

What Kind of Being is Man? Part 2

By Paris Reidhead*

You know it's amazing people asked you to cross the country years ago especially go in for a Saturday night youth rally, and they'd take you all the way from New York to California. And you would sit there through two hours of services and then when you'd get up to speak the speaker would say now the important thing is when you finish you've got 8 minutes, you know. And you'd spent 3 days, one day coming, one day going, one day there, and 8 minutes. Well I'm glad this is not like that.

Psalm 8. I'm going to read it again. We're talking about man. What is man? What kind of a being is he?

“Oh Lord, our Lord how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! who has set Thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained; what is man that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou visitest him. For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beast of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea. Oh Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!”

Now I shall not take time to review in any detail that which we discussed last Lord's day, though I know many of you were not here. I will remind those of you who were and share with those who were not, that our concern in these two studies and perhaps others in the months to come that are here or elsewhere, will have to do with answering this question, what kind of a being is man.

I pointed out in the introduction last week that most of the divisions in Christendom, most of the sects that have grown up have not grown up on the matter of the doctrine of God, theology, but the doctrine of man, anthropology. What kind of a being is man? What is he capable of doing or incapable of doing?

And so we started by asking the basic question, why did God make man in the first place? And the answer was that He made man to meet or serve as the object of His love; one with whom He as the God to His love could share all that He is, all that He has and all that He is doing. And He is as Father, having man as His children. And Bridegroom, man serves as His Bride. Both of these are love relationships and the basic idea that I wanted you to grasp then was that God made man to be the object of His love.

And He made him in His image and likeness because we can only love that which is like us. The only being God has made that He said He loved is man. We do not know wherein angels differ from God as to His image and likeness, but they're not said to be made in His image and likeness. Nor is it said that God loves angels. Man is said to be made in His image and likeness and is declared that God loves man.

Now we also saw that there was a conflict, that when God wanted to have manmade He came right into the very area for all we can discern from the Scriptures, He had made the prison of Lucifer, the son of the morning, this angel that revolted against God. And Christ said He saw Lucifer cast out of heaven and apparently to earth and with him were all the angels that revolted under his leadership. And in a sense I saw personally that that's what you have between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” And then at some time a cataclysm. “And the earth became.” It didn't say it was created. “The earth became without form and void.” It is my feeling that is when the God of this world was cast out. We saw that he had taken four weapons. That these weapons that Satan used were actually the very antithesis to the character of God. God is love, God is light, God is life, and God is truth. And Satan took as the very opposite thus as his character and thus as his weapons, he is the god of this world, is hatred, and darkness and death and the lie. And thus it was that these, these two as it were, were in combat. God could not say “I hate this rebel.” And use hate to destroy him. For had He so done, He would have destroyed Himself, His own character, so He had to be totally consistent with Himself and love had to overcome hate at

least in a preliminary way to the point where it was consistent and right for God to cast Satan out of heaven. In all that had become his character. And so it was that “darkness covered the face of the deep.”

Then when God made man, He came right to this penal colony, if you please. Remade it and placed this one who had, for whom He had from eternity past yearned, this being called man. And he permitted this enemy, this arch enemy, this declared foe to come and to approach Eve with all this subtlety, with all his fallacy, ye hath God said ... you think God loves you, God doesn't love you, He's trying to cheat you and keep from you that which is going to make you happy. He knows that if you do what I am suggesting, you'd be like Him.

Of course, she was like Him in every sense she could be. And so the argument was in itself fallacious. And there was that she sinned and then Adam deliberately sinned that he might chose to be with her rather than with God and they come under the control of the god of this world.

Now we begin today at that point. What happened to man when he sinned? First just a word about the nature of sin. What is it? We hear much about sin. And generally when we have put together the suggestions that have been made in an attempt to define sin, it sounds as though that sin is essentially doing something, that it's an action. But I think a more careful study may suggest to us that sin in its essence is not so much doing something as purposing to do something. The essence of sin therefore, I would say, is the committal of the will to the principle and the purpose of pleasing oneself outside of the will of God.

Now that suggests something else - the definition of temptation. What is temptation? Many people become confused at this point and they feel that temptation is synonymous with sin. And they thus bring themselves into enormous bondage because finding that their tempted they would then feel that because they are tempted they have sinned.

Well, let's distinguish in definition. Temptation is the proposition presented to the mind to satisfy a good appetite in a bad way. That brings us back again to something we saw last Sunday, what about man were the appetites that he had. We saw that when God had made man He said, “It is good.” But that man that he made had an appetite for food because God had determined that he should live by repeated daily intake of nourishment. He had an appetite for knowledge, for as God knows everything in the now at once, man learns in sequence. So God gave to man an appetite for food so that he would be stirred to take the necessary nourishment. And then He gave to him an appetite for knowledge so he would be stirred to learn because he leans in sequence. Then God gave to man an appetite for pleasure because He had made so many marvelous things as the expression of His love and He gave to man that appetite or urge or drive to enjoy. Then God gave to him an appetite for authority because it was God's intention that he should rule over his creation. And so He put into us this drive or urge to rule and to change and to control. He gave to us an appetite for security, a drive or urge for security, because He, as a thoughtful Father had provided for us. And therefore that we might understand, then enjoy and appreciate what He'd provided, he gave to us the urge or the hunger or the capacity for it. He gave to man the appetite for sex because he made the first pair, but His method of completing this beloved was by means of procreation and so there was a drive and an urge. And he looked at this person that had an appetite for food and for knowledge and for pleasure and security and for sex, and He said, “It is good.”

Then God made every appropriate and proper way and relationship for satisfying each of these urges. But Lucifer, Satan came to her and suggested to her mind that she satisfy these urges in a manner that God had forbidden. Now this was temptation. But when within her, she determined to do it, and then the temptation had changed from something which was an intellectual activity to something which had moral involvement. She now made the decision to do it. And when she decided, when she made the decision to eat, she had sinned, born out by the fact that the Lord Jesus said of, in the Sermon on the Mount, “He that looketh *on a woman* to lust *after her* hath committed adultery. He that hath hate or has purposed to injure has committed murder” (Mat. 5:28). That the criminal aspect is in the decision to do it not finally in the action to do it. One may have decided and have to wait for an opportunity, they are criminal from the moment the decision was made, from the moment the temptation passed from an intellectual function to a moral purpose, that is the time when it becomes sin. And so sin, we define therefore in its relation to the individual in terms of his life, the criminal aspect of it, at the age of accountability, when you committed your will to the policy or the supreme choice of your life became that of pleasing yourself without regard to the

will of God or the likes of others. Then it would be that you had sinned and come short of the glory of God. That became the ruling purpose.

Now I speak not in detail of other aspects that with which you're familiar about the inherited aspects because of the congenital aspects of the crime of sin, I'm talking about moral responsibility. I'm talking about that time when we reach the age of accountability and we said like mother Eve and father Adam "this is how I'm going to live." Now we may not have hit your hand. You may not have grit your teeth. You may not have done anything of that sort, you just did it. And the Scripture says that this is the case because "all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23). Not just the act that they unconsciously committed because of an opportunity or a suggestion or an inherited propensity, but rather because it became a policy of life to which we all these things contributed. But it required at the moral essence as a crime when you said this is how I'm going to govern my life.

Now what happened when man sinned? What were the effects? God said "The days thou eateth, thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). "Thou shalt surely die." Now this is an enormously important point and one that I think we should take quite seriously and perhaps quite closely and carefully. Now does death mean annihilation? Let me illustrate it. You come in to your television set and you want to watch something on it and you turn it on and nothing goes. The little white dot doesn't show, no sound comes. What do you say about it? Well, I'm sorry I can't get it, the set is dead. Now what does that mean? That all of the inside has sort of rusted down and inside this machine is just a pile of rust, that it has disintegrated. That somehow its substance has changed. That there has been some great change in its physical characteristics. That it has been annihilated so to speak. What does it mean? Well, all it may mean is that one little wire came loose and it separated. The wires are all there. The tubes are all there. Everything is there. But because that one little wire has separated then there is no communication with all of this electronic impulse and power that surrounds the set.

So in a sense I think that gives us the basis of looking at the word death. What does it mean? Well, it means separation. It means that the filament has come loose, if you please. Separation. "The day thou eateth thou shalt die." What does that mean? That some how you're going to become a subhuman, a new species, that the purpose of God and the investment of God in you is going to have all been withdrawn and you now become some other kind of a species? Is that what it talks about? I don't think so. I don't think that's what it talks about at all. It talks about the very thing that death is everywhere in the Scripture, namely separation.

Well, let's look at some aspect of it. The first way in which man died as a result of sin, the first thing that was introduced because of it or the first aspect of this penalty, and I'll see at least four with you in the next few moments, was physical death. It's amazing to learn that the body is so made, so say those who know something about it and I make no place for being a scientist. I get all of my science out of the Reader's Digest and that of course makes me a happier authority than the ones that know something about it, because they know so much about it they can't be sure of anything. But when you've read the Reader's Digest like I have, you can be sure, because you don't know enough not to be. But I recall reading some time ago, either there or in one other of my equally scientific treatise that every cell in the human body is replaced periodically. And I heard that it was every 7 years and that had to do with the enamel on the teeth and other hard structures. But someone else comes along and says 90% of the human body is replaced every 7 days.

Well, be that as it may, the process is going on because I know this morning I rubbed some callous off my hand and I just know that some place is being replaced because I've been doing that for a half a century and my hands are still there, they aren't worn out yet. And so somebody is taking place, its coming and going all at the same time you know. And therefore when God made us apparently He built into us a principal that makes old age and death a kind of an insult to the creator.

He put into us a principal by which there should be and can be and must be a reproduction of cells, a replacement of the equipment that we brought with us when we came. An enlargement of it, growth of it and then afterwards replacement. So, if that's the case then there's this matter of why do we get old. We're told about some who lived 900 years. Then God saw that they could do an awful lot of mischief in 900 years. So after the flood He said, hey let's cut that down a little. How about 120? That gives them time enough to really make a mess of things. Then after that it's still, that was too much, so finally He got around to Moses and He said look 70 or 80 is about all I can stand any of you fellows. You can learn enough mischief in that

time to keep a flock of angels busy and so I'm just not going to let you live too much longer than that. But that was an arbitrary decision like He said to the sea "thus far and no farther." He said to man, "Thus long and no longer." And some that have reached that point will just about agree with Jacob. And, but I would have you see that death, physical death is one of the first consequences of sin. Death passed upon all men for they all have sinned and all die. That's the first thing. God has reduced into the human race this principle of death.

Now the second thing, man not only began to die physically though from the first heart beat the pulse is saying near death, near death, near death, near death, that's just one less pulse beat we'll have in the certain number, and each one that goes is gone. But there's another aspect in which we die and that's legally. Legal separation. Physical death is a separation from the spirit from the body. We see that, we know that. I've gone in at the request of family and been there when that last gasp and sign, and had to look around the bed at the hospital and take the arm of the wife or husband and say well she's gone. She's gone to be with Him. But look, everything is there. Body is still warm, eyes still opened. A few moments ago, a few minutes ago conscience perhaps or aware, and now gone. What's gone? That person, the part that thinks, that feels and wills, that part that's made in the image and likeness of God. That which remains is the tenement we've occupied, the suit we've worn, the physical suite we've used. But the person is separated from the body. And that separation we call death.

Now the other aspect of death I said is a legal separation. Men, God has made man and God has assumed responsibility from man, but when man sinned he abrogated the covenant, if you please, and therefore he was on his own. So the second aspect of death is legal separation from responsibility. You've seen the ads in the paper, so and so having left my bed and board I do hereby declare that I'm no longer responsible for any debts incurred by and the name. What a tragedy it is when that happens. And it's happening every day.

And thus we're seeing legal separation of those who have had a legal commitment to each other and a legal responsibility for each other. And one of the aspects of sin was legal separation where in God who had made man said since man has committed himself to the god of this world, let him look to that one for his sustenance, I no longer have legal obligation.

Now the only thing that a sinner can legally expect of God is justice and judgment. If he asks for any more, he's asking beyond all rights. But there's no great consolation in that is there? That God will be just when He judges, and that of course He will by reference to His character and not to the sinner's petition. But that's the only thing a sinner can ask of God, yet you recall, those of you who like myself were fairly adult during the Second World War, of men saying as their plane was shot down over the South Pacific or the guidance system shot out and they were miles from their carrier and it was dark and they couldn't find their way and they cried "Oh God of my mother lead me back to my ship." And they'd see a plane out there and follow the plane until they could see the ship and come in.

And God answered prayer but they didn't have any claim upon Him. They had no basis of expecting it. God answers many prayers of sinners that He might show Himself merciful. There's no relationship upon which that prayer is based. Maybe on the basis of a faithful mother or someone else, but the sinner has no claim on God. He has by his revolt, by committing himself to pleasing himself, it's the end of his being, he's relinquished all right to expect care, sustenance, protection, or any other kind of help from God. That's legal separation.

And then there is a third kind of death and that is spiritual separation. Spiritual death. Now what are we talking about? Let's go back to our analogy of the television set. All around is the electronic impulse and here's the set that was made to receive it, but because of some break inside, there is no longer the function of the set in relation to the environment.

Now the Bible tells us that "in God we live, and move, and have our being" (Act. 17:28). God is just as close to us, close to you as the sound of my voice. He's just as near as the light upon your face. He's just as close as the gentle breeze that may cool you brow. God is here. "In Him we live and move and have our being." We live actually in three environments. The first of them is the one to which I've referred just now, that is the environment of atmosphere or air. We understand it's how far, 17 miles above us. That it exerts a pressure of 15 lbs. per square inch upon our bodies. It's a pressure that is such that if you exhaust the air from say a can, just an ordinary can, you take the air out by vacuum pump and the can will collapse from the pressure of the air. The reason we don't collapse is because it's equalized within, without. But when you walk on an elevator and your ears feel

or in an airplane your ears hurt. What is it? The pressures not equalized and then you begin to feel the weight of that down upon the ear drum. So we blow our nose or we swallow or something else trying to equalize the pressure. We're living at the bottom of a sea of air. We're walking on the bottom of that sea.

Now the only part of you that gets good out of it or the essential good out of it, the life sustenance out of, it is your lungs. That simple little action for five minutes or more and you would be a statistic. And yet you have air all around you. But it wasn't getting where it had to go in order to sustain your life. You were separated from it. Alright that's the first atmosphere.

Now the second atmosphere is electronic impulse. If we wanted to prove that to the degree to which it's true and you know it's true. It wasn't so when I was in Africa years ago as a missionary in the Sudan. I had gone out in 1945 in one of these Army surplus type radios that connected to a battery. I never did figure out what all the dials and gadgets were but I had it working a couple of times.

One night I was out at the Yabus River Bridge right on the Sudan-Ethiopian border and I had visitors come. Suliya was my informant and he came that evening with his wife and sister in law and they wanted to see this fellow that he was coming to work with each day, making them do the planting and so on. And I, they were sitting there. I had a little grass thatched rest house, government rest house that I was occupying and it was sand floor. When I arrived my boy went in and very carefully said, "Wait at the car a minute." And I wondered what he was doing and he was brushing the lion tracks out. He thought that might disturb me and he was right. After he told me, it disturbed me too. I never got over being disturbed about that. But we were sitting on that sand floor not knowing what was outside. I had a pressure lantern there, Suliya was there and I reached over behind me and put the switch on. The car was pulled up next and had the cables out to the battery and I did want to hear the news from Cairo, BBC out of Cairo. And so all of a sudden voices came. You could have brushed their eyes off with a stick, you know.

And I said, "Oh, it's just the radio."

And he turned and said, "It's just the radio." He didn't know what radio meant you know. I saw his sister in law get up out of the corner of my eye. She went out and then I wondered where she went and then I saw just a flicker of reflection on black skin outside. And she came and she got down behind that and she looked up into the inside of that radio and she came and set down and then she said something to her sister. And then she said something to her husband.

And I said, "What did she say?"

"No, no, nothing."

I said, "Yea, yea, something, what was it?" He said, "Well she's also doing the talking in there."

I said, "Who's doing the talking?"

She said, "There's little houses in there and she can see little people and those were the people that were doing the talking inside those houses." Well it was an old tube set you know, long before the day of the transistor and she had seen the filaments in there and so those were the people inside the lighted huts and she could see them through the little holes in the back.

And I said, "No, no those aren't little people inside there doing the talking."

She said, "They are, I saw them."

I said, "I'm sorry they're not, they're not little people." I said, "It's coming from the air."

And he said, "See, it's coming from the air."

And she said, "Listen, I've got the best ears in our village. I can hear a lion when nobody else can. I can hear a gazelle when nobody else can hear it. And you're trying to tell me that there are sounds in the air I can't hear. I don't know what this man is, what he thinks he's going to say, but he can't tell me that. I looked inside and he's got little houses there and he's got little people and I'm going home because I don't want anything put in a house like that. I don't know how he does it."

And he says, "I think I better go home too."

So they all left there very shortly. Utterly unconvinced that around them was a world of sound that they couldn't hear. You know it. I know it. If we wanted to take all the sound that you're not listening to and bring it in at say 100 decibels, we'd have to get shelves put in here with radios, long distance radios, television sets and probably the whole room would be filled next Sunday. Each one at 100 decibels, this whole wing of the church would just shatter down to dust. Couldn't take it. All the electronic sound that you've taken for granted that's just as close as the air you breath, that it's interlaced with the air, it's not the air, it's distinct from the air, it moves not through the air but through the spaces between the air.

And now I've exhausted all I know about radio. In fact, I've gone too far, I can see that. And some of you say, "Boy, that guy doesn't know enough. I hope he's better on his theology than he is on his electronics." But I blame it on the Reader's Digest.

Now there could be little people inside that box. But we have a receiving set. We have to have a receiving set to get it, don't we. Now when God made you, He built into you a receiving set to know God. That's the point I'm making. The receiving set for your air or your lungs. The receiving set for the electronic sound is the radio receiver, or the television receiver. And the receiving set for this third environment is the human spirit. "In Him we live and we move and we have our being." And God is as near as the air we've been talking about, as near as the electronic sound we've been talking about. But He's not in the air or the air and He's not the electronic sound. God is God.

Now how can you be in three atmospheres at once. I don't know, how can you be in two atmospheres at once? I don't know. But this is what the Bible tells us. And you have a receiving set to know God. And that receiving set is the human spirit. God is spirit and you are spirit living in a body. And God has given to the human spirit the ability to feel Him, to hear Him, to taste Him, to see Him, to know Him, to commune with Him. But when man sinned that set went bad, out of commission. He died spiritually.

Now he didn't shatter or disintegrate or turn to dust any more than your television that doesn't operate has done that. It's just not working. And when man sinned God just sort of let the set go out of, just out of kilter, he fixed it in such a way, when man has committed his will to please himself, his set doesn't receive God.

So what do we find in India, the people that know there's a God. They're aware of His presence and must know Him. And so they say if I can just abdicate the flesh and punish the body. And so we'll see someone lying down and taking his fingers and scratching a mark and getting up and putting his toes where the finger mark was. Laying down the whole subcontinent of India. We'll see them laying their babies for the crocodiles to eat along the Ganges. We see them sitting between fires until the skin and flesh turns to parchment and leather. Yearning after God. But that's not how you find God. It's not how you meet Him. That's not how He's known. But you see they know He's there. God didn't allow that knowledge to be destroyed. They know that He is and they know that He made the world. They know that He's going to judge them when they die. God didn't allow that knowledge to go. He just doesn't allow communication with Him. Man died. Man died spiritually. He broke the contact. He broke the contact.

And then there's a fourth aspect to this death and that is man came under the sentence of eternal separation from God. That this crime of turning to our own way of committing our will to please ourselves have the effect of bringing unto us under the sentence of living eternally separated from God. Not knowing Him. And that sentence is passed upon all. That death is passed upon all, because "all have sinned." Physical death indeed. Legal death certainly. Spiritual death obviously, but the sentence of eternal separation. At no time does it mean annihilation or cessation of being or change of form, but rather a distance between, a separation from. And whatever that place that God has prepared for those who reject and spurn Him that He's prepared for Lucifer and the angels and the others who choose to follow and accept and adhere to the character of that prime

inhabitant. Whatever it is it's going to include an eternity of separation from God. That's obvious. So we have, we have then the fact that death has passed up them. What kind? Physical death and legal and spiritual death and then eternal separation from Him.

Now having seen that, then let us look for just a moment as to what didn't happen when man died. First his intelligence was not necessarily impaired. We find for instance after the man has been driven from the garden and the sons of Tubal Cain for instance, one of the sons of Adam and Eve went out and invented musical instruments and built cities.

Someone said they were living in the country and Cain killed Abel. That was a rural massacre and the Tubal Cain invented cities so they could do it wholesale. And there's a good bit of evidence to support that. But the fact is that whatever sin did it did not destroy the mental capacity of man. His mental ability was remained. His ingenuity, his inventiveness, his genius was unimpaired by the coming of sin. And the powers of his personality and his capacity to exercise much of that authority that God had given. That was not impaired. So whereas there's a tremendous amount of effect of sin on man, we must not attribute to it what the Scripture doesn't and we must not assign to it more than Scripture does. And so I would suggest to you that man's nature and his personality and his personal powers, those powers that he recognizes were not destroyed or annihilated in any sense by the coming of sin.

Now we find that some things happened. Man is under the sentence of death. And so there's an interesting thing that's given to us and I'll have you look at it, because it helps you to understand the relationship of man to God in this sinful state. I think that perhaps if you turn to the 3rd chapter of Genesis you can see this rather quickly and the 14th verse.

Now remember man at this point is under the sentence of death. He is condemned in these aspects that we've said. And now there is going to have something else come in. And it's important for us to see this. I think verse 14 tells us. "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, because thou hast done this thou art cursed above all cattle." And that's the first mention. One of the hermeneutical principals that you get when you study the Scripture in a formal way is that the first mention of a word generally gives to you the significance that word is going to have throughout Scripture. And this is the first time that the word *curse* is introduced. "Because thou hast done this thou art cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field. Upon thy belly shalt thou go and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life and I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head. Thou shalt bruise his heel. Now under the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children and thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast harkened unto the voice of thy wife and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee saying thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake. In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistle shall it bring forth to thee and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground" (Gen. 3:14-19).

Now what do we find then in curse? Does this sound like death? Separation? No, what do we find? A change coming from the time the condemnation to death is pronounced until it is exercised. And what's the purpose of the curse. I'm suggesting and I think I can prove it in a few moments that God cursed the ground and woman in this relationship of the sorrow and pain of child bearing, man in his labor in order that he might have a foretaste of the penalty that would induce him to turn to God to be forgiven and to be pardoned. The sentence is death and the curse is the foretaste of the sentence that is to be experienced in the interim between the time the sentence is pronounced and is carried out for the purpose of inducing the one that's under the sentence to realize the enormity of the sentence and thus to return to God in repentance and seek forgiveness and pardon.

Now I think if you accept this then you're going to - we're trying to understand again how man relates to God, how man relates to the world around us, and how man relates to other fellow man.

So turn to Deuteronomy chapter 28. In the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy we have a very interesting statement. In the first verses beginning from 1 through 14 you have the promise of blessing. "Blessed shalt thou be ..." is the key word, the key phrase. "... if you harken diligently unto the voice of the Lord your God to observe to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, all of these blessings shall come on thee."

Now in contrast to the blessings that will come for obedience, in verse 15 we find that He's talking about something else. "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God to observe to do all His commandments and all His statutes which I command thee this day that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee." Look at them briefly. I'll go through them quickly. "Curseth shalt thou be in the city, in the field. Curseth shall be thy basket and store. Curseth shall be the fruit of thy body. Curseth shalt thou be when thou cometh in goeth out. The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation and rebuke and all that thou settest thy hand unto for to do until thou be destroyed and until thou perish quickly because of the wickedness of thy doings whereby thou hast forsaken me. The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee. The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, with a fever, with an inflammation, with a burning, with a sword, with blasting with mildew. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust. The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies. The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt and with emerods and scab and itch. The Lord shall smite thee with madness and blindness and astonishment of heart." This is curse – that has come upon for disobedience.

Now if we see that then we realize that something has happened here. First he's under the sentence of death, and in the interim from the time the sentence is carried out, pronounced and until it is carried out, there is a foretaste of it in something that the Scripture calls the curse.

Now, you saw last week as we were talking that in that 3rd chapter of Genesis the Lord Jesus Christ because the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New, came into the garden and called for man "Adam, where art thou?" And finally he came already reflecting the nature of his new God in whose image he now has been made, namely that he has said this woman you gave me, she made me eat. If you're going to kill somebody, kill her. Not my fault. She made me do it. Which of course is a lie, an evidence of hatred and death. And then the Lord Jesus made the coats of skin and pointed by that down across the centuries to the time when John the Baptist would see Him, and would then say "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (Joh 1:29).

Now let's see what happens. Here is the sinless, innocent, holy Son of God, who has lived these 30 years and has had the Father break the silence of heaven and say "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Mat. 3:17). He was tempted in all points like as we are.

Now what's temptation? The proposition to satisfy a good appetite in a bad way. I said temptation is not sin, because if temptation is sin then Christ sinned because He was tempted. He did not sin. "In Him was no sin," yet He was tempted, because He had urges and appetites and drives (I Joh 3:5). And to His intellect was presented the proposal, a proposition to satisfy these good appetites in a bad way and He resisted it with the Word. The Father said "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

And now there comes that moment when the Lord Jesus Christ is in Gethsemane's garden and He's praying. For what is He praying? He is praying that if it's possible that the very reason for which He has come into the world might be obviated, the necessity be removed, that the pressure that is on Him might be taken away. That somehow He might not have to go through this yet His cry is "Father nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done" (Luk. 22:42).

Now why is it as it was great perspiration like clots of blood falling from his brow to the rock over which He kneels? Well, I think it's because He, the innocent, sinless, spotless, holy Son of God, God come in the flesh is coming to grips with what the enormous, foul nature of sin. He's looking at me and He's looking at you and He is seeing all that is represented by this thing of sin. And that He Himself is now going to have to be in the eyes of His Father, made what we are or become what we are so that we might become what He is. And yet there's that embrace, that reaching as it were down through the centuries to find you and to find me and to draw us to Himself. And then when He arises from that period of prayer, He stands before His Father as me. He has voluntarily, the innocent, spotless, sinless, infinitely holy Son of God has reached down in time and found me and drawn me to Himself, and He now stands before His Father as me.

Now what happens? Remember what took place, what I've just given to you? The Lord Jesus was apprehended. He was taken. And what did they do to Him? Well, first they beat Him. They plucked the beard from His face. Then they put a crown of thorns on Him. Then He was scourged and that's the cat and nine tails that tore the flesh across His back and body.

Now look, why? Why? Why did the Lord Jesus have to undergo this? Why couldn't the soldier's spear in the garden have pierced His heart and let Him die there? Because it's blood that makes atonement for the soul. Why should He have to endure those agonizing hours from 6 until 9? Why should He have to endure those hours? Why should He have to go through them? Well remember we had two things didn't we. We had the penalty of the law, death and we had the curse of the law. Correct? We had the curse of the law.

And in Galatians we read: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law. Having been made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13). So now what's He experiencing when his face is buffeted and the thorns are pressed upon His brow and the blood runs down his cheek. And His back is scourged. What's He experiencing? The curse, if you please. Not the penalty, the curse. If He's going to redeem us from the curse of the law, then He's going to have to undergo. He's going to have to be made a curse for us. And so we find that this is precisely what the Scripture says, that He is. So in those hours from the time until He is nailed to the cross and if you'd like to see it turn to Galatians chapter 3. He is now experiencing the curse: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us. For it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. That the blessings of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." As you look at this and as you study it and as your heart comes to grips with it you will find that something happening to you. When you realize that the Lord Jesus Christ has now not only wanted to take you out from under the wrath of God because of your sin, but He also wants to take you out from under the control of the one into whose hands you have fallen. Namely, to the god of this world whose dominions we were and whom we serve. So in order to do that the Lord Jesus not only has to pay the penalty of the law, but He has to redeem us from the curse of the law.

Now let's go with Him shall we? Let's go with Him to that point where He gets up from that rock and He stands there as you. Remember, I told you that there had been a battle in heaven when the god of this world, Satan, had said I will set my throne above the throne of the most high. And the weapons that he chose were the very antithesis to the character of God, darkness and death and the lie and hatred. And these were the tools, these were the weapons. This was what he armed himself with for this conflict. Now the Lord Jesus has risen from the rock and He stands there in the eyes of His Father and something else is happening, isn't it? Something else has taken place. There's another pressure there. It's the god of this world. And here is the One who defeated Satan at that battle in the past, now for the purpose of redeeming us has had to become, made to be what we were so that we could become what He is. The only way He could redeem us.

* Reference such as: Delivered at The 4th Presbyterian Church, Discerners Class, Bethesda, MD on Sunday, July 20, 1980 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.