

The Lord Jesus said ... “My Sheep

Without a moment’s hesitation, he disregarded his Creator and ate the forbidden fruit. How clearly he revealed his heart. *He didn’t love his Maker.*

How heavy God’s heart must have been that day. He came to the garden to walk with man, and had instead to ask that dreadful question, “Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?”

“... and I did eat,” responded Adam.

SCENE 2

Sentence of the First Man

God’s promise for disobedience was death: separation. Adam and Eve feared God’s judgment and so hid among the trees, *separating* themselves from God.

But oh, the mercy of that One. His heart still sought after man in the purest of love. He still desired man’s companionship, and to get it, He knew what He would do. Man deserved to die, but God spared Adam and Eve that day. They did not die physically. God spared them, accepting the death of an animal in their place.

God banished man from the garden and cursed the ground of the earth, so that it no longer produced only “good fruit.” Thorns and thistles were now produced.

Adam was himself a product of the ground, of course, so that when the ground was cursed to bring forth “bad fruit,” so too was Adam. “...Return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken...” (Gen 3:19).

Adam was created to “be **fruitful** and multiply.” And he did, Cain being the first of endless examples of Adam’s “bad fruit.” A corrupt tree always yields corrupt fruit. And every descendent of Adam, as he returns to the ground in death, bears the marks of the curse pronounced by God that day (Rom 5:12).

In apparent defeat, God pronounced His righteous verdict. What a sorrowful day for God. But all along He could see afar off – to the joy set before *Him*.

SCENE 3

God’s Verdict Appealed

Throughout the ages, Adam’s race of man has feverishly sought to overturn God’s righteous verdict against

hear my voice, and ...

him. Every defensive strategy has been attempted. Adam knew the judgment for sin was death. And deep within the heart of every man, the same is known. As Adam hid himself among the trees, seeking to avoid the judgment, all of mankind does the same.

Many convince themselves that there is no Judge. They hide behind the trees of evolution and “natural laws,” appealing on the grounds that there is no God and therefore no judgment to fear.

Others hide behind the trees of “love.” They reject God in His justice, believing that the Almighty Judge will not carry out the promised sentence against man. They appeal on the grounds that, “A God of love would never send anyone to hell.”

Still others, perhaps worst of all, hide behind the trees of religion. They understand that they have sinned, but are satisfied with their own “fig-leaf” coverings. They appeal on the ground of self-righteousness.

But alas, there is no appeal that can hold up in God’s court of justice. There is a God. He will judge the sinner in righteousness. And there is none righteous.

But there is still another strategy that mankind *once* attempted in order to break God’s rule over him and so overturn the hopeless verdict against him –

the cross ...

SCENE 4

The Second Man Tried

God loved the second Man, the Lord Jesus. He is the express image of His person, sent to earth to give life where there was none.

As the first man had to be tested, so too had the second Man to be tested. And so He was.

“*Arise, let us go hence,*” spoke the Lord as He led His disciples from the upper room. He took them to a familiar spot, a garden called Gethsemane. There, He had enjoyed their companionship many times before.

What memories must have stirred within the Lord that night in the garden – that dreadful day when Adam had sinned. The day when the object of God’s love had chosen another, and had become completely corrupt! How He longed to heal God’s companion.

they follow me.”

John 10:27

But, the cross.

He fell on His face, and prayed, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me...” For centuries He had endured, awaiting this moment when He would bring restoration and healing to the object of His love.

But, ... the cross.

“And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” In anguished contemplation, He determined to obey: “...Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.” That day, in the garden of Gethsemane, a man chose God in the face of every alternative. (Satan had already offered Him the kingdom with all its glory and power. But He refused the crown without the cross). Now, there was yet one more thing to be endured...

... the cross.

The band of men came carrying torches and lanterns. The blessed Lord asked those men, as light from their torches flickered in His face,

“Whom seek ye?”,

“*Jesus of Nazareth,*” they responded.

“I am.” He said, and they fell to the ground.

“Whom seek ye?” He asked again.

“*Jesus of Nazareth.*”

“I have told you that I am...”

So long ago God Himself had sought man. “Where art thou?” He called unto Adam as he cowered in fear among the trees of the garden. Now He came in His own person as the “second Man,” Jesus, “to **seek** and to save that which is lost.”

This day man did seek Him. But it was to mercilessly destroy Him. He knew it, and still refused to call the legions of angels poised to deliver Him. “...The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”

At His trial He would be proven innocent, yet still He would suffer unjustly and inhumanely at the hands of man. Wonderful love! The Lord Jesus willingly chose God. “That the world may know that I love the Father...”

“For as in Adam

SCENE 5

Sentence of the Second Man

Surely the race of man, despite his efforts to overturn God’s verdict against him, has in every way proven the righteousness of that verdict and sentence. He is perfectly corrupt fruit from a perfectly corrupt root.

“The Lord looked down from heaven..., to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Psalm 14:2-3).

Consider the collective heart of Adam’s race toward his Maker in those events leading to the cross. It is there that man revealed the abyss of his heart’s poverty and wickedness in a way before known only to God.

They arrested Him. As a common criminal, they led Him away, chained in humiliation, from Gethsemane to stand trial at Gabbatha. *Sinners* counted Him the lowest scum of society: a criminal who deserved to be executed. They would stop at nothing short of the cross.

“Such contradiction of sinners!”

“Here,” says man to God, “You covered us with skins in the garden of Eden? We will strip you and humiliate you and remove your very own skin.” “Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged Him.”

“You cursed the earth with thorns? We will crown you then with those thorns.” “And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head...”

Man’s rage continued unabated, “Before all the host of heaven, you presented us in Adam, saying, ‘Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil...’ Now, the tables are turned! You have become one of us: a man!”

Governor Pilate brought Him forth, and presented Him for all to see. Mankind in triumph exclaimed, “Behold the man!” This God who once judged man is Himself now judged by man. Man is God’s judge!

Man bubbled over in excitement to finally be rid of his Maker. With great satisfaction in his voice, he cried out in loathsome contempt for his former judge,

“*Crucify, Crucify!*”

all die,

“You cursed us with work and death for eating of a tree. You carry your own cross to your own death and hang upon a tree.” “And He bearing His cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, Golgotha.”

“You banished us from the paradise of Eden? We now banish you from our planet!” And there at Golgotha, the place of the skull, “they crucified Him...”

As the Lord hung on that cross in apparent defeat, man enraged can be seen wagging his head with clenched teeth, a raised arm, and a quaking fist at heaven. “We will not have this man to reign over us.”

In fury man sentenced God’s anointed to death on a tree and carried out the injustice. “Why do the heathen rage...? The rulers take council together, against the Lord and against His anointed saying, ‘let us break their bands [chains] asunder’...”

The cross revealed for all time the darkness of man’s heart and the vacuum of his wisdom. Man desires to be separated from God. Man is wholly corrupt and he *hates* God. He fully revealed his loveless and wicked heart. He rejected his Maker.

But really, the cross is poetic justice against man. With the “Lord of glory” spiked to it, the cross stood impaling Golgotha, (the place of the skull – the figure of an empty human head), almost giving reply to man’s ferocious deed.

At the cross...

... The greatest of man’s wisdom is revealed as utter foolishness: it was unable to understand that Jesus was in truth, God. They killed the Lord of Glory.

... The truest of man’s religion is exposed as perfectly powerless to change a heart: it hated its Maker, Christ Jesus, and banished Him from *their* society.

... The mightiest of man’s civil power is proven weak beyond measure: In fear of losing its power it had an innocent Man crucified, Jesus Christ the Lord.

“For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.” As man tried God, man was again proven ...

Guilty!

even so in Christ

SCENE 6

God’s Verdict

“In the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.” In a garden, man laid the body of Jesus, dead, in a grave. And as God had sealed the garden, so man sealed the tomb. But from that tomb in that garden, God raised the **Lord Jesus** alive as everlasting Judge, forever to be seated at His right hand in glory.

Man tried by his own efforts to overturn God’s verdict against him. But he only proved the righteousness of that verdict by revealing his wicked heart in the face of God’s Son. But God had always known of man’s folly and what he would do.

At the cross, man pronounced a verdict against God’s Son, and God overturned that verdict, raising the Lord Jesus up from the dead.

Death is indeed separation from God and man deserved it now more than ever he had before. He had ignorantly crucified the Lord of Glory, withholding all mercy to the One who pleased God in all things.

But, God chose to be merciful. He still desired fellowship with man. And now He could have it. By the cross of Christ, all who answer His call and seek His mercy are healed of their corruption and made righteous. God promises to spare them eternally – to be with Him as His companion. He accepts the death of His Son in their place.

Unlike Eden, from this garden of victory came “good fruit,” an obedient righteous man, Jesus Christ the Lord: “the firstfruits.”

Now, all who believe will follow with changed hearts: (hearts turned to “kiss the Son,”) bringing pleasure to God’s heart. He’s conforming them to the image of His Son, Who pleased Him in all things. He produces in them the very life of the second Man, the “good” fruit of the Spirit: *love*, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self control. They are a new race in Christ, “the last Adam.”

Now, God and man can be in true union with each other. Man had died in a garden. Now through the resurrection from a garden man in faith has life eternal.

shall all be made alive.” 1Cor. 15:22

SCENE 7

The Joy Set Before Him

God loved man. He created him in His own image and placed him in a garden. But, God could never have known returned love unless man was tested. And so he was.

The first man, Adam, sinned without hesitation in the greenest of environments, despite the prospect before him of an eternal, easy life in the immediate presence of God. The last Adam, Jesus Christ, obeyed God fully, despite forty days of hunger in a desert wilderness, with the prospect before Him of death on the cross and separation from God. He obeyed despite having “no place to lay His head.” He obeyed despite hatred, betrayal and rejection. “He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

This obedient Man, the last Adam, now heads a new race, a spiritual race, composed of men and women who love God because He first loved them and “sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

Now through the divine love of God and the obedience of His Son, this race will enter eternally into His garden to live forever as His beloved companion. What love between the creature and His Maker!

“My beloved is gone down into His garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine ...” (Song of Sol. 6:2-3).

All because of the obedience of that Man, there is glory prepared for man in God’s *eternal garden* and joy set before *Him!* “... the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

... And they shall see His face ...”

Behold the Man! The Lord Jesus Christ!

J. Wilbur

Chronicle #3 of ‘*The Son of God*’ series, tells the story of Christ from the Old Testament

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The Chronicles of the

*Son
of God*

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Two Races

The Joy Set Before Him - a narrative

SCENE 1

The First Man Tried

God loved man. He created him in His own image, breathed life into him, placed him in a garden and there sought his companionship. What joy would then have filled God’s heart if man loved Him in return.

But, could God ever know this returned love unless man from his own will chose Him in the face of an alternative?

Man had to be tested. And so he was.

“The Lord God commanded the man, saying, ... of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”

Eve was deceived. Without understanding she ate the fruit. But Adam, oh Adam. Adam was not deceived. And he chose the alternative, self and woman, over God!