

GOSPEL HIGHWAY

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Satan's Strategy, God's Remedy 1. The Message Of Genesis 3

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned... For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. (Rom. 5:12,19)

There are many stories that revolve around the idea of finding a secret formula to produce a special cure for an otherwise incurable disease. Many of such stories have been produced into movie shows. We can think of examples like "Lorenzo's Oil", "Jungle Doctor", and so on. Many traditional kung-fu stories run along a similar line. We have the hero who finds a long-lost manual that helps him achieve greater heights in his fighting skill, so that he is able to overcome a powerful villain.

We may look upon Genesis 3 as a document like that. It contains the story of what happened to our first parents in the Garden of Eden. It reveals to us the consequences of their fall from innocence. It gives us a special insight into our lives today. Put another way, Genesis 3 is of crucial importance to the understanding of our past, our present, and our future. It reveals to us our roots, our current status before God, and the key to our future stability and happiness.

Our roots revealed

We are all aware of the great importance of knowing our roots. Many young people grow up happily until a stage when they become troubled about their roots. An identity crisis occurs in them. They begin to ask who they are, where they are from, how they are to relate to the many people around them. This problem is more acute in our modern age in which there has been great mobility and migration of people. There are those who grow up in an environment in which are found people of diverse cultures and different colours of skin. I believe it is this crisis of identity that has given rise to the popularity of books tracing the ancestry of individuals, clans, or even whole ethnic groups.

You might claim that this is never a problem with you. But wait till your children grow up, and your daughter comes home one day to tell you that she is going to marry someone whose skin colour is totally different from yours! What would your reaction be? You might say that you are an open-minded person, that this would be no problem to you. But is that really true? Would you be willing to let your daughter marry him? Would there be full consent from within your heart? And even if you have no racial prejudice of any kind, there is still the practical problems of having a son-in-law from a different culture, who speaks a different language, who eats different food... How should you view these differences? Would these things affect your relationship with him, and with your daughter? Should these be allowed to affect your relationship?

You would not have these kinds of problems if you understand that the human race is actually one. Mankind is actually one family! That is a fact. It can easily be proven. We all know that the tiger and the lion belong to the cat family. If you were to crossbreed a lion with a tiger, you would get a perfectly healthy offspring which has two eyes, two ears, one nose, one mouth, one heart, one stomach, and so on. You would get a complete animal which has nothing lacking in it. This has actually been done. The product has been called a "liger", a cross between the lion and the tiger. You may do the same for a cow and a buffalo. That is because the cow and the buffalo belongs to the same family. However, if you were to cross-breed a tiger and a cow, you will never get a living creature of any kind. You may use artificial insemination, but you will never succeed in getting a living creature of any kind. The reason is that the tiger and the cow belong to two different families.

That is not the case with human beings. You can take the tallest and whitest European, and marry him to the shortest and blackest pigmy from central Africa, and you will produce a perfectly normal offspring. The reason is that the human race is actually one family. This confirms to us the truth taught in the Bible that mankind descended from the same pair of parents. God created all the creatures of the world "according to their kind", but he created only one pair of humans. We are all descended from Adam and Eve. Once you grasp this truth, you will no longer be too concerned about the differences of culture and the different colours of skin among people. You suddenly realize that your roots stretch all the way to the very beginning, when God created the first humans.

Those who attempt to trace their ancestry can go back only five or six generations, and no more. They can perhaps trace their ancestry to a certain village in Swatow in China, or to a village in Kerala, India. But they are unable to go further back. This exercise of tracing their ancestry may give them a certain sense of satisfaction, but it still does not account for their origin. Genesis 3, however, shows that all of us originated from the same parents. There is our ultimate satisfaction! We know where the whole human race comes from. We are able to comprehend the history of mankind at one sweep, even if we do not know all the events that have transpired during the time in between.

Our current status revealed

A knowledge of our roots gives a certain stability to our lives. It shows us where we came from. But it also explains why we are what we are today. It reveals to us that we stand guilty before God because of the sin of our first parents. We are guilty in two ways. First, we share in the guilt of Adam. God made Adam the head of the human race. He stood in our place. We were "in him" when he sinned against God. You may not like the idea. You might protest that you did not have a choice in the sin of Adam. You may protest as much as you like, but the fact remains that you are held guilty by God for Adam's sin. We see this principle operating in many areas of life. Consider this example. If the Prime Minister of our nation were to declare war on, say, Japan, none of the citizens in this country may say that he is not at war. You might go to Japan and say to the people there that you are only a tourist, and that you have nothing to do with the war. But will the Japanese listen to you? Before you know it, you will be held as a prisoner of war! That is because all the citizens of this country are linked to the Prime Minister by virtue of the fact that he is our representative head. In the same way, Adam was the representative head of the human race. When he sinned against God, and broke His commandment, we were all held guilty with him.

Not only are we held guilty by God, but we have the additional problem of the pollution of sin in our lives. Since all of us descended from Adam and Eve, we share in their fallen nature. Something happened to them when they rebelled against God and ate the fruit of the forbidden tree. Their nature became twisted and filthy. They knew guilt, and shame, and fear. They were now capable of lying, blaming others for their sins, and committing sins of various kinds. That sinful, polluted nature of theirs was passed down to their descendants. Since we are all descended from them, our nature is also twisted and filthy. That accounts for why it is that children naturally take to lying, stealing, and rebelling against their parents. You do not have to teach your children all these. They will show forth these sins as they grow up. These sins are not picked up from their environment. These sins come naturally to them. Your children may have been induced to show all these sins by the bad examples of others, but you have still to account for why it is that they should follow them at all. It is because they have a twisted and polluted nature! Even without the examples of others, your children will show forth these sins sooner than you expect.

Children do grow up. You are children who have grown up, are you not? All through the years, you have sinned in worse and worse ways! Your conscience testifies to the fact that you have done wrong towards God. You have broken His laws. You stand guilty before God for your sins! We are already guilty because of our first parents' sin. We now stand guilty before God for our own sins! Genesis 3 gives us the explanation for our predicament. It shows to us that we stand guilty before God, and God's holy anger now rests on us. We are enemies of God. Every time that we try to get near to God, we are repelled by the force of enmity which exists between the two parties. We cannot get near to Him, let alone be welcomed by Him, unless something is done to our situation. That is the big problem we are faced with!

The way ahead revealed

Genesis 3 reveals to us our roots. It reveals to us our current condition and status before God. And it also reveals to us the way ahead. We know that left to ourselves, there will be no possibility of being reconciled to God. What is life if God does not smile on you? You live in His world. You enjoy His benefits. But you know that His holy anger rests on you everyday of your life! Imagine yourself going to work each day and knowing that your boss is unhappy with you! It will not be long before you break under the burden of your guilt before God. That is why a lot of people are unhappy deep down in their hearts. They do not have a clear conscience before God. And if the burden of guilt, shame and fear does not break you, God will break you in due time. Your sins will catch up with you. Death will come to you. There is the judgment day that all of us will have to face. And after that what? You know that nothing good awaits you. Eternal separation from God, and from all that is good, awaits you. Sufferings of the worst kind await you. You will be plunged into darkness forever...

Thankfully, that is not all that is shown to us by Genesis 3. We are shown that there is the possibility of reconciliation with God. We are shown God's way of saving sinners. We are shown that a Saviour will be provided. Those of us who know something of the Bible's teaching would know that that Saviour is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. The way ahead is revealed as bright for those who come to faith in Christ. Our sins may be cancelled! Our guilt may be lifted! We may gain a new status before God and be accepted by Him! All these are possible through the Saviour of the world, namely Jesus Christ. We know that life on this earth is so short, and temporary. We want to live out the remaining stretch of life well. We wish to live usefully, with a sense of purpose and well-being, and with the certainty that we are heading for better things ahead. All this is shown to be possible only through the Saviour whom God has provided, namely Jesus Christ. His death on the cross, and His resurrection, have secured all this for His people.

These, then, are the unique features of Genesis 3. Our past, our present, and our future are revealed to us. We may gain a better understanding of ourselves, and know how best to live. These truths form the outline of Genesis 3. We must now consider the details.

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