

“PARADISE LOST”

GENESIS 3:22-24

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

INTRODUCTION

Adam and Eve lived in such an environment in the Garden of Eden, having the Tree of Life, luscious trees with fruit, a pure stream and river of life, peaceful surroundings, beautiful and friendly animals, etc. What more could they ask? Maybe independence from God’s control, to do their own thing! Well, they gained their desires and now they bore the consequences. **They lost Paradise!**

PARADISE HAS BEEN LOST, BUT IN CHRIST IT HAS NOW BEEN REGAINED.

In this passage we see *the nature of God, the Nature of Man, and the Position of Man.*

I. THE NATURE OF GOD (22a)

A. His Name—*Yahweh Elohim*

- Not merely powerful, and to be feared—*Elohim*
- Also merciful and keeping His covenant—*Yahweh*
- Consistently and faithfully keeping his promises
- Seeking to restore the fallen pair He has created to have a relationship with Himself

B. Diversity in Unity

- Singular—“God said”
- Plural—“Like one of Us”—cf. 1:26
- Not God and the angels, for angels are not on the same level with God.

II. THE NATURE OF MAN (22)

Notice that the woman’s place is not prominent here, for man is the head.

A. Man in one way has become “like God”—in the point of knowing good and evil.

- What a sorry godlikeness; what a pitiable achievement!
- Gained an attribute like God by becoming unlike God.
- Divine sadness is expressed here.
- Pure pity; a sort of expression of irony.
- Man gained what he sought—now what a predicament he finds himself in!

B. Man must not now eat of the Tree of Life.

- One thing could be worse than his fall into sin—living eternally in such a condition!
- He had not yet eaten of the Tree of Life—“lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.”
- To so eat in further rebellion would be to totally reject grace, and any hope of restoration; it would be to live eternally in man’s sinful condition.
- Such granting of eternal human existence in man’s fallen state would not be the result of some magical power inherent in the fruit of the tree; it would be through the power of God’s Word.
- **Such eternal life would be equal to eternal death or the Second death—being separated from God eternally.**
- The horror of such a thought is expressed by God’s breaking off of His sentence in the midst of it.
- To eat of the Tree of Life in man’s current condition would be to make impossible the obtaining of the resurrection body of the redeemed through the Atoning work of Christ (Phil. 3:21).

III. THE POSITION OF MAN

A. Expelled from the garden--“The Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden.”

- Note again the name: “The Lord God.”
- Punishment for his sin, but also an expression of mercy.
- It would be **hell** for sinful man to live in paradise, and the results would be disastrous.

B. Driven out of the garden—v. 24.

- Man was reluctant to leave and to enter the now harsh world outside paradise

C. Required to “till the soil.” (23)

- He also had this responsibility before his fall—2:15.
- Such is not his only basic work now.
- He also has a daily struggle with the elements.
- The words concerning the ground—“from which he was taken”—are an **intimation of his death** (see v. 19).
- Man now experiences unwelcome and degrading labor.
- **Man largely loses his dominion and rule over creation.**
- He now stands in bondage to creation.

D. Prohibited from access to the Garden (24)

God placed two things at the east of the Garden: [“East”—at its entrance; God’s coming from the east—so the future tabernacle and temple]

1. Cherubim

- Highest order of angelic beings who seem to be guardians of God’s holiness, and His “chariot” to carry out the divine mission of Holiness.
- Called “living beings” in Ezek. 1 & 10 and in Rev. 4 (?)
- Replica of the cherubim were put on the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant, and on the Veil of the Temple in both the Tabernacle and in the Temple.
- They stand in the immediate presence of God.
- They are associated with God in works of judgment (e.g. Rev. 6)
- They are representatives of God’s presence in the world.
- They vindicate and protect His holiness in relation to creation.
- They represent creation before God.

Redemption for man may only be found by honoring God’s justice and strict holiness.

*Man’s access to God is prohibited except by the **blood of a Mediator.***

Man cannot enter Paradise by his own works.

2. The Flaming sword revolving in every direction

- Not the hand of the cherubim.
- The flame represents God’s purity, justice, and wrath (cf. Ezek. 1:4, 28)
- Evidently man continued to worship God at the entrance to the garden.
- God’s presence was manifested there in a special way by the cherubim and the sword of fire.
- Note how “fire” has been connected with the tabernacle and the temple.

CONCLUSION

Paradise was lost to man.

- How long did the Garden remain on the Earth? Until the Flood?

Paradise is regained in Christ.

- Now it is in Heaven—Rev. 22:1-4; Rev. 2:7
- Jesus, in another “garden”—Gethsemane—made possible our entrance into Paradise (Mt. 26:36ff).

Would you like to enter?