIFFERENT LOCATION. THE HONEY BEE IS BUILDING EXACTLY THE SAME KIND OF HONEY COMB THAT HE BUILT A THOUSAND YEARS AGO. HE DOES IT BY INSTINCT. THERE HAS NEVER BEEN AND THERE WILL NEVER BE ANY KIND OF IMPROVEMENT. THE LOWER ANIMALS, IN SPITE OF THE INSTINCTS WHICH THEY POSSESS, ARE IRRATIONAL, BUT MAN, MAN IS ENDOWED WITH MENTAL FACULTIES WHICH ARE CAPABLE OF INDEFINITE IMPROVEMENT. MOST OF US ARE USING ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE BRAIN CAPACITY THAT GOD HAS CREATED WITHIN US. MOST OF US ARE USING ONLY A VERY SMALL PORTION OF THE ABILITIES THAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO US, AND NOT ONLY THE INDIVIDUAL BUT THE RACE IS CAPABLE OF BEING IMPROVED, OR IMPROVING PROCESSES, OF IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE, OF INCREASING WISDOM. MAN IS ABLE TO DO THESE THINGS BECAUSE MAN IS A RATIONAL BEING. MAN IS ABLE TO DO THESE THINGS BECAUSE THERE IS WITHIN HIM THE CAPACITY TO ASCEND THE LADDER OF INTELLECTUAL EXCELLENCE. NOW IT IS TRUE THAT MAN'S RATIONALITY DID NOT ESCAPE THE FALL. AND IT IS TRUE THAT MAN'S RATIONALITY, MAN'S ABILITY TO THINK, HAS BEEN AS MUCH AFFECTED BY SIN AS HAS ANY OTHER PORTION OF MAN. BUT YET, HAVING SAID THIS, WE MUST ALSO HASTEN TO SAY THAT THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT MAN IS NO LONGER BEING CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD. ADAM AND EVE WERE NOT THE ONLY HUMAN BEINGS CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD. EVERY HUMAN BEING, EVEN THOSE CONCEIVED IN AND THOSE BORN IN A WORLD OF SIN--AND THAT INCLUDES ALL OF US EXCEPT ADAM AND EVE--WERE STILL CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD. IN JAMES 3:9, JAMES SPEAKS OF MEN WHO ARE MADE AFTER THE "SIMILITUDE OF GOD." THE TENSE OF THE GREEK WORD THERE TRANSLATED "ARE MADE" IS IN THE PRESENT TENSE AND THAT TELLS US SOMETHING. IT TELLS US THAT, IN SPITE OF MAN'S IMPERFECTION, IN SPITE OF MAN'S SINS, IN SPITE OF MAN'S INCAPACITATION, MAN IS STILL BEING CREATED, OR BEING MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD. MAN ALONE IS RATIONAL AND HE DERIVES THAT RATIONALITY FROM THE LIKENESS OF GOD. THIS IS THE GLORY OF MAN, BUT WHILE MAN'S RATIONALITY IS HIS THE GLORY, IT IS NOT HIS CHIEF GLORY.

MAN IS NOT ONLY MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD IN BEING A RATIONAL BEING, BUT MAN IS MADE IN THE MORAL LIKENESS OF GOD. THIS MEANS THAT MAN WAS CREATED AS A HOLY BEING. THIS IS MAN'S CHIEF GLORY--THE FACT THAT HE WAS HOLY AS GOD WAS HOLY. SOMETIMES WE SPEAK OF MAN AS BEING BORN IN A STATE OF INNOCENCE AS IF WE BELIEVED THAT THAT EXHAUSTED THE NATURE OF MAN'S CREATION. BUT IT DOESN'T. INNOCENCE JUST MEANS THE ABSENCE OF EVIL--IT'S NEGATIVE. BUT MAN NOT ONLY HAD INNOCENCE WHICH WAS NOT HAVING SINNED, HE HAD A POSITIVE CHARACTERISTIC WHICH WAS HOLINESS. WELL READ A PASSAGE IN A MOMENT FROM EPHESIANS 4 WHICH I BELIEVE WILL INDICATE THAT HE WAS MADE SUCH.

IN ECCLESIASTES 7:9 THE WRITER SAID CONCERNING MAN, "GOD HATH MADE MAN UPRIGHT." MAN ENJOYED FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD, AND HAD MAN NOT BEEN HOLY THIS FELLOWSHIP COULD NOT HAVE BEEN ENJOYED FOR GOD COULD NOT LOOK UPON EVIL--HABAKKUK 1:13. HAD MAN NOT BEEN HOLY GOD COULD NOT HAVE LOOKED DOWN UPON THE CREATION THAT HE HAD MADE INCLUDING MAN AND SAID, "IT IS GOOD." MAN'S MORAL STATE IN HIS ORIGINAL STATE WAS A STATE OF INNOCENCE, OF INTEGRITY, OF UPRIGHTNESS, AND OF PURITY. MAN AS CREATED. HOW BEAUTIFUL INDEED AS HE CAME FROM THE HAND OF GOD!

BUT NOW COMES THE SAD CHAPTER IN THE EXPERIENCES OF MAN. NOT ONLY DO WE LOOK AT MAN AS CREATED, WE LOOK AT MAN AS FALLEN. THERE HAS BEEN A GREAT DEAL OF DISCUSSION (REALLY, PERHAPS IT JUST SOUNDS LIKE A GREAT DEAL. MAYBE IT IS JUST A LITTLE BIT OF RATHER INTENSE DISCUSSION), AS TO HOW LONG MAN CONTINUED IN HIS STATE OF INNOCENCE AND HOLINESS. DID HE CONTINUE FOR A DAY? DID HE CONTINUE FOR A WEEK? DID HE CONTINUE FOR A YEAR? DID HE CONTINUE FOR A HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE THE FALL? THE ANSWER IS THAT WE JUST DON'T KNOW, AND IT IS USELESS TO SPECULATE. BUT THE IMPORTANT THING FOR US TO NOTE JUST HERE IS THAT WE DO KNOW AT LEAST THIS MUCH. WHILE WE DO NOT KNOW THE LENGTH OF TIME THAT MAN CONTINUED BEFORE THE FALL, WE DO KNOW THAT HE DID SO CONTINUE. THE FACT THAT HE DID CONTINUE PROVED MAN'S ABILITY TO BE OBE-
DIENT TO GOD. MAN DID NOT FALL BECAUSE HE HAD TO FALL. MAN FELL BECAUSE HE CHOSE TO BE DIS-
OBEDIENT TO THE WILL OF GOD. THE FACT THAT HE WAS OBE-
DIENT PROVES THAT HE COULD HAVE BEEN OBE-
DIENT PERMANENTLY. MAN NEED NOT HAVE FALLEN AND MAN WOULD NOT HAVE FALLEN BUT FOR HIS VOLUNTARY DECISION TO DISOBEY. FOLLOWING THAT DECISION THERE CAME DISASTROUS RESULTS, PERHAPS BEST DESCRIBED BY THE APOSTLE PAUL IN ROMANS 5:12. "WHEREFORE, AS BY ONE MAN SIN EN-
TERED INTO THE WORLD, AND DEATH BY SIN; AND SO DEATH PASSED UPON ALL MEN, FOR THAT ALL HAVE SINNED." WE LOOK BACK INTO THE EXPERIENCES OF ADAM AND WE SEE WHAT PAUL MEANT BY THAT, FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD WAS BROKEN. ADAM, WHO HAD DWELT IN COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IN THE GARDEN; ADAM, WHO HAD WALKED WITH GOD IN THE GARDEN IN THE COOL OF THE DAY, NOW SHRINKS FROM GOD'S PRESENCE AND FOOLISHLY ATTEMPTS TO HIDE HIMSELF FROM THE OMNIPOTENT AND THE OMNISCIENT ONE. ADAM DIED. ADAM BECAME SPIRITUALLY DEAD AND STARTED PHYSICALLY DYING--PHYSICAL DEATH COMING WHEN THE SPIRIT LEFT THE BODY AND SPIRITUAL DEATH WHEN GOD LEFT THE SPIRIT. ADAM REACHED A POINT WHERE HE DID NOT WANT TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY. HE DENIED HIS GUILT AND HE SOUGHT TO SHIFT THE BLAME TO EVE AND EVEN TO GOD. BUT ADAM REACHED A POINT WHERE HE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO LIVE EVEN WITH HIMSELF. IT IS EVER SO WITH THE SINNER. THE SINNER IS NOT EVERYBODY'S BEST FRIEND. HE IS NOT EVEN HIS OWN BEST FRIEND. HE IS HIS OWN WORST ENEMY. HE HAS DIFFICULTY LIVING WITH HIMSELF. HIS KNOWLEDGE IS DARKENED, HE IS THE SLAVE OF SIN. GOD'S IMAGE, GOD'S LIKENESS, PUT IN MAN AT CREATION AND UPON WHICH GOD LOOKED AND SAID, "IT IS GOOD," HAS BECOME CORRUPTED IN MAN.

BUT THANKS BE UNTO GOD, PRAISE BE TO THE FATHER, THAT THE STORY DOES NOT END HERE, FOR WE SPEAK NOT ONLY OF MAN AS CREATED, WE SPEAK NOT ONLY OF MAN AS FALLEN, WE CANNOT FULLY BEGIN TO COMPREHEND THE NATURE OF MAN UNTIL WE SEE MAN AS HE IS REDEEMED BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST. FALLEN MAN HAS A PROBLEM. FALLEN MAN'S PROBLEM IS THAT HE LOOKS AT HIM-
SELF AND ASSUMES THAT HE IS NORMAL. FALLEN MAN HAS A PROBLEM BECAUSE HE LOOKS AT HIMSELF AND ASSUMING HE IS NORMAL BELIEVES THAT HE IS AWARE OF HIS TRUE NATURE. BUT HE IS NOT NOR-
MAL. HE IS NOT AS GOD CREATED HIM. HE DOESN'T SEE HIS TRUE NATURE FOR HE DOESN'T SEE WHAT GOD WANTS HIM TO BE. IN HIS STATE OF DARKENED KNOWLEDGE AND BLINDNESS, HE SUPPRESSES THE REVELATION THAT GOD HAS GIVEN UNTO HIM. AND IN SUPPRESSING THE REVELATION THAT GOD HAS GIVEN, IN ALL OF HIS GUILT HE CONTINUES TO REBEL AGAINST GOD. HE NEEDS TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF SELF. BUT TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF SELF ISN'T POSSIBLE UNTIL MAN COMES TO SEE HIMSELF AS HE WAS, AS HE IS, AND AS, BY THE POWER AND GRACE OF GOD, HE MIGHT YET BE. SO IT IS THAT IN SEEKING TO GIVE THIS MESSAGE TO MAN--THAT ALL IS NOT LOST, THAT ALL IS NOT UNDONE, BUT THERE IS HOPE, THERE IS A WAY--GOD PUBLISHES THE KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION, THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST UNTO SINFUL MAN. THOSE THAT ARE OF A TRUE HEART SEE THEMSELVES REFLECTED IN SCRIPTURE AND YET, SEEING THEMSELVES REFLECTED IN SCRIPTURE WITH ALL OF THEIR GUILT UPON THEMSELVES, THEY,

LIKE MEN ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST, CRY OUT AND ASK, "MEN AND BRETHREN, WHAT SHALL WE DO?" AND WHEN THE ANSWER COMES, "REPENT YE AND BE BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST UNTO THE REMISSION OF SINS AND YOU WILL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT," THERE IS NO HESITATION. AND IT MAY BE SAID OF THOSE TODAY WHO RECEIVE THE MESSAGE OF JESUS AS IT WAS RECEIVED THAT DAY THAT "THEY WHO GLADLY RECEIVED THE WORD WERE BAPTIZED AND THERE WERE ADDED UNTO THEM IN THAT DAY ABOUT THREE THOUSAND SOULS."

BUT NOW THE QUESTION IS, "WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?" THE SCRIPTURE TELLS US WHAT HAPPENED, WHAT REDEMPTION IS ALL ABOUT, WHAT THE ATONEMENT DOES FOR US. IT BRINGS BACK TO US EVERYTHING THAT WAS LOST IN THE FALL. THE ENTIRE REDEPTIVE PROCESS OF JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION IS REFERRED TO IN SCRIPTURE AS THE RENEWAL OF THE IMAGE OF GOD WITHIN MAN. MAN AS CREATED, WAS CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD. MAN AS FALLEN MARRED THE IMAGE OF GOD. AND THE PROCESS OF REDEMPTION AND SANCTIFICATION IS TO REMOVE THAT WHICH MARS GOD'S IMAGE IN MAN AND TO RESTORE HIM TO THE PRIMAL STATE OF HOLINESS AND PURITY AND HAPPINESS IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD. TURN TO EPHESIANS 4:22-24. "THAT YE PUT OFF, CONCERNING THE FORMER CONVERSATION, THE OLD MAN, WHICH IS CORRUPT ACCORDING TO THE DECEITFUL LUSTS; AND BE RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND; AND THAT YE PUT ON THE NEW MAN, WHICH AFTER GOD IS CREATED IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUE HOLINESS." MAN WAS CREATED IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, MAN WAS CREATED IN HOLINESS OF TRUTH, BUT THESE CHARACTERISTICS WERE LOST IN THE FALL. NOW GOD SEEKS TO RECREATE MAN AND RENEW IN HIM THESE QUALITIES OF HIS ETERNAL IMAGE. TURN TO COLOSSIANS 3:10. "AND HAVE PUT ON THE NEW MAN, WHICH IS RENEWED IN KNOWLEDGE AFTER THE IMAGE OF HIM THAT CREATED HIM." THE IMAGE OF GOD CREATED AGAIN, THE IMAGE OF JESUS CHRIST CREATED AGAIN. THE IMAGE OF JESUS CHRIST RENEWED IN THOSE WHO WOULD BE GOD'S CHILDREN. READ ROMANS 8:29. "FOR WHOM HE DID FOREKNOW, HE ALSO DID PREDESTINATE TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON." THAT'S THE THING THAT GOD WANTS TO DO FOR THOSE WHO WOULD BE HIS CHILDREN. HE WANTS THEM TO CONFORM TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST.

NOW YOU SEE WHAT THIS HAS DONE. WE HAVE COME FULL CIRCLE AS CHRISTIANS. WE ARE RIGHT BACK WHERE MAN BEGAN. WE ARE IN PARADISE. WE ARE IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN, AND EDEN MEANS NOTHING MORE THAN PLEASURE AND HAPPINESS. BUT MAN IS FALLEN. MAN IS FALLEN UNTIL HE IS REDEEMED, MAN IS FALLEN UNTIL HE HAS RECREATED WITHIN HIM AGAIN THE UNMARRED IMAGE OF GOD, UNTIL THE STAINS ARE TAKEN AWAY, UNTIL THE IMPERFECTIONS ARE REMOVED BY THE SACRIFICIAL BLOOD. UNTIL THAT OCCURS, MAN IS CUT AWAY FROM THE FELLOWSHIP OF GOD AND HAS NEITHER THE MEMORY OF THE GARDEN NOR THE ANTICIPATION OF HEAVEN. HOW TERRIBLE IT IS TO BE IN SUCH A STATE. HOW WONDERFUL IT IS TO STAND PURE AND HOLY IN THE SIGHT OF GOD AS HE VIEWS US IN THE BLOOD OF JESUS. AND IF TONIGHT, IF TONIGHT YOU ARE MAN AS FALLEN INSTEAD OF MAN AS RENEWED, WOULD YOU NOT BRING YOUR LIFE TO JESUS, WHILE TOGETHER WE STAND AND WHILE WE SING?