

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



The Curse on the Serpent

The serpent was a very crafty beast of the field. It had the ability to reason and speak. This beast decided to incite the woman against God and so became the symbol for sin, the father of lying and deceit.

The serpent was cursed for this evil deed and was sentenced to crawl on its belly and eat dust. The later part of the sentence on the serpent is quoted above. This is recognized as the first prophecy in the Bible that has reference to Christ and his future role as the man who would destroy sin and death, which the serpent was instrumental in bringing on our race.



The Enmity

The sentence on the serpent indicated that there would be an ongoing enmity between the descendants of the woman and the serpent. This enmity would eventually be destroyed by Christ, the woman's descendant. This enmity is what the Scriptures later call "sin in the flesh." We are all born with a deceitful heart and an inherited tendency for sin, which leads only to death. This is the influence introduced and represented by the serpent. We struggle constantly to overcome this sin within us with God's help. The Apostle Paul refers to this as the "*sin that dwelleth in me.*" (Romans 7:17-21) He speaks of this struggle as a "*law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.*" (Romans 7:21-25; see also Mark 7:21-23)

Destroying the Power of Death

The sentence on the serpent will be finally fulfilled when the serpent, (representing the power of death resulting from sin) will be destroyed (bruised on the head) by Christ, the descendant of the woman. Christ overcame in his own struggle against sin and was obedient to God. He destroyed this enmity in himself, through his own sacrificial death, in which we can participate through baptism. He opened the way for the final destruction of all sin and death at his return and in his Kingdom. (Hebrews 2:14, 1 Corinthians 15:54-58)

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Things Concerning

The Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ

“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Genesis 2:16-17)

The Law of Sin and Death

When God placed the man and the woman that He had created in a beautiful garden called Eden, He gave them a very specific law, which had the potential for major consequences.

We all know the account. Eve was tempted by the fruit on the forbidden tree and they both ate, disobeying God, introducing sin and death into the world.



Sin Resulting in Death

The consequence of their sin became a burden for all of their descendants. "*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*" (Romans 5:12)

Adam and Eve were sentenced and expelled from the Garden of Eden. They were no longer in a position of favor with God, and they were prevented from any access to the Tree of Life by the flaming sword which turned every way. (Genesis 3:15-19, 22-24)

Outside of the Circle

It is a very simple picture. Man is outside of the circle looking in. The Tree of Life remains a future hope, but only for those who take advantage of the wonderful offer of redemption that God has made available through the promised descendant of Eve, His son and our Lord, Jesus the Christ. (See Romans 5:18, Revelation 2:7) Today, through baptism into Christ, we can be made free from the permanent consequences of this law of sin and death. (Romans 8:1-2)

We are all, including Jesus, born outside of the circle. He was our representative in restoring hope for mankind. Jesus, through his sacrifice, figuratively made his way back through the flaming sword, restoring favor with God and opening again the way to the tree of Life.

“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” (Genesis 3:21)

Clothing our Nakedness

After Adam and Eve had sinned by disobeying God they were ashamed and realized that they were naked. *“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.”* (Genesis 3:7)

In a very logical way sin became associated with nakedness and the need for a covering for sin had been established. It is interesting that Adam and Eve first tried to cover their sin using fig leaves and, as we follow the record, God made them coats of skins for this purpose.

Why were the fig leaves not a sufficient covering? Why did God make them coats of skins for their clothing? There are two significant principles that can be found in this event.

God’s Way, not Ours

The first principle that we learn from the coats of skins is that we must cover our nakedness (our sin condition) with the way that God has provided and not by our own design. This principle is emphasized in many ways throughout the Bible. We find it reinforced in the account of Cain and Abel. God was pleased with Abel’s offering from the flock, but not with Cain’s offering of the fruit of the ground.

The same concept is seen in the record of the Tower of Babel. Men, trying to establish their own system of security, built a city and a tower. God was displeased with their desire to bypass Him as the only real security, and He destroyed their tower and scattered them in the earth.

Today, we must follow God’s plan of salvation through Christ. His is the only name under heaven that offers salvation. (See Acts 4:12) The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation. (Romans 1:16) Men, after their own design and purposes, have perverted this gospel and their own version will not save. (Galatians 1: 8-9)

The Shedding of Blood for Sin

The other principle that is equally clear and critically important is the need for the shedding of blood for the remission, or covering, of sin. This is expressed in Scripture in these words: *“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”* (Hebrews 9:22)

The fig leaves that Adam and Eve chose for a covering were like the vegetables that Cain brought for an offering. Neither were obtained through blood shedding. When God provided coats of skins, these could only have been obtained through the death of the animal involved. This type may seem vague in this early account from the book of Genesis, but we find that the principle is well established in the many typical animal sacrifices that were offered in the Old Testament period, all pointing forward to the blood of Christ that was offered once for all time, for the forgiveness and covering of sin. (I Peter 1:18-19)

“...for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Genesis 2: 17)

Disobedience of Law required a Death

It can be a little confusing that Adam and Eve did not die on the day that they ate the fruit of the forbidden tree. They had been plainly told that their punishment would be death “in the day” they ate the fruit.

There have been a number of suggestions offered to explain this matter. One thing is very certain. God cannot lie, and His spoken word will always come to pass. (Isaiah 55:10-11) The suggestions include:

- The “day” that was mentioned was a one-thousand-year period. A day with the Lord is like a thousand years: this principle is supported in scripture. (See II Peter 3: 8) We are told that Adam lived 930 years and then died, within the 1000-year “day”. (See Genesis 5:5)
- The word “die” in this verse is from a Hebrew expression that literally means “dying thou shall die.” Adam and Eve were sentenced to mortality after they sinned. They became dying creatures and death passed upon all men. (Genesis 3:19, Romans 5:12)
- The immediate death that was required by that first law was temporarily set aside through God’s mercy. Instead of carrying out the sentence on Adam and Eve, the lamb was offered, just as a ram was later offered in the place of Isaac. God instituted His plan for redemption through the future death of Christ, of which the animal was a figure. Adam disobeyed and brought death, Christ obeyed and restored life. To fulfill the righteousness of God, the sentence of death had to be carried out on a true representative of the race who was without sin.

The Lamb Slain from the Foundation

The important thing in this account is that we recognize the personal implications in both man’s fall from favor and in the atonement that has been gained through the sacrifice of Christ.

When Adam and Eve sinned, condemnation to death was passed on to all of their descendants. We are born in this state of condemnation. We are mortal, dying creatures subject to the curse on the ground. We can only hope for a few good days along with a sure measure of suffering, sorrow, sickness and pain, as we each wait for our eventual return to the dust of the ground. (Job 14:1-2)

There is no redemption, no salvation, no life eternal without an identification with Christ, the lamb slain from the foundation of the world to take away sin. (John 1:29, Revelation 13:8) We can only identify with Christ by putting on or being clothed with him through baptism. We must believe the gospel that he taught and be baptized to be saved. (Mark 16:15-16)

If we remain “in Adam” we are without Christ and without hope in the world. (Ephesians 2:12-13) When we die “in Adam”, we are related to the grave and return to dust. When we are baptized we are “made nigh by the blood of Christ”, and we then have the hope of being in the likeness of his resurrection. (Rom. 6:4-5) To be worthy of God’s mercy at the judgment, we must follow Christ’s example of obedience through faith. We then hope for eternal life through Christ, having escaped our certain death in Adam.