



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Genesis 3:16-24

Paradise Lost—but Regainable!

TRANSCRIPT

We are studying through Genesis chapter 3 and in our last Scripture reading, we read through verse 19 but I'm going back again for the Scripture reading this morning and beginning at verse 16 and reading through the end of chapter 3. So, will you open your Bibles to Genesis chapter 3 and verse 16 and listen now as I read.

To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you shall bring forth children; yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." Then to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': Cursed is the ground because you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Now the man called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all the living.

You will notice incidentally that this verse, the twentieth verse, "Now the man called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all the living" is obviously an addition by Moses to the account of the incident. Now if this were the product of Adam he no doubt would have said because she shall be the mother of the living but the fact that he puts this in the past tense, she was the mother of all the living when she was not at this point indicates that this is one of the additions that Moses himself is responsible for in the tradition that he records

in the book of Genesis. Now we have had a preceding incident in which this occurred in chapter 2 verse 24 so this is another of the additions that Moses made to the traditional account. Verse 21:

And the LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. Then the LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the Tree of Life, and eat, and live forever.’ Therefore the LORD God sent him out from the Garden of Eden to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So, he (isn't it interesting that in this account we have already had one instance of the God referred to in these chapters, we've had one incident already in which he has been referred to in the plural number. "Let us make man after our image and likeness" in Chapter 1 and now again verse 22) Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us." (But also there is in throughout the account a reference to the unity of this God, so we read here in verse 24 after the reference has been made to like one of us.) So he drove the man out and at the east of the Garden of Eden he stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword, which turned every direction to guard the way to the Tree of Life.

What I was referring to is an incidence again of the fact that the God of the Scriptures is referred to in the plural number. In other words there is a plurality within that Godhead. Now the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity is not yet fully unfolded but throughout the Old Testament we will have indications that while there is plurality in the Godhead there is still one God and finally we shall learn that plurality is a Trinity. But at the moment we have learned there is plurality within this one God. May the Lord bless this reading of his Word.

Our subject for this morning in the exposition of the book of Genesis is “Paradise Lost—but Regainable!” In nineteen hundred and thirty-three, a group of optimistic Americans issued *Humanist Manifesto number I* in which claims were made that science and economic change had disrupted the old beliefs and that the religions of the world would now have to come to terms with the new knowledge. Anthropology and history were said to have clearly shown that man's religious culture was the product of a gradual development due to his interaction with his natural environment. Theism's time had passed, it was claimed. Man is at

last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams that he has within himself the power for its achievement, the signers optimistically and enthusiastically intoned. Among those who have fixed their names to the document were John Dewey whose educational theory has so affected the United States over the past generation or so; John Herman Randall, Jr., a well-known philosopher and historian; and Edwin A. Bert. Forty years taught the signers of *Humanist Manifesto I* a few things but not enough. In 1973, there was an additional *Humanist Manifesto*. It was called *Humanist Manifesto number II* and when it appeared it referred to the original document and in the course of it, the signers of it did at least admit events since the first make that earlier statement seem far too optimistic, but the optimists still have not learned their lesson for they still say as in 1933, humanists still believe that traditional theism—especially faith in the prayer hearing God assumed to love and care for persons to hear and understand their prayers and to be able to do something about them—is an unproved and outmoded faith.

Leaning wholly upon themselves, they blindly offer us their faith. This is what they say, but we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species while there is much that we do not know—isn't it interesting, really?—while there is much we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become, no deity will save us, we must save ourselves. Not content with the denial of divine revelation, which they of course cannot prove, they boldly affirm promises of eternal or immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience, their bootstrap man deifying theology contends. Forty years should have taught us a great deal more than that.

Genesis chapter 3 is really the downfall of humanism, the Waterloo of its man-deifying faith. Man's failure in Genesis chapter 3, as recorded there. His judgment, his

banishment from the Garden of Eden, the sentence of death that has been carried out down thorough the centuries without exception, save in one or two cases of divine intervention, has underscored the adequacy of the divine revelation for the solution of the mysteries of life on this planet.

Genesis 3:15, the passage to which we referred in our last study, which is the heart of Genesis chapter 3 and has been called the most important verse in all the Bible, contains in capsule form the biblical faith. It enunciates the incarnation. We read of the seed of the woman, not the seed of the man but the seed of the woman; it enunciates the victorious atoning death of that seed. We read, "He shall bruise you as to the head, he shall crush your head serpent." We also read of the resurrection because it is implicit in this that he should be raised from the dead having had his heel crushed by the serpent. And the New Testament affirms this explicitly in Romans chapter 16 when the apostle Paul says, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly referring to this promise."

And incidentally, speaking of the seed of the woman as the God of peace there, it is evident that the apostle Paul read this verse and understood that the seed of the woman was the God of peace, for he has said to do exactly what the Lord said the seed of the woman would do. So as a result of his incarnation, his victorious atoning death, his resurrection, and the overthrow of the enemy of men, the elect are forever beyond the reach of the serpent. The future is glorious; it is replete with hope.

Christians, in spite of the fact that their future is replete with hope have ways of speaking according to the old life. You may have a Christian say something like this, "I know that the time will come when I have to depart." Now when he says I have to depart, he writes not from the standpoint of what he is leave—what he is going to, but from the standpoint of what he is leaving. Helmut Thielicke points out, "When I say I have to depart, then the values

and the things of my life, my house, my garden, my stamp collection, my vocation are the standard by which I measure the departure. But when I can say I'm going home, then there is a point in my life where even the greatest things become an insubstantial shadow, and I see only the shore of home where I am awaited.”

Isn't it great to be able to say as a result of the work that Jesus Christ has accomplished I am going home? And if we look at our lives in the light of that, what a difference it does make. It's not that I have to depart, it's that I'm going home. It's rather strange at first glance that the Christians or let me go back and say that the travelers on the Titanic as it was going down turned to the singing of the hymn, “Nearer my God to thee.”

I have often thought that was rather sad because you can read all of the stanzas of that hymn and not find a single word of the distinctive Christian Gospel. Not one distinctive Christian Gospel statement is found in that hymn. Now there are many incidental statements that are very nice that a Christian could certainly agree with but there is nothing in the hymn that marks it out as a distinctive Christian hymn. And yet at the same time, they were expressing an important truth, nearer my God to thee. The point is, as someone has said, they did not sing “Farther away” or “Now the golden jewelry of my cabin, the precious documents in the ship's safe and in my bank at home, farther away are my loved ones at home.” But they did have the proper perspective when they sang nearer my God to thee. It was not sad leave taking if you took them at the words that they were singing but it was a coming nearer to the eternal God.

Now it is well for us to have that viewpoint on our lives and Genesis chapter 3 causes us to think about the fact that we are sinners, that the time is coming when every individual in this room if the Lord Jesus Christ does not come shall return to the dust from which we were made. "Dust thou art and unto dust thou shall return," those are the facts of life, the real facts

of life. Every one of you, you who appeared to be in the bloom of youth, you are dying on the way to becoming again dust, for dust you are and unto dust you shall return.

We've considered rather lightly of the judgments of the serpent, the woman and the man in our preceding study, we tried to point out in the limited time that we have that physical, moral, and local changes were to occur as a result of the fall in the Garden of Eden. For example, these physical changes were to take place, the ground no longer was to experience the blessing of God but the ground came under the curse of God that led to toil on the part of Adam: perspiration, infirmity, and finally death unto all of Adam's descendents. Moral changes occurred too. One sin turned the chief end of the creature from God to self and that one sin controlled the whole stream of moral action that flowed out of the man from that time forward.

Up until that time man glorified God in all that he did. He sought to glorify God, the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. But when the one sin came, this was all turned around and man began to live for the glory of himself, that great change took place. The first thing that happened we read was that their eyes were opened, they knew that they were naked. The glory, if it was, a covering of glory was gone. They looked at their own generative organs by which the race was to be preserved and multiplied and saw the hand of sin and guilt and condemnation in their bodies. And the result was that they made a futile effort to cover themselves. God's anger was provoked, guilt was also induced in them, fear and such hostility to God that when the only good being in the universe came into the garden to fellowship with them, they ran and hid from him.

Now in this part of the account we shall read that that they will be banished from the Garden of Eden and autonomous man is now shown his limits. The chains of time now clank upon this being that was made for eternity. Adam must die. The penalty is one. I often have

heard people say that there are several different kinds of death. Well in one sense that is true. There is physical death; there is spiritual death; there is eternal death. But really the penalty for Adam's sin was one, it was spiritual death. Spiritual death has certain issues however. God had said in the day that you eat the fruit of that tree you shall die.

Now so far as their physical life was concerned they were still living. They knew something had happened. They saw that that they were naked. They became fearful. Something had happened but they still lived physically. But the facts are that that they had died. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shall surely die" their spirit had died with reference to the Lord. The communion was broken and shattered. There is no longer communion with God.

Now that one sin which led to spiritual death, the death of the spirit issues finally in physical death after centuries, for Adam lived to be centuries old as we shall read. And finally if there is no response to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the spiritual death, which issues in physical death merges into an eternal death. So that the penalty is one, the remedy for spiritual death is spiritual life through faith in the Lord Jesus. The remedy for physical death is the resurrection to which believers look forward. The remedy for eternal death—there is no remedy; it is eternal death.

Now you might have thought that as a result of what transpired in the Garden of Eden that when Adam became confronted by the LORD God that it might be simply an account in which judgment was poured out upon the man and a new beginning would have taken place. But we have seen that that is not true. We read Genesis chapter 3 and verse 15, which I mentioned to you has been called the protoevangelium, that is the first Gospel. Isn't it striking that the first gospel sermon Genesis chapter 3 verse 15, "He shall bruise you as to the head, you shall crush him as to the heel" is a sermon preached by Yahweh himself? It is preached

with the whole human race for an audience, Adam and Eve. It is not preached to them it is preached to the serpent—very striking. And also it is striking that it is delivered before the sentence of judgment upon man—that's startling, too. We might have expected simply or judgment on a new beginning, but instead we have a Gospel message preached by the Lord God himself, and then the sentence upon the man.

Now, I must confess that I'm amazed at Adam, because when the message of Genesis 3:15 is given, he listened with understanding. And we read that the man called his wife's name Eve. I don't know what transpired—I wish I knew exactly the words that were spoken. Perhaps they were as the Lord concluded with "You are dust, unto dust you shall return." He looked at his beloved wife, his helpmeet, the one of whom he had said there is nothing like this in the animal kingdom. He turned to her and said, "Well if what the Lord God says is true, I am giving you the name life or living," for that is what Eve's name means, it was grandly spoken by father Adam.

Not simply the mother of physical life, he already knew that. They had been told that they were to be fruitful and multiply. And so he simply meant that you shall be the mother of physical life, he would have called her that long before this. It's clear that when he turns to her at this point in the narrative and says "Your name shall be Eve" that he thinks of her not simply as the mother of physical life but as the mother of spiritual life and specifically as the mother of the seed who should take the sting out of death. Your name is life.

Now what a beautiful illustration of faith. Now we are told in the word of God that the natural man is ignorant of the things of God. He is rebellious against God. Listen to what Paul says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, they are foolishness to him. Neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned," or what has transferred in the heart of Adam that we should receive the word of God in faith and then as the issue of

his faith called Eve, life. But what has transferred is that God through the Holy Spirit has regenerated this man and brought him into a faith in the promise of God. And as a result of that regeneration and the exercise of faith, he has come to know in his own experience faith cometh through the word of God, faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God, Paul tells us.

And you will remember when the Luke describes the ministry of Apollos in Achaia, when he went over and preached thereafter he had been instructed in the faith more perfectly by Aquilla and Priscilla, he went over and he helped those much who had believed through grace. All faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is a belief through grace as a result of the coming of the word of God. And here the word of God has come to Adam, he has responded to it by the grace of God and speaking out of the communication of life which was to him, he said, "Eve, your name shall be life."

Now Moses adds a justification for that name, he says because she was the mother of all the living. I say that comes from Moses because of the tense of the verb and because it is evident that at this point she was not the mother of any. But it is said here that she was the mother of all the living, this is Moses' addition at a later time.

Now, in verse 21 we have another important step in the story. Now Adam and Eve were naked. Well they weren't naked, they really were covered with fig leaves now. And the LORD God ripped the fig leaves off and we read he made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. Now, this of course was a condescending, thoughtfull, instructive deed of love. After all, coats of skins are much better than a garment made of fig leaves. So, even on the lowest level it was a thoughtful, considerate act on God's part.

Well there is more to it than that, it is one of the most eloquent object lessons of the grace of God. Do you know what is signified by this? This verse is a verse that contains within

it in germ form or perhaps we reported this way in acorn form all of the great oak of the doctrine of the atonement of the Lord Jesus. For here we have the penal substitutionary sacrifice that provides a lasting raiment of right standing before God. Now think for a moment. We read, he made garments of skin; it was necessary for an animal to be slain. Death takes place apparently for the first time in the Garden of Eden, death of an animal. Let's just say on the light of the remainder of the revelation of the God that it was a lamb, it may have been or it may not. But it was coats of skin, and so it was necessary for an animal to die.

In other words, it was a violent death. That death which we know now is the penalty for sin suggests, the penal sacrifice by which we are covered. Now, when the Lord Jesus died on the cross it was a death for a punishment as a punishment. It was death as a penalty and so suggested by the slaying of the animal is the penal sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. It is a substitutionary offering, because the animal becomes the substitute for Adam and Eve, in type. It's illustrative. The animal is shall die instead of Adam and Eve. And it is a sacrifice, a violent death on the part of the animal. And as a result of the death of the animal, instead of the fig leaves, we have the lasting raiment of coats of skins. And evidently what followed when they were clothed with coats of skins was acceptable to the Lord. The coats of skins were not, but the raiment of the animals was. Adam can no longer say, now I'm naked, because the sacrifice by which he has been clothed is offered.

All of the truths that we think of, when we think of the penal sacrifice of Christ without shedding of blood, there is no remission that is taught here. Or the substitutionary death, "the Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many." And a sacrifice, "Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world," John the Baptist said as he saw the Lord Jesus. And the garment that covers reminding me of Isaiah chapter 61 and verse 10 when he describes the effects of the sacrifice of

the Messiah. And Isaiah chapter 61 and verse 10 we read, “I will rejoice greatly on the Lord. My soul will exalt in my God for He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness.” And the coats of skin suggest the robes of righteousness.

By the way, it is interesting I think that when Adam and Eve were clothed, they were clothed by God in the Garden of Eden. They felt they were naked, they were ashamed because their nakedness was designed to represent the shame and reproach of sin. I mentioned last week that's why the Lord Jesus died naked upon the cross, he must not only bear the penalty for sin but also the effects of sin and he must bear the reproach of it. And so when his garments were stripped from him, it was the final step in the bearing of the sin of his people. So, that he dies naked for he bares all of sin.

He bares the penalty of sin and the reproach of sin itself and so specifically the New Testament makes much of the fact that he died naked. Now we have a moment in the twentieth century, I presume it existed in other centuries too. It's the nudist moment. There is no way back. It is impossible for us to take off our cloths and meet in some restricted place and come back to conditions that existed in the Garden of Eden. There is no way back and there can be no such obstruction of the truth of the word of God.

There are some interpreters whom I respect very much, who say it is unduly subtle for interpreters to say that we have in these statements in Genesis chapter 3 any reference to the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. I must say that I can only differ with that. Mr. Spurgeon has said, "Make a point whenever you receive a promise from God to get all you can and out of it. If you carry out that rule it is wonderful what comfort you will gain." Some go on the principle of getting as little as possible out of God's word. I believe that such a plan is a proper way with man's word. Always understand it at the minimum because that's what he

means that is the minimum. But God's word is to be understood at the maximum, for he will do exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or even think. And so, while some may say it is unduly subtle to see any reference to the atoning work of the Lord Jesus, I rather feel myself that what we have here are giant object lessons designed to teach everyone of us and even professors of Old Testament and New Testament who can't see the truth of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus written right upon the opening chapters of the word of God. In fact I don't know of any more beautiful illustration of what Christ did. When he came, then when God the father, slew the animal, stripped the animal off the skins, and clothed Adam and Eve, his wife, and said I'm pleased with the cloth—the clothing.

Now I think it's also interesting that these were garments of skin and I must say I cannot help but contrast them with the fig leaves. In the case of the fig leaves, everything was the work of man except the leaves themselves. Adam and Eve took the leaves and they made their garments, in the case of the coats of skin everything is the work of God. In other words, even in the making of the clothing for the two, there is evidence of that great truth that salvation is of the Lord. He stripped away man's fig leaves and gave them God's coats of skins. What a parable that is.

There are many who seek to find their own fig leaves and make themselves acceptable before God, after all doesn't God honor us for our good works? Fig leaves. Doesn't he honor us for our culture? We live in the twentieth century. We are the recipients of the culture of ages. Fig leaves. Does not God accept us because we've joined the proper religious organization? Fig leaves. Does he not honor the fact that we are members of a Christian church and have been baptized? Fig leaves. We sit at the Lord's table, we listened to sermons, we even actually visit Believers Chapel every now and then where they really do preach the Bible over there. They don't seem to know anything but the Bible, does not that help a bit?

Fig leaves. Don't you see that the only thing that makes a man acceptable to God is the acknowledgement of his need and the acknowledgement of the sole sufficiency of saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you are sitting in this audience this morning, if your trust is in any way in what you have done or are doing, you're lost, you do not understand the grace of God, you do not know your debt, you do not know your desperate predicament, you do not understand that you stand under the judgment of God that you are on the way, a dying man on the way to spiritual and eternal death.

There is no recourse for a man outside of Christ, except the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ and the provision that God makes. Paul puts it, “being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in the Lord Jesus Christ, whom God has set forth as a satisfaction through faith in his blood. And that is in order that he might be just and the justifier of them that believeth in Jesus.” So, if you're sitting in the audience and you do not know what it is to be lost and what it is to be saved through the cross of Christ if you do not know anything about the despair of the lost man, you need Christ. You need the coats of skins and what they speak of ultimately, as they have to do with the blood that was shed for human sin. “Jesus, thy blood and righteousness my beauty are, my glorious dress.”

Now the story concludes with the removal of Adam and Eve from the garden. It was expulsion by decree. But I think it was logically necessary too. They have in a sense cut themselves off from the Lord. And so, as a result of that they are expelled from the Garden of Eden. In the twenty-second verse we read of cause of it. “Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever.” These words are not ironical, they are sorrowful. Man does now know good and evil, he knows them experientially. God knows them experientially by virtue

of his omniscience. Man knows them experientially by virtue of his own experience of sinning. But unfortunately man knows good and he cannot perform it; and he knows evil and he cannot help but do it. And God in mercy sent them out of the Garden of Eden, lest he should put his hand upon the tree of life, eat and live forever in his lost estate.

It was for man's good that he was expelled from the garden. The act itself is described in verse 23, “therefore the Lord God sent him out from the Garden of Eden to cultivate the ground from which he was taken.” He was made from ground and from the breath of God. But as a result of his disobedience he has chosen to live by of the principles of his earthly origin. And because he has chosen to live by the principles of his earthly origin, he must end where he belongs, dust.

Here is the being who was created out of the dust of the earth into which God breath the breath of life, the spirit of God, but now having disobeyed God in unbelief and having rejected the word of God, God takes him out of the garden, places him upon the ground and he has to till the ground and himself return to that, which represents the principles by which he has chosen to live. In the New Testament we read about lost men who mind earthly things. In fact it's possible for Christians to fall into the practice of minding earthly things. And so, Adam ends where he belongs.

And finally, the last words of the chapter describe the consequences. So, he drove out the man. At the east of the Garden of Eden he stationed the Cherubim and the flaming sword, which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life. Every detail, incidentally here, excludes the sinner. Notice the flame. The flaming sword, notice the sword itself. Notice that it turns every way so that there is no way to get back into the garden. It is God's way of saying there is no return for man to the Garden of Eden that way.

The first Adam began in a garden; he winds up in a grave. The Last Adam who comes dies upon a cross, cries out, it is finished, is placed in a grave in a garden incidentally, and out of the garden comes forth in resurrection life, and ultimately shall lead all of his people to the final garden, the paradise of God, where there is the tree of life from which men shall partake and live forever in his redeemed state.

You know that there was rural preacher who was preaching on this twenty-fourth verse, and he was describing what must have happened to Adam and Eve as they lived for a while at least probably near the entrance to the Garden of Eden. And Adam now, say man anxious to teach his children the facts of life would take his boys out, so the preacher said and he said, "They would come down in front of the gate where the cherubim were, and he would say now boys take to good look in there, there is a where your ma eat us out of house and home." [Laughter] Now that's not scriptural so far as I know, but nevertheless it does express some truth, it wasn't however simply Eve, it was Adam and he was of course the key person.

Let me close by just pointing out two or three facts, on the practical level there are three kinds of disorder referred to here, which have affected human life since. On the personal level, there is estrangement and the brutalizing of the sexual love, as a result of the Fall of man in the Garden of Eden. On the physical level, life has become a painful struggle now, and on the spiritual level man is a banished enemy of God, friend of evil, but alienated from God and actually and at enmity with the Lord.

Adam's sin has had some theological effects, which are very important. Now in various other studies here at the Chapel we've gone into a great deal of detail over these points and I would suggest if you're interested that you look up, the tapes on various facts, especially those that have to do with the effects of Adam's sin. There is the imputation of the sin of Adam to the whole of the race. The Apostle Paul says, for this cause as through one man sin

entered into the world, so death passed upon all men because all sin. And Paul meant by that all men sinned in their representative the first Adam. So that we are all guilty of the sin of Adam.

Now people always many respond I don't think I should be guilty of the sin of an individual, who stands for me. Well, let me say to you simply this, the reason that God has arranged his relationship to men in this way is in order that you might find a way of deliverance through the Last Adam, the representative for the people of God. In other words he has established the representative relationship in the case of Adam in order that there may be a representative relationship in redemption. I don't have time to go into this I suggest you look at the tapes for a full justification of the method of God, although God does not have to be justified. But, the imputation of the sin of Adam is to the whole of the race. The evidence of it is that every one of us has inherited a corrupted nature. We are by nature the children of wrath.

Do you think that you are not affected by that? Do you think that you are different? Well, let me remind you that it was Abraham who said in the eighteenth chapter of this book that he was a sinner. Isaiah the greatest of the prophets if we had to choose one of them, said all that he was a sinful man. The Apostle Peter said, Depart from me for I am sinful man, O Lord. The Apostle Paul claimed that he was the chief of sinners. John in the presence of the Lord fell down upon his face as if were dead. It is the unanimous testimony of the holy men of Scripture—prophets and apostles—that they are sinners. Is there someone in the audience who would like to stand up and say that you are not a sinner. We'd like give you a few minutes if you would like to come up and tell us that you are not a sinner, that you are actually a more moral being than Moses who spoke of his sin, or of Isaiah, or of David who said he was conceived in sin, or of Paul, or of Peter, or of John. If you would like to take your stand and

put yourself above them as if you don't need redemption, we'd give you as few moments would you like to raise your hand and come up? No, you wouldn't. Because you know deep down in your heart you are not sinless, you are a sinner, you are guilty. You have inherited a corrupt nature and you are proved it by your actions, since that time.

Further, Adam's sin meant that men were unable thereafter to perform spiritual good, the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, it cannot even be. They that are in the flesh cannot please God. The word of God says, it is the apostle Paul who affirms this. I do not affirm it; Paul affirms it: they that are in the flesh cannot please God. If a man pleases God it is because the Holy Spirit takes him out of the flesh, regenerates him puts him in Christ so that he exercises faith, which pleases God. Until that takes place no man can please God. Would you like to stand up and say that you pleased God in the flesh? No, you wouldn't like to dispute with Paul. They that are in the flesh cannot please God, unsaved men cannot please him, unregenerate men cannot please him. This is because of Adam's sin and of course finally, Adam's sin meant eternal punishment. John Owen said, "They who have slight thoughts about sin never have great thoughts about God." How true? "Easygoing, superficial evangelicalism does not give us any great thoughts about God for they have slight thoughts about sin.

Now I want to take just one more minute. You may remember from your study of the Bible, that when Moses constructed the Tabernacle, he constructed the Tabernacle with a veil, once a year the high priest, went into that holy place on into the holiest of all, pushing aside the veil and with the blood entered into the very presence of God. You may have forgotten this but embroidered on the veil were pictures of the Cherubim. For the Cherubim in the Bible are those angelic beings especially associated with the guarding of the holiness of God. They were at the Ark of the Covenant looking down upon the blood, in order that it may be

conveyed to us in illustration there is no communion with God apart from the shed blood of sacrifice. The Cherubim guarded the way into the paradise of God, because they are guardians of the holiness of God.

Now we read in the New Testament, some interesting facts concerning the ministry of the Lord Jesus. When he finally cried out, it is finished. We read in the Gospel of Matthew the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom. In other words that veil which suggests the holiness of God has been ripped from top to bottom suggesting there is a way into the presence of God, and it is a holy way made possible by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. No longer is there the picture of the cherubim guarding the way in to the throne of God, for Christ has by his atoning sacrifice removed the veil and sinners may enter into the presence of God, having been redeemed through the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. He breaks the power of canceled sin, he sets the prisoner free, his blood can make the foulest clean, his blood avail for me. I do hope that that's your own personal testimony.

And as we close our meeting with a word of prayer, if it is not I hope that deep down in your heart that is your prayer to God. Give thanks to him for Jesus Christ, give thanks that the way into the holiest has been opened by the blood of Christ. Give thanks that you have been brought to the knowledge of your sin to see yourself as under the judgment of God and give thanks for the atoning sacrifice. The preaching of which is to all and to you specifically this morning. May God help you to respond. Shall we stand for the benediction?

[Prayer] Father we are so grateful to Thee for these wonderful pictures of the atoning work Christ. We acknowledge Lord we have no hope save in him, but we thank Thee that having rested upon him and upon his sacrifice, we know that we have past from death to life. And O Father for those who may be in this audience who have never responded to the Gospel, O God for the sake of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit,

“Paradise Lost—but Regainable!” by S. Lewis Johnson
Copyright © 2007 Believers Chapel, Dallas, Texas. All Rights Reserved.

pierce the blindness of their hearts and the rebellions of their will—the rebellion of their
wills—and turned them to him who loved us and loosed us from our sins in his own precious
blood. May grace, mercy, and peace go with us. For Christ’s sake. Amen.

[Font used in this document: Garamond]