

“For the Obtaining of the Glory”

7

From Glory to Glory



Character development is said to be the most important work ever entrusted to human beings. During the next hour we will explore both our privilege and our responsibility to become Christ-like in character. Join us now for this powerful time of personal renewal as Pastor Stephen Wallace takes us "From Glory to Glory."

Good evening, my friends. So good to see you back this evening. Thank you so much for your commitment to the study of the Word of God that your presence manifests. I have been looking forward to continuing our study with you. Our series is entitled "From Glory To Glory," a seminar on the principles of Christian character development. We are studying together the most important work ever entrusted to human beings. And what is that? "Character building." **Education, page 225**, it's the first reference in your handout: **"Character building is the most important work ever entrusted to human beings; and never before - never before - was its diligent study so important as now."** Why it's so important now? Are you ready for this? Because the King is coming soon. Oh, you weren't ready. I'll give you a second chance. Why it's so important now? Because the King is coming soon! {Amen} Yes, indeed. I believe it, my friends. Oh, I believe it.

There are so many things happening. In fact, today is a very significant event, going on, that I am going to resist getting into... but a fulfillment of prophecy is happening today. We are right down at the finish line, my dear friends. Please know that. Please know that. But we have much work to do. **We have a gospel to take to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people {Rev 14:6}, and we have our own lives to prepare. {Rev 14:7}** But the successful accomplishment of both of those tasks, depends upon the same thing, doesn't it? ...and what is that? The development of a Christ-like character. Why? Because we can be neither effective witnesses for the King, nor fit citizens for the Kingdom, unless we have a Christ-like character.

Last night, we grappled with some pretty grim news; the terrible consequence of the fall of man upon human nature, and what it did, to totally incapacitate him to fulfill his God-ordained destiny. What was his God-ordained destiny? **Isaiah 43:7**. What does our Creator say of us? **"Whom I have created for My glory, I have formed him, yes I have made him."** You are not the product of time and chance, here only by accident to eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die. Oh, no! We are the personal handiwork of a personal Creator God, who made us for a high and holy purpose: to reveal His glory, to say true and beautiful things to the universe regarding what He is like; particularly to reveal His character. For, the Biblical term, for those of you who have just joined us, the Biblical term for character is what? "...glory" So, when the Bible tells us that God created us for His glory, it's telling us that He created us to reveal His character. That infinitely glorious character we were to reflect to the on-looking universe that they might draw accurate and beautiful conclusions regarding what He was like. For **we had been created in His image, according to His likeness {Gen 1:26}** in every dimension of our being. And what did God further do to enable us to fulfill our destiny? **He wrote upon every nerve, every fiber, every faculty of our being His what? {Law} ...His law. {RH, Nov 12, 1901 par. 4}**

But the bad news last night, that we had to come to grips with, is that at the fall, **selfishness took the place of love. {SC 17.1}** Love is the law of God that was written upon the fleshly tables of man's heart, every nerve, every fiber, every faculty of his being. But when he fell, selfishness - the law of Satan, took the place of love. It became the dominant, motivating principle written upon the fleshly

tables of the heart of man; indeed upon every nerve, every fiber, every faculty of his being. That's why his whole nature, all of his powers were perverted.

Before the fall, they were exercised exclusively to gratify and glorify God. But on account of selfishness taking the place of love, after the fall, they are now exercised exclusively to gratify and glorify self. Serious, radical, moral derangement in human nature on account of the fall - it's called depravity. And on account of this moral derangement, on account of this fundamental change at the core of his being, when selfishness took the place of love, man utterly incapacitated himself to reveal the character of God.

In fact, he capacitated himself to reveal whose character? ...Satan. For he is governed by the same principle, the same spirit, the same law that governs the heart of Satan - selfishness; and all that man can develop by nature, is a satanic character likeness, my dear friends. I say, *"praise God for grace."* What do you say? {Amen} But we've got to understand the way it is by nature, before we will appreciate the way it can be by grace. That's why we had to deal with the bad news, so, the good news would be all the more appreciated. Remember, the good news is only as good as the bad news is... bad.

We must have a fundamental, radical change - the reverse of what happened at the fall, if we're going to become Christ-like in character. At the fall, selfishness took the place of love, but by grace... praise God, love can take the place of selfishness. Amen? {Amen} Once again, we can be dominated by the spirit, the law, the principle of love, which governs the very heart of God; and the plan of salvation was devised to make that change possible.

Tonight, we're going to get into the good news. I'm so glad you came back, because I would've felt so bad if you had only, let me talk about the bad news, and not let me talk about the good news. The next several studies, will be dealing with what God has done, to reverse what went wrong at the fall of man. That's just a quick review to catch us up, and to focus our minds in the channel that we have been pursuing.

But before we proceed with new material, what must we pause to do, my dear friends? What must we pause to do? Personally invite God's Spirit into our hearts. Why? **Spiritual things are only... spiritually discerned. {1 Cor 2:13-14}** Please don't ever be so presumptuous then, as to open the Word of God without first, opening your heart, and inviting the Holy Spirit to come in, and give you that supernatural capacity to know the truth.

What does it mean to really know the truth? Remember those three steps? Somebody encourage me. It means (1) to grasp it with the intellect, (2) to embrace it with the affections, and most importantly: (3) to submit to it with the will. Only as we do that, can we know the truth to the point of experiencing its liberating, sanctifying power in our lives; and that's what you all want to do, isn't it? {Amen} You want more than just an intellectual exercise tonight, don't you? You want a life-changing experience, don't you? {Amen} You want to be more like Jesus for having spent time studying His Word, don't you? {Amen} It can be, my dear friends, by the power and the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

God longs to give it to us. But as much as He wants to give it to us, He cannot unless we, what? ...ask. You see the whole economy of heaven works on the simple principle, **"Ask and it shall be given."** {Mat 7:7} We can't earn it. Praise God... Jesus Christ has earned it all for us, and is prepared to give it to us, as a free gift. But, He will never force it on anyone, because He doesn't go there; He doesn't do that. He doesn't violate the free will of the human agent. That's why we must go to the door of our heart, open it, and say, *"Come in... come in, Heavenly Guest... Come in and sup with me. In the person of Your Spirit, enable me to have that hungering and thirsting, and enable me to be able to digest and assimilate the bread of life, that I might be nourished and strengthened in my spiritual being. Come in."*

Will you invite Him, to do that? ...and as you pray for yourself, would you please, remember your brother? I need special efficiency tonight, as I proceed with this study. Let's spend a few moments on our knees.

My Father in heaven, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord my righteousness, I come... with confidence into Your very presence. A confidence that is based upon the worthiness of my Intercessor - not my own. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain. See me as hidden in Him, I pray. I come asking that You would be gracious to us, and pour out Your Holy Spirit upon us. We want to come to understand the truth to the point of experiencing its liberating, sanctifying power in our lives, more fully than ever before. But we cannot, unless You bless us with the Spirit of Truth. Father, I especially, as I have the undeserved privilege of leading out in the study of Your Word, I especially, need the Holy Spirit. Please take possession of me, body, mind, and spirit. I am Yours by creation, by redemption, and by my own choice. Please choose to use me as a channel of the blessing of truth. Whatever You're able to say through me, may it not only be grasped by the intellect, may it be embraced by the affection, and submitted to, by the will... of each one here, that it might transform the life. Make us, by the Spirit of Truth, much more like Him, Who is the Truth. We ask it in His name. Amen.

We are on page 13 in your printout, and I hope that you've received the next installment in the notebook that you have. There is a statement that's a bit longer than I usually include, but it is such a marvelous insight from the seer of our day. "The seer," that's an old fashioned name for "prophet" - one who can see things that most of us can't - because they have been given, special spiritual eyesight. Listen to this description of what was happening in heaven when man sinned. It's remarkable, and it sums up also the consequence of sin upon human nature.

It's found in **Signs of the Times, February 13, 1893: "When man sinned, all heaven was filled with sorrow; for through yielding to temptation, man became the enemy of God, a partaker of the satanic nature."** Pause. I've got to say this: In what way, had man become a partaker of the satanic nature? Selfishness had taken the place of love, the very spirit that motivates the nature of Satan, became the spirit that motivated the nature of man. Therefore man became a partaker of the satanic nature. Back to the statement: **"The image of God in which he had been created was marred and distorted. The character of man was out of harmony with the character of God; for through sin man became carnal, and the carnal heart is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."** {Rom 8:7} Pause. Why is it that the carnal heart cannot be subject to the law of God? Because it is subject to which law? ...the law of Satan, the law of selfishness; it's tyrannized by it. Reading on: **"To the angels there seemed to be no way of escape for the transgressor. They ceased their songs of praise, and throughout the heavenly courts there was mourning for the ruin sin had wrought. Out of harmony with the nature of God, unyielding to the claims of His law, naught but destruction was before the human race. Since the divine law is as changeless as the character of God, there could be no hope for man unless some way could be devised whereby his transgression might be pardoned, his nature renewed, and his spirit restored to reflect the image of God. Divine love had conceived such a plan."** {Amen} Praise God for that last little sentence! Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} Praise God for such a plan! It was devised in the heart and mind of God from eternity past, and it was infinitely costly, but there is such a plan, my friends.

What is its purpose? Listen to this next statement; sums up the whole purpose of the plan of salvation remarkably well. **Education, page 15 and 16: "By infinite love and mercy, the plan of salvation had been devised, and a life of probation was granted."** Pause. Granted to whom? ...to Adam. But remember, who is Adam? - Mankind. And anything that God did for Adam, He did for all of us because we were all comprehended, and included, in, and with him. Remember that study last night. What is the purpose of this plan? Reading on... this time of probation? **"To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the**

development of body, mind and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized- this was to be the work of redemption."

What is the whole purpose of the plan of salvation, my friends? It's to bring back man to the perfection in which he was created, to restore in him the image of his Maker, which comprehended his whole being, that's why it was to promote the development of body, mind, and soul. You see in every dimension of our being, we were created in the likeness of God; we bore His image. Sin marred and well nigh obliterated God's likeness in every dimension of our being. But the plan of salvation was devised to restore the likeness of God in every dimension of our being. Praise God for such a plan!

Note how the apostle Paul states the purpose so succinctly of the plan of salvation. It's recorded in **2 Thessalonians 2:13-14**. We have a remarkable passage here; it encapsulates very succinctly the whole plan of salvation. But the thing that I really want to underscore is the purpose of that plan. Follow; verse 13, **"But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because..."** Here comes the quick synopsis of the whole plan of salvation: **"...because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel."** Remarkable summary of the whole plan of salvation, but listen here comes the purpose. What is it? **"For the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."** OK class, use your key. What word did you just hear there? {Glory} "- Glory," and whenever you hear glory you need to think what? {Character} "- Character." So, I ask you, according to the apostle Paul, what is the whole purpose of the plan of salvation? It's to obtain once again the, what? ...the character of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In light of this, do you see dear friends, how character building is truly the most important work ever entrusted to human beings?

Indeed, it's the whole purpose of the plan of salvation being changed from glory to glory, growing from one character stage of development to another, - which is what glory to glory means - is not something optional for the Christian, is it? It is the very essence, the heart and core, of what it means to be a Christian. Please know that, please know that. The whole purpose of the plan of salvation, is for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now this plan, devised in the heart of God in eternity past, was implemented in time; in the words of Scripture, **"in fullness of time," {Gal 4:4}** by the sending of God's Son on a two-fold mission. Note this please; that's what the margin's for. The plan of salvation was implemented in fullness of time by the sending of the Son of God, on a what? A two-fold mission. What was that two-fold mission?

Number one: He was sent to reveal God's glory to man.

Number two: He was sent to restore God's glory in man.

Did you get that? I insist that that summarizes, indeed comprehends, everything that Christ was sent by the Father to do. Indeed, it comprehends the whole plan of salvation. What is the two-fold mission again? The Son was sent to reveal God's glory to man, and what? ...restore God's glory in man. Now, some of you might be saying, *"Well I thought the Son was sent to die for our sins."* Well yes, absolutely; but that is part of the revelation of God's glory to man. Amen? You see, God's glory is His character, and He proclaimed that, when He proclaimed His name. **"The Lord, the Lord God,"** what? **"...merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquities..." {Ex 34:6-7}** You see, Christ on the cross reveals not only the mercy of God, but what? ...the justice of God. God doesn't just clear the guilty, He forgives the guilty. How? On what basis? By having imputed their guilt to the Guiltless One on the cross; and because He has died for our sins, now we can live on account of His righteousness. Amen? {Amen} So, everything that Christ did, was a revelation of God's glory to us.

But my dear friends, He revealed God's glory to us, that He might restore God's glory in us. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} Please, understand the purpose of the revelation, was to make possible the restoration; and indeed, the restoration was dependant upon the revelation. Why? Well, only in beholding can we be changed. He had to reveal God's glory to us so that we could behold it, and thereby, be changed from glory to glory into the likeness of what we are beholding. Do you see that? If there had not been the revelation, there could be no restoration. The two-fold plan, revelation-restoration, is where we need to turn our attention at this point. I want to look at the revelation phase first, and then probably the balance of our seminar will be dealing with the restoration phase and how we cooperate with it. OK? We've just given you a quick foreshadowing there of where we're going.

The Revelation Phase. Note in that context, 2 Corinthians 4:6. **2 Corinthians 4:6: "For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."** Oh, I like that. You heard our key word there, didn't you? Please get the picture here. Planet earth with the human race is in a sin-benighted condition. **We are in gross darkness, as the prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 60.** You remember our study of that passage; and we are lost, and the only way we're going to find a saving relationship with God once again, is to have some light shine upon our path. So, what does God do in infinite mercy? He sends His Son to be this Light: **"For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness who has shone in our hearts."** ...What is this light? **"To give the light of the knowledge of the,"** what? **"...the glory of God."** What's that? - The character of God. Where? **"In the face of Jesus Christ."** That is what Jesus was sent by the Father to do for the human race. It was to reveal His character. The light of His lovely character.

It says here **"in His face."** Now, that's interesting because the human character is especially revealed in the human face. His whole life, of course, was a revelation of His character, but it's in the countenance, that the character is particularly revealed. Now, God sent His Son to reveal that glory, and the Son sent His Spirit to restore that glory, and to make it possible for man to see that glory. You see **spiritual things are only, what? ...spiritually discerned;** and the natural man was incapable of seeing the light of the glorious revelation of God's character, in the face of Jesus. So, Jesus sends His Spirit, that we might have that spiritual discernment, that supernatural capacity to see the light; and the same Spirit that enables us to behold it will, what? Change us into its likeness restored in us.

Desire of Ages, page 341. **Desire of Ages, page 341: "His, Christ's, Spirit will develop in man all that will ennoble the character and dignify the nature. It will build man up for the glory of God in body and soul and spirit."** See the whole man included once again? We're to **glorify God even in our, what? ...our bodies. {1 Cor 6:19-20}** Reading on; **"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind." 2 Timothy 1:7 He has called us 'to the obtaining of the glory'"** Dash, what? **"-character-"** I didn't add that. - Inspiration, the inspired commentary has added that - **"...of our Lord Jesus Christ' has called us to be 'conformed to the image of His Son.'" That's "2 Thessalonians 2:14 and Romans 8:29."** Now, the Father sent the Son to reveal the glory; the Son sends the Spirit to restore the glory.

What is our cooperative role in this whole process? It is to behold the glory. Remember? Our key text, **2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all with unveiled face beholding as in the mirror the glory of the Lord, are..."** what? **"...being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."** My dear friends, the restoration can not possibly take place, unless we behold the revelation; and it is precisely for this reason, that God sent His Son to reveal His glory to man: that He might capture man's attention, have him direct his mind's eye to the revelation, and thereby, be able to restore in him, the glory that he beheld in Jesus Christ. That was why God sent His Son.

Now... I have a question; think with me on this. If it is essential to behold the revelation of God's glory in Christ, in order to have the restoration take place in us, how were people restored from glory to

glory, before Christ came to reveal that glory? Isn't that a legitimate question? Wasn't there a period of time, when the human race was in desperate need of being changed from glory to glory, before Christ came to reveal that glory? Wasn't there a period of time? Yes, in fact it was 4,000 years. Right? 4,000 years after the fall, Christ became incarnate to reveal God's glory to man. My question is, how were people changed from glory to glory before that? Before the incarnation, how? Good, I heard a legitimate answer. Did you hear it? *"The sanctuary, and its services."*

Remember in our study of the seven ways, in which God revealed to us His Glory? What was one of them? - The sanctuary and its services. Scripture says, **"the sanctuary was full of God's glory."** {Ez 10:4} David says, he wants to go to the temple because that is where God's glory dwells. {Ps 63:2} Yes, in beholding the character of God, as revealed in the sanctuary and its services, men before the Incarnation were changed into the likeness of what they beheld, from glory to glory.

But wait a minute. Wasn't there a period of time before the establishment of the sanctuary and its services? How were they changed before the development of the sanctuary and its services? How were they changed from glory to glory? They had to behold the glory. That's the only way anyone can be changed. How? Nature, good. But is that a sufficient revelation to save us? No, because it's marred, and distorted, and blemished, on account of sin. There has to be - not only natural revelation, there has to be - supernatural revelation. So, how were men changed before the establishment of the sanctuary and its services? OK. The transcript of God's character, which was given at Sinai, but that was significantly after; in fact, just shortly before the sanctuary and its services. Good... good. I heard the answer that I was looking for. Did you hear it? *"Through the sacrificial system."* The sacrifice of the lamb. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen}

My dear friends, I want to take you to my favorite text - one of my favorite texts. I'll say it's one of my favorite texts. It's found in Genesis 3, verse 21. **Genesis 3, verse 21, "Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin and clothed them."**

I can just see you thinking, *"Favorite text? What is his problem? How can that be anyone's favorite text?"* Come on now, you were thinking that, weren't you? My dear friends, that is such a profoundly beautiful text. But its beauty doesn't lie on the surface, does it? You see, that's the way it is with Scripture though. Please, don't be too content just to read what the surface words say. Ask God for spiritual discernment to help you see, what is really being communicated by those words. Will you let me share with you, why this is my favorite text... or one of them? Are you ready for that?

I want you to see my dear friends, how it is from the very beginning, indeed, from the very day man sinned, God gave a supernatural revelation of His glory, His character. Are you ready? Roll up your sleeves, we're going to have to move quickly. The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. They evidently needed clothing. Why? Well, because they were what? {naked} Well, no they weren't. They were clothed but with an inadequate garment. What was it? {fig leaves} ...fig leaves. Why were they clothed with fig leaves? Because they were... naked before they put the fig leaves on. Did God create them naked? **He created them clothed with light, a garment of light.** {LDE 249.2} They were in the image of God, and Scripture says specifically, that **God is clothed with light.** {Ps 104:2} What was the source of this light? Follow quickly. They were indwelt with the fullness of the Spirit of God. Are you with me? ...and the indwelling presence of the fullness of God's Spirit, manifested itself in an aura of light that enveloped that body temple.

Very similar to what happened, when the tabernacle on the Sinai desert floor, was filled with the indwelling presence of God. How could the children of Israel, tell that He was there? It was enveloped with the Shekinah, glory that emanated from that tent. Are you following this? So, it is with the human tent, the human tabernacle that God built, - intending to fill it with His presence - He did, and indeed He could, because it was sin-less when He created it.

Now, God had created mankind with a free will, hadn't He? We've touched on that before... ..and that was a risk on the part of God. But He was willing to take that risk, because He could only be satisfied with freewill love from His creatures. When you stop and think of it, that's the only thing that you and I, are satisfied with, as well. How pleased would it be if you had a robot, that you could program to say every morning upon arising, *"I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you"* ten times. Would you really feel good about that? - No. Why? Because that robot couldn't possibly do anything else. You see my dear friends, the only love that really satisfies us, is free-will love; and that's the way it is with God. In order for human beings to be able to love Him with free-will love, He had to give them a free will. But when He gave them a free will, - please understand something very important here - He also assured them, that He would honor their choice.

Now, this is crucial... This is fundamentally what justice is all about. Justice says, **"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."** {Gal 6:7} It is imperative my friends, that we have such an assurance, if we are really going to have a free will. You see, what if God said, *"Listen, I give you the power of choice, you can choose whatever you want, but I'm not sure I'm going to let you have it."* That's useless. That would be a sham. So, when God gave us a free will, He said, *"Listen, take it seriously please, and exercise it carefully, because I will honor what you choose."* Are you following this? ...and that's the only way we can really have a free will.

Now, there was a choice that God gave man to test his character, to test his loyalty, and to help him develop character as well. What was it? It was a single tree in the midst of the garden, called **"the tree of knowledge of good and evil."** He was not to eat of that tree; and God said, **"In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt,"** what? **"...surely die."** {Gen 2:17} You know the story... I can't get into the details... I'd love to... But they chose to, what? ...to eat of that tree. Therefore, they chose what? Come on now, follow through. They chose what? ...they chose death.

By the way, was there anything arbitrary about the fact that God said, **"In the day you eat of it you will die"**? No. Why? Because to choose to eat of that tree - follow this - was to choose to rebel against God's authority, to reject God's authority. And my dear friends, it is impossible to reject God's authority... without rejecting God Himself. Why? Because God is our Author. That's why He is our authority. Are you following this? He made us; He created us. That's why He has authority over us. So, to reject God's authority, is to reject God; and God is the only source of what? ...life! Therefore, when one chooses to reject God, what does one choose? Death! Are you following this? {Yes}

Now, what happened when they chose to eat of that fruit? The Bible records it, in Genesis, chapter 3. Turn with me there quickly. We're going to have to just touch on these high points because I want to come quickly to my favorite text, but we need to establish the context. **Genesis 3:7: "Then,"** When? Last line in verse 6, **"She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."** Very interesting. Only when Adam ate - and that's profoundly significant - not "until" Adam ate. When Adam ate, what happened? **"...then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were,"** what? **"...naked."**

Now, what has gone on here? God has honored their choice. Initially, at least. Follow. They chose to reject God, and so, what departs from them? The Spirit of God... and with it, what disappears? The outward manifestation, the robe of light, the Shekinah disappears. Are you following this? ...and they look and they see that they are, what? ...naked, ...and they panic. Why? Because as the next verse tells us, it's in the cool of the day.

Now, I have a personal opinion here. OK? I want you to know that I have no, **"Thus saith the Lord"** upon which to base this. That's why I'm telling you outright, it's a personal opinion. I believe it's Friday evening, just before sundown. I have several reasons for that... We know it's in the evening

because of the next verse: **"...in the cool of the day."** {Gen 3:8} I believe that it's Friday evening, and the Lord - their Creator - the Lord of the Sabbath - is coming, to welcome in the Sabbath with them.

But they look at themselves, and they look at each other; and they panic. They are unpresentable. So, they quickly try to make themselves presentable. What do they do? Rest of **verse 7**, what does it say? **"...and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves,"** what? **"...coverings."** They are desperately trying to replace the robe of light, and make themselves presentable. Are you seeing the picture here? What do we have the very first example of, in this act? Righteousness by works. Do you see it? Absolutely, righteousness by works; and by the way, please know that this is mankind on display. This is human nature. These aren't just two individuals that have nothing to do with us. This is us, on display. This is the way we have been behaving, ever since. Are you with me? Will you admit it? We are constantly trying to make ourselves presentable by our own efforts. That's righteousness by, what? ...works. We are trying to make ourselves presentable. Now, we have more sophisticated ways of doing that, than fig leaves. But it's the same principle. Are you with me?

By the way, can you imagine how uncomfortable a fig-leaf garment would be, after wearing a robe of light? But, I insist that they didn't even notice the physical discomfort, on account of the spiritual discomfort, the guilty conscience. Watch. How adequate are these garments, to make them presentable to stand, in the presence of the Lord God? Next verse. Just after patching those crude garments together, what did they hear? **"...and they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day."** ...evening. Always before, when they'd heard those familiar footsteps, they had run to greet Him and embrace Him, and express to Him their love and their appreciation for all the new discoveries of His created works that they made that day, or that week.

But this time they run, but where? ...to hide. **"...and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, among the trees of the garden."** Oh, my dear friends, do you see instantly the radical effect that sin has, upon the relationship between humanity and God? Now, they run and hide; they are afraid. Can you imagine the pain, that that must have caused the heart of God? It's hard to conceive of how, that must have hurt Him. He is looking forward, He loves them with His whole being. He only has their best interest in mind, but they run from Him; how that must have broken His heart... But, what does He do? Oh, I love the picture that this gives us of God. **Verse 9: "Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where are you?'"** ...and by the way, in the Hebrew, it's implied that He keeps calling them. **"Where are you? Where are you? Adam, where are you? Where are you? I want you back!"** Do you know what I hear in those words? **"Though you have rejected Me, I have not rejected you."** {Amen} Adam, I want you back; Adam I have a plan. I have a way that I have devised, it'll cost Me everything, but let Me explain it to you, let Me show it to you. There's a hope still, Adam let Me give you the gospel. **"Where are you?"** ...and He keeps looking until He finds them.

Where does He find them? – Hiding, in the deepest, darkest part of the garden; and what is Adam's response? **"So, he said, 'I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.'"** Very interesting... Clothed with fig leaves, what does he confess? He is naked. What does that tell us about the adequacy of fig leaves, to convince us that we are properly attired, when we actually stand in the presence of the Lord God? They're as good as nothing. Do you hear me, my dear friends? Please... please recognize, that Adam is one huge step ahead of Laodicea, in this confession. Do you hear what I am telling you? What's our problem? We are so self-deceived with our fig leaves, that **we think, that we are rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and we don't even know we are wretched, poor, blind, miserable, and naked.** {Rev 3:17} That's, what is so scary about Laodicea's condition. At least, Adam recognizes that fig leaves are as good as nothing. God help us recognize, that our **filthy rags** {Is 64:6} are as good as nothing. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen}

What is it that helped Adam recognize his nakedness? It was a glimpse of the Lord God. The same thing that helped poor Saul of Tarsus recognize, that all of his **filthy rags** were as good as nothing, when he ran into Jesus, on the way to Damascus. Saul, who started out that day in Jerusalem, **rich, and increased in goods, and had need of nothing**; staggered and stumbled into Damascus, **chief of sinners** {1 Tim 1:15}, because he had met Jesus on the way. We need exactly the same experience. Do I hear an "amen," fellow Laodiceans? We need the same experience. God help us run into the Lord God, while there's still time to get dressed! There's not much left!

He acknowledges his nakedness, but does he take personal responsibility for it? He confesses it, but does he repent fully? No, and by the way, as much as God wants to clothe him and provide salvation for him, He cannot, unless he truly repents. Are you following this? He's got to own up to his personal responsibility for his nakedness. Thus, the questions that follow. **Verse 11: "And He, God, said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?'"** God is coaching him. He is just longing for him to own up to what he's done, so that he can be forgiven. But what does Adam say? **"The woman made me do it!"** Not only does he blame the woman - I didn't quote him quite right - I wish that's all he had blamed. What does he actually say? **"The woman whom You gave to be with me gave me and I did eat."** Adam! Do you hear what he's doing? He's blaming God, as well as the woman. He's saying, *"If You'd given me a better woman, this wouldn't have happened. You gave me a faulty product. It's her fault, it's Your fault, but it's not my fault!"* My friends, this is human nature on display. Will you admit it? This is us. This is Adam, this is mankind. This is what we're all about. This is why we think **we're rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing**.

God hoping, longing for a better response, turns to the woman; and what does He say? **"What is this you have done?" Verse 13.** And, what does she say? *"The devil made me do it!"* **"The Serpent deceived me and I did eat."** Now, she's not quite as bold as Adam, but it's implied; *"And by the way God, You allowed that snake to be in the tree. You allowed those circumstances to exist. It's the Serpent's fault, it's Your fault, but it's not mine."*

Who are the four scapegoats that our first parents, and we ourselves, have been blaming ever since the fall? God, each other, Satan, and circumstances. But, not who, folks? Not who? ...not ourselves.

Now, the Lord God wants with all of His heart, to forgive our rebellious parents, and to offer them hope, and a garment. But, He can't unless they repent. So, how's He going to do that? Paul puts it this way in **Romans 2:4: "Know ye not that the goodness of God leads to repentance?"** What leads to repentance? - The goodness of God. So, what does God proceed to do, to lead these rebellious human beings, to repentance? He proceeds to preach the first gospel sermon ever preached. Yes. What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news regarding the goodness of God, towards undeserving sinners. That's what the gospel is. {Amen} ...and you say, *"The first gospel sermon ever preached."* Verse 14 following, that's the curse pronounced upon the serpent. *"What do you mean the first gospel sermon ever preached?"* Well folks, it's not good news to the serpent. It's bad news to the serpent. But whatever's bad news to the serpent, is good news to us. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} We have here, the first gospel sermon ever preached, and I would love to take the time to explore it, but we've got to cut right to the heart of it.

In the middle of this sermon, what does He say? **"I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her Seed."** "He" - masculine singular in the Hebrew - a special male Seed of the woman, **"He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His,"** what? **"...His heel."** What is this the first prophecy of? A Savior, who will come to deliver man from the tyranny of sin and Satan, by crushing its author's head, - that serpent of old called the devil. - You see, from the beginning, Satan has been identified with the snake, because he used it as a medium, through which to deceive the

human race; and when the Lord God, pronounces the curse upon the snake, He's actually speaking to who? ...that **serpent of old, called the devil.** {Rev 12:9} And it is a profound object lesson: What happens to the actual snake has spiritual application, to what happens to Satan. Fascinating... Oh, to take the time to explore it... but we can't.

Now, this "**Seed**," this special "**Seed**" that will crush the serpent's head, it is to be born of who? ...the woman. And where was this promise fulfilled, my dear friends? Where was it fulfilled? It was fulfilled on Golgotha. What does "**Golgotha**" mean? "**The place of the skull.**" {Jn 19:17} Isn't that wonderful? How clearly God lets us know, that what happened on Golgotha, is the fulfillment of that very first promise. When that cross was dropped on Golgotha, Satan's skull was crushed. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} Oh, brother, sister, do you see it? The very same act that bruised our Savior's heel, indeed, fell Him into the tomb. But because **the serpent couldn't touch His head** {1SM 256.1}, couldn't cause Him to even sin at the realm of His thoughts; the tomb couldn't hold Him, and He rose again. {Amen} But that wound inflicted on the serpent, is one from which, he will never recover. His head is crushed. Amen? {Amen} It happened on Golgotha.

How was his head crushed? Follow quickly. Think with me. Satan's power over the human race was gained, and can only be maintained by his capacity to deceive us. Are you hearing me? It was through lies that we came under the bondage of sin, self, and Satan. That's why when Jesus came, He said, "**You shall know the truth, and the truth shall,**" what? "**...set you free.**" {Jn 8:32} Amen? {Amen} ...and what were the original lies, that Satan brought us into bondage with? He lied regarding the character of God, and the consequence of sin; and that, could be very clearly brought out in that conversation, at the foot of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The character of God and the consequence of sin.

Where is the ultimate truth regarding both, revealed? In Christ and Him crucified. Amen? We see the ultimate truth regarding the character of God, and what else? ...the consequence of sin; and for those who know the truth, the deceptive power of Satan, is broken. His head is crushed and we are set free. Amen? {Amen} Satan is a defeated foe. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} His head has been crushed. It's a historic fact.

Now, some of you might be thinking, "*Wait a minute, how come he's apparently so alive and well on planet earth?*" Oh, don't be fooled by appearances, my dear friends, please. When you crush an actual snake's head, what happens? Come on, what happens? His tail flails for a long time. Satan's head has been crushed. He is a mortally wounded snake. I beg of you, don't get drug into the lake of fire by the flailing tail of a mortally wounded snake. Christ has conquered our enemy, and we have conquered in, and with Him, when we come to the cross, and accept Him, and what He's done; as having been done for us. Precious good news. Precious gospel. Does it do its work?

Listen. He proceeds to pronounce the curse upon the woman, and upon the man. And upon the man, what does He say? **Verse 19: "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return."** What is He telling them, he will do? ...they will do? ...they will die. He is reiterating, what He had warned them. "**In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt,**" what? "**...surely die.**" {Gen 2:17} Did they die, the day they ate? No, they didn't. Why? Did God not tell them the truth? Why didn't they die, the day they ate?

Listen and follow closely. Please understand. With the death sentence ringing in his ears, what does Adam do? "**And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.**" In Hebrew, "Eve" means life. Adam, what in the world are you doing? How come you're naming your wife "life" just after God has told you you're going to die? Is this an act of defiance? Is he clenching his fist and saying, "*I refuse that verdict? I'm going to name my wife 'life' just to spite you.*" Is that what's going on? No, my friends, no, no, no.

What's going on? - Faith is going on. Amen? He has heard the gospel sermon. He has understood it. He has grasped it, and he believes it. How do we know that? Well, who was the "**Seed**" to be born of that would crush the serpent's head? - The woman. Who does Adam think that is? - His wife. Can you blame him? There're no other candidates. God didn't say, "*It won't be for another 4,000 years, and her name will be Mary.*" He just said, "*born of the woman,*" and of course Adam thinks it's his wife. And so, what's he doing by calling her Eve? He's naming her in honor of the promised Messiah. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} His faith has grasped the gospel, and he has exercised his faith. Indeed **faith without works**, is what? ...**is dead.** {**Jas 2:20**} He is now, naming his wife in honor of that Seed. And my dear friends, now the Lord God can count him to be righteous by what? ...faith.

Do you see the significance of the following verse? "**And the Lord God made garments of skin.**" {**Gen 3:21**} That is the establishment of the sacrificial system. That is it! The very next chapter, the argument between Cain and Abel, is over the acceptable sacrifice. When was it established? It was established the day man sinned! When he needed it the most. After all, God had said, "**In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.**" {**Gen 2:17**} The only reason man didn't die the day they ate, is because "**...the Lamb of God was slain from the foundation of the world.**" {**Rev 13:8**} Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} And in that sacrificial lamb that provided that garment of skin, a symbol of the robe of righteousness, we have beautifully revealed the Lamb of God. Amen? {Amen} And in beholding that sacrifice, in beholding the mercy, the justice of God, revealed in the lamb, we are what? Changed. When the anti-typical Lamb finally came, how did John the Baptist, introduce Him? "**Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.**" {**Jn 1:29**} Oh, please behold Him; and in beholding you will be changed. Shall we stand for prayer?

Father in heaven, I thank you so much, that from the very beginning, You revealed Your glory to us by establishing the sacrificial system. ...and as we see in the lamb slain - Your justice, Your mercy, Your love, Your character is beautifully portrayed. Help us to behold the Lamb, that we might be changed. Thank You for revealing Your glory to us in the Lamb slain, that through the Lamb, you might restore Your glory in us. We praise You and thank You in Jesus' name. Amen.