

Identity Lost—Identity Regained

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Genesis 1:31 (NKJV) “Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”

Genesis 2:15–17 (NKJV) “Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Genesis 3:1–7 (NKJV) “Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Has God indeed said, “You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”’ ² And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, “You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.”’ ⁴ Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.”

Genesis 3:14–19 (NKJV) “So the Lord God said to the serpent: ‘Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.’ ¹⁶ To the woman He said: ‘I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.’ ¹⁷ Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, “You shall not eat of it”: cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. 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.’”

PAIN IN PARADISE

Why is there pain in our world? Where did pain begin? Couldn't God have created a world free from pain? Yes, and He did! God created a universe and a world free from pain and suffering. In fact, the world that God created was a Garden, a paradise. Everything that God created was good; it was very good! It was very good until something terrible happened. Into this perfect paradise came a serpent. Before the serpent there was no sin. Before sin there was no pain. Pain began in paradise.

Why does pain continue? It is because the original sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden brought a curse upon our world. We cannot blame Adam and Eve alone for we have all sinned in return. Sin affects everything. Sin makes life seem quite unfair at times. For instance, the sin of others directly affects us. In addition, our own sin affects others. We are all victims of sin and victimizers of others with our sin. Sin is the great evil that brought pain into paradise.

What is sin? Sin is disobedience. We can disobey God by doing what He has commanded us not to do. We can also disobey by not doing what God has commanded us to do. No one gets away with sin even if no one on earth finds out about it. Sin always has consequences. You and I are free to choose our sin. However, we are not free to choose the consequences of our sin. Satan doesn't care what sin we choose. Each of us has a free will and we can pick our poison. It all leads to pain in one way or another and ultimately to death.

Who is this serpent? Before the Fall of man into sin, the serpent was called "Lucifer" which means, "Morning Star". (Isaiah 14:12-15) He was the "anointed cherub who covers". (Ezekiel 28:14) After the Fall he is called "Satan" which means "Adversary". He is the "Devil" which means "Slanderer". He is called the "Tempter" in Matthew 4:3 and 1 Thessalonians 3:5. He is the "Accuser of the brethren" in Revelation 12:10. He is called the "ruler of this world" in John 12:31; 14:30. He is called the "god of this age" in 2 Corinthians 4:4. He is called the "prince of the power of the air" in Ephesians 2:2. He is the Great Dragon of the Book of Revelation who makes war against God in heaven and against the saints on earth. (Revelation 12) He is revealed as the Deceiver of the entire world in Revelation 12:9. The serpent is the author of evil. God is good absolutely. God did not create evil. Even as darkness is simply the absence of light, so evil is the absence of good. Adam and Eve allowed evil into this world by sinning against the goodness of God.

PROMISE IN PARADISE

God gave a promise to overcome the pain in paradise:

Genesis 3:15 (NKJV) *"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."*

God promised to send a "Seed" to defeat the serpent. Jesus Christ is the Seed of a woman, born of the virgin Mary. Jesus Christ is the Seed whose heel the serpent crushed on the Cross. Jesus Christ is the Seed that, through His Cross and Resurrection, crushed the serpent's head.

God promised to send the Seed of a woman to deliver mankind from the poison of sin. In Numbers 21 the people of Israel were bitten by deadly serpents. God instructed Moses to make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole. Those who looked upon it in simple faith would not die but live. Anyone who would not look and believe would die. In the same way, God made Jesus to be sin for us and raised Him up on a Cross so that those who believed in Him would not die:

John 3:14–18 (NKJV) *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸ "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."*

Yes, God gave a promise in paradise to overcome the pain in paradise. Jesus' work on the Cross is God's antidote for sin and death. Nothing else but faith in Jesus and His Cross can save us.

Sadly, many refuse to look upon Christ and believe. Instead they put their trust in something else. The reality is that good works cannot save you. Religion can't save you. Denominations can't save you. Theology can't save you. Spirituality can't save you. Good intentions can't save you. The church can't save you. Your mother and daddy can't save you. Your Christian friends can't save you. The Virgin Mary and the saints can't save you. The angels of heaven can't save you. There is only One who can save you from the poison of sin in your soul that is killing you—Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God! Look to Him!

Isaiah 45:22 (NKJV) *"Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other."*

All you must do to be saved is to look upon Jesus and His Cross and believe! When you look upon Jesus and believe, not even Satan can stop you from being saved! God kept His promise in paradise. Jesus Christ is the answer to the pain in paradise!