

GENESIS 3:11
GREAT QUESTIONS OF LIFE:
“WHO TOLD YOU THAT YOU WERE NAKED?”

“God [asked Adam], ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?’”¹

The first question God asked of the man was, “Where are you” [GENESIS 3:9]? The man’s response was the first indication that things had changed for the first couple. Adam said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself” [GENESIS 3:10]. This elicited the further question, “Who told you that you were naked” [GENESIS 3:11]?

It would be easy to dismiss the question as merely casual, or as something expected in the normal course of conversation under the circumstances. However, there is so much more underlying the query of our first father. I invite you to join me in exploring the ramifications of the question, applying what we learn in our own lives. In doing this, I contend that we will equip ourselves to serve the Master more effectively, honouring Him through the service we render to Him and to the praise of His glory.

HOW DID WE GET WHERE WE ARE? — Let’s recall what has occurred to this point in the narrative. The LORD God created a man who He named Adam. Adam was placed in a beautiful garden and charged to guard the garden, watching over it, tending to the plants growing in the garden, ensuring that all was well in the garden. God then enabled the man to recognise his distinctive position in all creation; none of the animals could truly be his partner. So, God made from the man’s side a woman; she would complement the man. The man received the woman as the one who would ensure that his life was complete.

It is obvious that the LORD God did a good thing, for when He presented the woman to the man, the man’s response was ecstatic joy. “The man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man.”

[GENESIS 2:23]

It is at this point that we encounter what is, to our minds, an enigmatic statement—enigmatic because we really cannot understand what is being said. The divine commentary on the presentation of God’s complement for the man is, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed” [GENESIS 2:24, 25]. Because God Himself instituted marriage—the union of one man to one woman, we may be certain that marriage flows from creation. Moreover, marriage is good because it was instituted by God and given for the benefit of mankind. Finally, marriage is designed to complement both man and woman before God.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible, English Standard Version**, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

I am certain that even in this age replete with fallen ideas and ideals we comprehend that truth, though many are obviously intent on imputing a novel meaning to what is stated as divine truth. However, it is the second part of the divine commentary that we cannot truly understand. The LORD God says, “The man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.” Shame, uneasiness, is part of our lives when we are stripped of all coverings and all masks. That is one of the dreadful transformations resulting from the entrance of sin into creation.

How long the first couple continued in this idyllic setting is not known. However, behind the scenes a dreadful event had taken place. An angel, Day Star by name, created to be the covering angel, rebelled and drew over one-third of the holy angels with him in his insurgency. These rebels were cast out of heaven and to the earth. Day Star was transformed into the enemy of all that God had created, for he sought to displace God. Thus, this angel, presenting himself in the form of a serpent, approached our first mother and endeavoured to lead her into rebellion against the stated will of the Creator.

The account of that temptation and the consequences are outlined quite simply in the verses preceding our text this day. “[The serpent] said to the woman, ‘Did God actually say, “You shall not eat of any tree in the garden”?’ And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, “You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.”’ But the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths” [GENESIS 3:1-7].

Thus, Eve was deceived. Adam, however, plunged into sin with his eyes open. He willingly chose rebellion over intimacy with God. We cannot know the rationalisation he employed. We do know, however, that he chose to join his wife in rebellion. God had warned, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 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 2:16, 17]. There are those who argue that the first couple did not die, and therefore, the account that we are given is allegorical. However, consider the fact that “sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” [ROMANS 5:12].

No, paradise was lost to mankind. The couple would be expelled from the Garden, and death would contaminate all that was created. Man was instantly estranged from God, who is life. His soul was condemned to eternal separation. Henceforth, the body of all people would age, being susceptible to disease and the ravages of time. Before the Fall, there was no ageing process—the debilitation that attends growing old was unknown. There was no failing eyesight, no loss of hearing, no muscular aches and the pains that come with arthritic degeneration; man was ageless and without the sorrow of death.

It was all thrown away in one impulsive moment. Forever after, creation was transformed. “The creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies” [ROMANS 8:20-23].

THE CORE OF SIN — There is such a plethora of doctrinal truth presented in this chapter, and assuredly implied in this verse, that it is impossible to fully explore all that could be said, and perhaps all that should be said, in the time allotted for this message. However, some dreadful truths stand out and demand that we take note of them.

One truth stands out above all others—self is at the heart of sin. The tempter did not command Mother Eve to eat some of the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil; rather, he understood the art of seduction. He created desire. Eve “saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise” [GENESIS 3:6]. Much later in the history of the race, the Apostle of Love, looking back on this event will present us with an instructive statement. “All that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world” [1 JOHN 2:16]. Eve saw that the tree was good for food (the desires of the flesh). She also saw that it was a delight to the eyes (the desires of the eyes). At last, she saw that the tree was to be desired to make one wise (the pride of life).

Our first parents were instantly transformed as result of their rebellion. On the surface, it must have appeared that God had lied and Satan told the truth. Their eyes were opened! They did know good from evil! However, the serpent had spoken half-truths; they knew what was evil, but they were powerless to turn from evil. They knew what was good; but they were incapable of doing what is good. Long after their rebellion a man would compile a number of statements that describe the new condition that they experienced and which has passed to all mankind. This is what is written:

“None is righteous, no, not one;
no one understands;
no one seeks for God.
All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;
no one does good,
not even one.”
“Their throat is an open grave;
they use their tongues to deceive.”
“The venom of asps is under their lips.”
“Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.”
“Their feet are swift to shed blood;
in their paths are ruin and misery,
and the way of peace they have not known.”
“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

[ROMANS 3:10-18]

Previously there had been a desire to glorify the Creator, now there was an overwhelming desire for self-preservation and self-justification. They had once exalted the Creator; now they exalted the self. Before their rebellion they had walked in innocence and rejoiced in the knowledge of the Holy One; they were now consumed with self-consciousness. Before, the man and woman had rejoiced in God’s presence; now they endeavoured to build their self-esteem. Indeed, the self was central to their person after their rebellion. They were estranged from God and terrified at their nudity; thus, they attempted to hide from the One who had given them life.

God had warned that death lay in disobedience; and the couple did die! Physical death was not immediate; but the process of death was initiated. It will assist our understanding if we see what was actually said. In **GENESIS 2:17**, the LORD God is recorded as saying, “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.” Let me translate that final clause that God spoke somewhat literally. “In the day that you eat of it, dying you shall die.” With the eating of the fruit, the process of death began.

Undoubtedly, physical death was in view. However, remember that man is a tripartite being—man has a body, but he has a spirit and he is a living soul. Whenever we think of death, we tend to think of physical death—the separation of the soul from the physical body. However, we dare not forget the apostolic assessment of our condition as fallen people. “You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind” [**EPHESIANS 2:1-3**].

As we promote the self, our sin is thrust to the forefront. “I want what I want, when I want it, to do with it as I will,” is the attitude manifest by each of us when we are in the flesh. We justify the most horrible evil on the basis of imagining that it is for our own good. Let me provide an example drawn from current attitudes prevalent in the world. The idea that many espouse that a woman has full control over her own body is casually tossed about as though it were an unassailable truth. If it is her body, I suppose one could make such an argument.

Within marriage, that argument doesn’t apply universally—either for man or for woman. We who are Christians are taught in the Word, “The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control” [**1 CORINTHIANS 7:3-5**]. Since there is no other conjugal relationship blessed in the Word, this is condition is for the married only, as taught in the Letter to Hebrew Christians. “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous” [**HEBREWS 13:4**].

There is also need to stress that no woman has the right to take the life of the unborn, nor does any person have the right either to participate in such an act or to approve of such an act. Life is sacred, and especially when that life is vulnerable and given by God. Every woman has the right to say “No!” However, when she is carrying an unborn child, she has a responsibility to protect that life, recognising that before God she has become the guardian of that which God gives. A wicked generation despises what God has given and what He has called good; only a darkened mind could dare call the gift of life evil or condone sentencing the innocent to death.

I tremble when I consider the attitudes and actions of this present generation, for surely we fall under divine condemnation. We are warned, “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools” [**ROMANS 1:18-22**].

Let me give another example of the exaltation of the self. This present generation imagines that sexual gratification is the highest good anyone can attain. Consequently, we don't want anyone to imagine that we will speak against sexual immorality. Thus, the strictures of generations are rapidly eroded as we exalt personal gratification to the forefront. I am always amazed when I watch a television program and see the ads for condoms, for aids to for sexual enhancement and even for sexual chat lines! This is a generation utterly occupied with sexual gratification. I cannot imagine that Sodom and Gomorrah was much different from this present generation; and we invite that same judgement on our present culture as that one received.

Moreover, society has bought into the idea that what the individual does in their private life is their business and no one else. Let me briefly respond to that idea. An individual that shapes public opinion, such as a Primer Minister or a Premier, should be as honourable in his or her private life as in the public life lived out before the world. If I am untrustworthy in my private life, would anyone truly expect that I would consider trust important in my public life? If I am immoral in my private life, it does dispose me to immorality in my public life. What I am in private does inform my public duties.

Whether I am in the public eye or simply one who labours in the shadows, if I fail to be pure in my life I am condoning evil. Whenever a society has a significant minority that approves—tacitly or expressly—of immoral behaviour, all within that society will suffer under the judgement of God. Not every German approved of the immoral actions of Adolf Hitler. When the bombs fell and the nation fell, all suffered alike, however. Likewise, not all Japanese approved of the wicked acts of their leaders and the armed forces during the Second World War. Nevertheless, when the nation was bombed, all the citizenry suffered alike.

I am constrained to provide one final example before moving on in the message. The cult of the self expands at a breath-taking pace as public schools instruct students that their feelings predominate in every situation. Teachers are great at instructing youth how to have self-esteem. Consequently, youth are unable to read, but they feel good about themselves. They can neither balance a chequebook nor calculate how much change is due, but they feel good about themselves. They are ignorant of Canadian history, though they are fully aware of which songstress is currently available for downloading onto iTunes—and they feel good about themselves! They have no sense of economic reality and they are unaware of political currents, but they do feel good about themselves. May I say there are grave consequences for the nation, for society and for our culture because of our refusal to accept responsibility before God for our sinful condition.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF SIN — It is impossible for us to imagine the life Adam and Eve enjoyed before the Fall. As the Psalmist has eloquently stated:

“I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

[PSALM 51:5]

Our first parents walked with God; they enjoyed His presence; spontaneously running to Him whenever He came into their presence. The LORD God asked the man, “Where are you” [GENESIS 3:9]? In asking this, He was drawing the man out. If you will, God was seeking for the man to confess his sin. The man replied, however, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself” [GENESIS 3:10].

This must be contrasted with **GENESIS 2:25**. The couple had always been naked; but we have forever lost the innocence they enjoyed before their rebellion. May I draw a conclusion that some appear to overlook in our day. Because of the original situation that is presented for our first parents, we are given the implication that husband and wife are permitted intimacy that others are not permitted. Clearly, this is contrary to the playboy morals of our present day. Adam and Eve were at ease with one another; there was no fear of exploitation. They trusted one another. This is still the divine intent for marriage; God gave us marriage in part for our own joy and comfort. Husband and wife learn with time to trust one another, to enjoy being at ease with one another, to delight in one another for who each one is.

Now, because of their rebellion, Adam and Eve knew shame and fear; and fear and shame have marked fallen mankind since that time. The sinning couple knew they were naked! This is the first instance of embarrassment. The sinning couple knew that their relationship to God had changed; consequently, their relationship to one another was changed. How stunning this must have been. For the first time, Adam and Eve knew self-doubt, insecurity; they were even questioning their own identity. Previously, they were not ashamed because they were not sinning. However, immediately after the Fall, they were transported into a new world for which they were unsuited. They could never return to Camelot! They were excluded from Paradise.

Analysing nakedness from the perspective of our culture, R. C. Sproul of the Ligonier Valley Study Center states that we fear exposure. He notes that staring shows our ambiguity in being looked at by other people. On the one hand we want to be noticed by other people. Should someone pass close by us and fail even to cast a glance in our direction, we are offended. “You didn’t even take notice of me!” we might say. However, if that same person enters the room, sits down and stares at us, we are also offended—only more so. Our reaction in this instance is, “Why are you staring? What do you want? Mind your own business!”

We react differently in these scenarios because we want to be noticed because we are persons, made in the image of the personal God. It is a most human of characteristics which makes us want to be noticed. On the other hand we are uncomfortable when people stare at us because we associate staring with the invasion of our privacy. We are ashamed to have someone pry into our private lives. We all wear masks, pretending to be what we think other people will respect and admire. We project these false images but we also reveal what we actually are through the choice and use of clothing. That was true for Adam and Eve and it is true for us as well. Our first parents made clothing of fig leaves, and when they heard God coming they hid themselves knowing that their clothes were inadequate to disguise their true selves.²

Instead of being focused on the Creator, for the first time Adam and Eve were focused on themselves. Whereas before their rebellion they had loved the Creator and loved one another without reservation; now their primary concern was for their own situation. This is the tragic consequence of sin—sinful man is always concerned for himself. There is no benevolence flowing from sinners. In the broadest sense I challenge you to think about that statement.

Consider that were there no churches there would be no hospitals. Christians expressing the love of God for injured and wounded humanity established the first hospitals. Without churches there would never have been an orphanage, never have been a public school system, never have been a charitable organisation. There is no outward expression of love outside the church, either historically or in contemporary terms.

² The foregoing discussion was abstracted from James Montgomery Boice, **Genesis: An Expository Commentary**, Vol. 1, **Genesis 1:1 – 11:32** (Zondervan, © 1982) pp. 118 - 119

Because of the sin of our first parents, you and I will never be able to say, “Here we stand before both God and man, without shame.” We do know shame; we cannot return to the days of primal innocence. Though there are individuals who practise nudity, claiming that they are ridding themselves of all inhibitions, they are not fully honest. They are dishonest before God and they still refuse to know themselves. Others form the cult of spiritual nudity, claiming that they just “let it all hang out.” They say whatever they want without regard to the consequences of their speech, thinking that such openness in speech is honesty. Boorishness is not honesty. Crudeness is not openness. Nevertheless, we know that we stand exposed before God, and we are uncomfortable with the knowledge that others also may see through the façade we so carefully construct and come to know us as we truly are.

We try to cover our nakedness through attempting to divert attention away from ourselves. We use external and superficial comparisons of ourselves with other people in an effort to cover-up what we really are. Of course, it is to be noted that we inevitably choose to compare ourselves in areas we know we will appear favourable and against others we know will appear unfavourable. We even cover up in the act of confessing wrongs. We are ashamed of ourselves and we will use any disguise.

Again, we try to focus on corporate sin so that others will not notice our personal sin. This is a futile effort, because societies, governments, institutions and even businesses reflect us; they are themselves what we have permitted them to become. These entities did not emerge separate from us, but they are what we permit them to be. This is the reason I caution Christians against joining some noisy march or petition drive to protest the social evil of the moment. Abortion and euthanasia did not become acceptable in a vacuum. The present woeful state of marriage in our world did not simply happen. It was precisely because we Christians did not do what Christ commanded that these evils are present and commonly accepted in our world. We refused to evangelise and we refused to show compassion and we refused to resist evil in our own lives, and so the world about us moved steadily toward destruction. If you really want to address the wickedness of society, change the heart of your neighbour. Otherwise, you are tacitly giving evidence that you are comfortable with the way things are, or at the least you are content to leave them alone.

We will often try to conceal our shame by adopting the view that time cancels sin. We witness this in the way we talk about some wrong done during childhood or some nearly equally distant period in our past. We will even act as though this were of no present concern. At times we will even laugh about our wrong. However, does God laugh? Is God unconcerned? Because we are creatures of time we sometimes forget that God dwells in eternity and is not bounded by time as we are. Thus, though we may remember the wrong itself we forget the hurt that wrong inflicted on others. God, however, dwelling in eternity sees our sin as an abomination before Him. Time does not eradicate our sin. The only thing which will remove our sin is the blood of Christ the Lord which purifies us from every sin [see **1 JOHN 1:7**].

We also attempt to conceal our shame through thinking there is safety in numbers. We imagine that if everyone fails the exam, then the exam must have been too hard. Christianity insists that all people are bad, and we reason that if this is true then badness must be excusable. In human terms it may be possible that the exam was too hard or the standard was too high. We are talking about God, however, and there can be no excuse for our failure before Him. “Everyone does it” will not suffice to excuse our sin.³

³ The foregoing examples were suggested by and discussed by C. S. Lewis in **The Problem of Pain**, Geoffrey Bles, London, © 1940, pp. 47-50

Modern psychologists have effectively explained away guilt and shame and fear. They distinguish between our feelings of guilt and our guilt as sinners, between our feelings of shame and our nakedness before God, between our feelings of fear and the manner in which we attempt to flee from God. This contributes significantly to my sense of disgust at the emphasis upon feelings among theological scholars of this day. Those feelings are far less important than the conditions which promote them to the forefront in life. Theologians endeavour to deal with the conditions, even as the unthinking masses think they are confronting the situation through addressing their feelings. Take note of a sorrowful truth: Adam confessed to a feeling and not to sin. When the LORD God called him, Adam responded, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself” [GENESIS 3:10]. “I was afraid!” In effect, Adam confessed that his feelings kept him from God. The same holds true to this day.

When Adam sinned, he and Eve knew good from evil. Consequently they felt guilt because their eyes were opened and they knew that they had rebelled against God. They would deal with their guilt through denial, blaming someone else for their condition (a response which characterises mankind to this day). They knew they were naked, and they were ashamed—so ashamed that they made a makeshift cover for their nakedness. Man still focuses on the external and attempts to cover-up his failure through refocusing the attention of all on his external features. Adam and Eve were fearful, for they knew they had transgressed Holy God, and so they fled. Fear leads to flight, and Adam and Eve were the first people to try to hide from God.

The knowledge of good and evil results in our guilt before God. Because we are capable of distinguishing between good and evil we understand that we are open books before God, our spiritual cover has been stripped away. As moral agents knowing good and evil we endeavour to flee from God who is righteous. We know we cannot stand before Him and even when we have been born into His family we tremble in His presence, for He is God. Those feelings are born of our inherent guilt. That shame which suffuses our lives is the result of our spiritual nakedness before God. The fear we feel when we think of God’s presence is the natural result of our longing to flee from responsibility imposed by the knowledge of good and evil. We are fallen in that we know what is right and we are powerless to do what is right.

The consequences of sin were immediate; however, speaking in broad terms, the Creator pronounced the consequences of sin. Satan, the old serpent, was cursed. Ultimately, together with those angels that joined him in rebellion, he shall be cast into the Lake of Fire that burns forever and ever. He was publicly conquered at the Cross of Calvary. The Apostle speaks of this conquest when writing the Christians of Colossae. “In him [that is, in Christ] also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him” [COLOSSIANS 2:11-15].

It is important to note that neither the man nor the woman was cursed. God had already blessed them [see GENESIS 1:28]; He could not curse that which He had blessed. Only the serpent and the ground are cursed. It did mean that the creation was ruined by the Fall. Whereas once there was harmony, now there is turmoil. Whereas once there was life, now there is death and decay. Whereas once all creation united to praise the Creator, now it groans in frustration.

THE CURE FOR SIN — Who told you that you were naked? The simple answer is, “No one.” Intuitively, we know that we are naked. In our hearts we know that we are sinful and unable to make ourselves acceptable before God. We are powerless to resist sin. Even we who are Christians find ourselves dismayed by our inability to do what we should. We react harshly to a word of concern from a dear friend, or we discover that our thought life leads us where we do not want to be, or we find ourselves jealous of the success of another—in our hearts we are miserable before God; and yet, we cannot cease the sinning.

Paul struggled with this condition, and in his struggle provided the cure for sin. Listen to **ROMANS 7:21-25**. “I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” Were we to stop reading at this point, we would continue in our misery. However, Paul continued by exulting, “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.”

Adam’s response to God’s call was not a confession of his sin, but rather a feeble attempt to justify his actions. People yet attempt to justify their sin by pointing to their circumstances and to the fate they have inherited in life. The excuse will not work, however, for we are responsible for our choices. Moreover, sin pits us against our dearest friends and loved ones. Adam accuses God by accusing the woman—the same woman over whom he had exclaimed earlier [**GENESIS 2:23**]. Oh, that the people of God would discover the reality of the promise, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” [**1 JOHN 1:9**].

You may well ask how we arrive at this condition of confessing our sins so that we may be cleansed. At least, you should be asking this question! The simple answer to the query is that we must be redeemed—we must be saved from our sinful condition and restored to a position that permits intimacy with the Creator. Peter speaks of the provision which the True and Living God has made so that we may know freedom and intimacy with the Holy One. In his first missive, he writes, “Preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’ And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God” [**1 PETER 1:13-21**].

The author of the Letter to Hebrew Christians reminds readers of that letter of the price paid for our salvation. Looking back to the situation that previously prevailed under the Law, he writes, “Every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified” [**HEBREWS 10:11-14**].

Writing a dysfunctional church, the Apostle to the Gentiles spoke of the price paid for our salvation, using that as the basis for appeal to all who will receive it. Turn in your Bible to his words, found in **2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-6:3**. “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

“Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says,

‘In a favorable time I listened to you,
and in a day of salvation I have helped you.’

“Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

You know very well that I refer you repeatedly to the words recorded in the Letter to Roman Christians. “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Master,’ believing in your heart that the Father has raised Him from the dead, you shall be set free. It is with the heart that one believes and is made right with the Father and with the mouth one confesses and is set free.” The passage concludes with the promise that was first presented through the Prophet Joel. “Everyone who calls on the Name of the Master shall be set free” [**ROMANS 10:9, 10, 13**].⁴

There is a cure for sin. Do you now enjoy this cure? The offer is presented to each one. Even now, the LORD God is prepared to restore you to enjoy intimacy with Him and to confer on you the freedom of His own beloved child. Accept the offer and be saved. Amen.

⁴ Author’s free translation