

***BEGINNINGS: Lesson Five***  
***Creation: The Beginning of Life Lived Under Judgment and Death***  
***Genesis 3:8-24***

**Subject:** God placed curses on the serpent, Adam, and Eve for their sin.

**Main Idea:** God offers grace when only judgment is warranted.

**Principles:**

1. *It is God who pursues sinners and not the other way around.*
2. *Faith in God's promises has always been the means of our salvation.*

### Introduction

Every parent hopes and prays their children will never make any decisions resulting in painful, lifelong consequences. Learning of these kinds of decisions is excruciatingly painful – something every parent dreads. It isn't too far into the parenting process that we realize that we cannot control every move of our children. They have a will of their own. And their will does not always line up with what we know is best for them.

In Genesis 3, we find God, the ultimate Father, having the conversation with His children, Adam and Eve, that no parent wants to have. Adam and Eve had eaten from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the consequences were heartbreaking.

We have learned in our study of *Beginnings* that Genesis teaches us much about God. In chapter 1, He is called Elohim, the all-powerful Creator. In chapters 2 and 3, He is introduced as YHWH – a very *personal* LORD God. In the last half of chapter 3, He is revealed as the Righteous Judge of the Earth. Amazingly, these same verses also portray Him as a God of grace and mercy. Even when God's wrath and judgment were all that was warranted, God offered much grace to Adam and Eve. First, the Lord had to confront Adam and Eve with their sin. When Adam and Eve heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the Garden, they attempted to hide from Him.

## I. Pursuit - Genesis 3:8-13

### A. The LORD God Walking in the Garden

#### i. The Sound

1. It is possible that, rather than actual noise, the “sound” of the Lord walking in the garden refers to the dread in Adam and Eve’s hearts over acknowledging their disobedience. However, other Old Testament passages indicate that the Lord revealed Himself in a visible form on certain occasions (Genesis 12:7; 16:7; Genesis 18, Daniel 3:19-27). In many of these passages, the one who appears is called “the angel of the Lord.” An appearance of God to man in visible form is called a *theophany* or a *Christophany*.
  2. The term *Christophany* specifically implies an appearance of Jesus on the earth in physical form prior to His incarnation (birth to Mary). Many, if not most, evangelical scholars believe that the angel of the Lord is a pre-incarnation appearance of Jesus. The assumption that it is Jesus is derived from the teaching of John 1:18 that no one has seen God the Father.<sup>i</sup> Keil and Delitzsch comment: “God having given man a bodily shape, when He created him in His own image, revealed Himself in a manner suited to his bodily senses, that He might thus preserve him in living communion with Himself.”<sup>ii</sup>
- ii. Walking: Leading up to this time, we may suppose that Adam and Eve regularly walked with God in the Garden. “Walking with God” is a phrase that implies intimate fellowship. In Genesis, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham are all said to have walked with God (Genesis 5:22, 24; 6:9; 17:1; 24:40; 48:15). Sadly, for Adam and Eve, the sweet anticipation of hearing God approaching for fellowship had become the awful sound of unavoidable judgment.
- iii. The Cool of the Day: The evening is the time when cool winds blow.<sup>iii</sup>

### B. God’s Confrontation of Adam and Eve

#### i. The Call

1. God called out, “Where are you?” to Adam alone (the “you” of these verses is in the singular form<sup>iv</sup>). The implication is that Adam bore the greater responsibility. However, the verse tells us that both Adam and Eve heard Him and hid. They were unworthy of God’s attention, but God graciously sought them out. It is God who pursues sinners, not the other way around (Luke 15:4-6, Romans 5:8).

2. Clearly, omniscient God did not ask Adam where he was out of ignorance. He was giving Adam an opportunity to expose himself and his sin. Confession is always the first step toward repentance. Rather than confess, Adam responded that he had hidden out of fear, because of his nakedness. His guilty conscience made him fear the judgment that he knew he deserved. Apparently, Adam was not as concerned with his true guilt as with his *feelings* of guilt. It was his nakedness that troubled him most! Do we, like Adam, hate feeling guilty more than we hate our sin?
- ii. The Confrontation
1. Next, God asked, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree I commanded you not to eat from?” (Again, God first confronted Adam, for the “you” is singular.) Although God knew the answers, His questions allowed the opportunity for confession.
  2. Instead of casting themselves on their faces in humility and grief, Adam and Eve sought to defend themselves. Adam blamed Eve, *whom God gave Him* (v12), suggesting that the fault lay, in part, on God Himself! Eve blamed the deception of the serpent. Throughout time, sinners have continued to use the same blame-shifting tactic. To suggest that any part of the blame for our guilt lies beyond ourselves is failing to make true confession.

**Summary Statement:** God graciously sought out the sinners and confronted them.

**Principle:** *It is God who pursues sinners and not the other way around.*

**Illustration:** In 1917, the *Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse* published the poem of Francis Thompson, *The Hound of Heaven*.<sup>v</sup> GK Chesterton called the poem the greatest ever written.<sup>vi</sup> The poem describes the author’s flight from God into the arms of many other kinds of lovers, and God’s relentless pursuit of him all the while. C.S. Lewis borrowed the idea to describe his own conversion: the Hound of Heaven pursued him relentlessly.

Jesus told a gathering of people (who complained about the company he kept) this parable:  
*Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, “Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.” I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. (Luke 15:3-7)*

God's pursues us because He is merciful and gracious. These attributes stem from His inherent goodness. Mercy and grace differ in meaning. Mercy is God determining to withhold the wrath we deserve. Grace is God's determination to give us what we do not deserve. Both are God's love to the utterly undeserving. We cannot earn them.

Some people claim that grace and mercy are New Testament concepts, but the God of the Old Testament is the same God of the New Testament. His grace can be seen from the earliest chapters of the Bible. He graciously sought Adam and Eve, giving them an opportunity to repent, when all they deserved was His wrath.

Once we have walked with God for a period of time, it is easy to look back and see that our salvation and every aspect of our spiritual growth have ultimately and always been at God's initiative. Sin has damaged us too severely to ever choose to look for God on our own. "There is no one who seeks God" (Romans 3:11). He is our pursuer. In our hopelessly lost condition, He does all the work to find us, restore us, and transform us. Our only responsibility is to yield.

**Application:** Which "lost sheep" are you still waiting for God to "find"? Will you pray to the "Hound of Heaven" on their behalf? Will you rest, in faith, that God will do the necessary work to find this one who is far more precious to Him than to you? This person may be denying responsibility for their life. They may be hiding from God. But He knows where they are!

**Transition:** God graciously pursued Adam and Eve. In verses 14-25, He pronounced judgment, but even in judgment, He offered hope.

## II. Promises – Genesis 3:14-24

**A. The Serpent's Judgment:** The Serpent was judged first. Although the serpent as a species was "crafty" by nature, Satan was the power behind this serpent and it was he who tempted Eve. God judged the serpent as Satan's tool, "just as a loving father, when punishing the murderer of his son, might snap in two the sword or dagger with which the murder had been committed" (Chrysostom).<sup>vii</sup>

- i. Crawl on His Belly: First, God said the serpent would crawl on his belly. The only meaningful way to understand this is to believe that previously, the serpent had an upright form. Crawling in the dust represented a humbling. How fitting, since the creature had essentially challenged Adam and Eve's authority over him!

- ii. Enmity Between His Offspring and the Woman's: Another result of the Curse was the universal repulsion for snakes. However, since Jewish and Christian traditions alike recognize that this Curse was not merely upon the species of the serpent, but upon Satan, the power behind that serpent, we must consider whom the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman represent. The woman's seed is traced in the history and genealogies of Genesis through Seth to Noah, and then to Abraham. God promised Abraham, "through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed" (Genesis 22:18). Christ is the ultimate descendant of Abraham, and the ultimate end of Old and New Testament genealogies (Luke 3:23-38). The enmity of which God spoke is the enmity between those aligned with Christ and those aligned with Satan.
- iii. To Be Crushed: Amazingly, God did not end there but went on to make a wonderful promise, not only to Adam and Eve, but to all mankind: "*He [Christ, the seed of the woman] will crush your head, and you [Satan, the serpent] will strike his heel.*"
1. Of course, physically, the lowly position of the snake forces it to strike down low, reaching only the heel of the human being. The upright position of the human being allows his foot to crush the serpent's head (Romans 16:20). But the one most deserving of the Curse was Satan, the one behind the serpent. Therefore, we should not limit the meaning to physical attacks of snakes on humans and humans on snakes, as Gordon Wenham explains. *'He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel' predicts ongoing hostility between man and snakes. It is thus an etiology (explanation) of this phenomenon. Some commentators have seen it as nothing more. However from at least the third century BC Jews, and subsequently Christians, have seen this as a prediction of the Messiah who would be victorious over the powers of evil. It is therefore called the Protevangelium (first gospel)<sup>viii</sup> [note: also spelled, "Protevangelion"<sup>ix</sup>].*
  2. The protevangelion is the first declaration of the gospel – the promise of God to send a Deliverer (a Messiah) to destroy our enemy (1 John 3:8). Satan crippled Eve's seed, mankind, in the Garden, and struck at the heel of Eve's ultimate seed, Messiah, at the Cross. But Jesus destroyed the works of the devil by rising from the dead! We can be assured that our enemy will meet his end because of Christ's victory. One day, he will be cast into the Lake of Fire where he will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Revelation 20:10).

3. God gave this promise to Adam and Eve and to all Old Testament believers as a basis for forward-looking faith. Old Testament believers looked forward in faith to Christ the Deliverer's coming (Genesis 3:15). They put their faith in God's promises. New Testament believers look back to Jesus' finished work on the Cross, and trust, by faith, that it is sufficient to save us from our sins, just as God has promised.

## B. The Woman's Judgment

- i. Pain in Childbearing: From the day in which God made that wonderful announcement of a Messiah to come, it is fair to suppose that all women hoped *they* would be the one to bear this Promised Deliverer. Immediately following the promise, God told the woman that she would have pain in childbearing. This in no way implies that bearing children was no longer His will for her. He established that standard at man's creation: the man and woman were to multiply (Genesis 1:28). Walt Kaiser suggests, "The grief [that would henceforth be known to women] lies not so much in the conception or in the act of childbirth itself, but in the whole process of bringing children into the world and raising them up to be whole persons before God."<sup>x</sup> To this, almost every parent will echo a hardy *Amen!*
- ii. Desire for Her Husband – The second part of the prophecy concerning the woman suggests a change in Eve's desire for Adam. The word translated "desire" appears only three times in the Old Testament (Genesis 3:16; 4:7; Song of Solomon 7:10-11). There has been much discussion in the scholarly community about the meaning of this word.
  1. *Desire for [Control Over] Adam*: A view supported by some is that, in the context, Eve's desire refers to her prompting of Adam to sin, and that perhaps the text should have been translated, "Your desire *was* for your husband." "Having overstepped her bounds in this, she would now be mastered by him."<sup>xi</sup> A twist on this view retains the tense of the word "desire," suggesting that *henceforth*, Eve's desire would be to usurp Adam's God-ordained authority, established at her creation as Adam's helper. Dr. Wayne Grudem says the word "desire" actually means "desire to conquer."<sup>xii</sup>
  2. *Sexual Desire for Adam*: Some commentators conclude that the change in Eve's desire was sexual, since the word is used in that context in the Song of Solomon.<sup>xiii</sup> Despite pain in the childbirth process, the woman would continue to have sexual desire for her husband. However, Dr. Walt Kaiser suggests that this interpretation is merely "a male fantasy," not borne out by the text or by human experience. In twenty-one out of twenty-eight ancient extra-biblical texts, the word is translated "*turning*" (not "desire") and that is how

the church fathers also universally understood it. Apparently, the popularity of translating the word “desire” can be traced to an Italian Dominican monk named Pagnino who, in 1528, understood the term to imply libido or sexual desire. Unfortunately, as Kaiser points out, Pagnino had a reputation for neglecting the ancient versions to glean the original meanings.

3. *Turning to Adam*: With the history of this translation error in mind, Kaiser says the Hebrew actually reads, “*You are turning away [from God] to your husband and [as a result] he will rule over you [take advantage of you].*” According to Kaiser, the meaning then is that as a result of her sin, Eve would turn away from sole dependence on God to depend instead upon her husband. Kaiser concludes, “The results would not at all be pleasant.”<sup>xiv</sup>
- iii. “He Will Rule Over You”: The word “rule” may not imply the kind of leadership that God ordained for Adam at Eve’s creation, but a harsh, tyrannical type of rule. In that case, God’s words were a warning that harshness on the part of the husband would often be the unpleasant and sad result of the wife’s “desire” or “turning.” Some insist that it is not possible to say that the word implies any particular type of rule – either beneficent or harsh.<sup>xv xvi</sup> Either way, it is not a command to husbands (the Hebrew grammar does not allow for that), but simply the result of the woman’s “turning.”<sup>xvii</sup>

**C. Adam’s Judgment:** Finally, God passed judgment on Adam, a judgment related to his work. Originally, Adam’s work was a God-given gift for creativity and exercise. Now God said, “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.”

- i. Painful Toil: The apostle Paul portrays creation as frustrated and eagerly awaiting “liberation from its bondage to decay” (Romans 8:19-21). One day, the earth will be renewed (Revelation 21:1). In the meantime, Adam would continue this work, but the formerly fruitful ground would be uncooperative, thwarting his efforts and making his work laborious and unsatisfying. God’s curse of the ground carried implications for all kinds of work in human culture. Work itself was not cursed (Ephesians 4:28, Colossians 3:23, 1 Thessalonians 4:11, 2 Thessalonians 2:10), but God said our efforts at productivity would be “painful” (Genesis 3:17). Adam would become a farmer and his work would be like that of farmers throughout the ages: continually battling weeds, thorns, and the elements. Although not all families are farming families today, every person experiences frustration in their work by things beyond our control.
- ii. “You Will Eat”: Despite the thorns, thistles, and sweat of Adam’s labor, the Lord graciously ensured that Adam would still eat.

- iii. **Death:** Finally, God told Adam he would return to the ground, “for dust you are, to dust you will return.” Adam’s physical death was delayed. His spiritual death was immediate (Ephesians 2:1): he was no longer able to remain completely obedient to God. This physical and spiritual condition was passed on to every succeeding generation. However, even Adam’s eventual physical death, and ours, is not without grace. Death is God’s provision that we may not eternally remain in the chaotic state of a sin-cursed world with sin-cursed bodies.

**Transition:** Even in the midst of judgment, God offered Adam and Eve hope. The events that immediately follow also reveal His grace.

- D. The Naming of Eve:** Just as Adam had authority to name the animals, he also had the authority to name the woman. After the Fall, Adam named his wife “Eve,” meaning “living,” since he now understood that she would become the mother of all the living. The name indicates Adam’s faith in God’s promise that the human race would survive. God had promised that Eve would give birth to children (3:16). Furthermore, it indicates Adam’s faith that eventually, a child would be born who would rescue the human race, just as God had promised (3:15). Although a death warrant had been issued, Adam believed that “living” was still God’s ultimate plan.
- E. A Suitable Covering:** “The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and Eve and clothed them” (3:21).
  - i. **Animal Sacrifice:** The Bible doesn’t say where the skins came from. Logically, we would conclude that animals were slain. This is probably what the Israelite community, the original recipients of the account, would have concluded, since in their day, God ordained a system of animal sacrifices to make atonement for sin. The sacrifices were a reminder that sin necessitates a death penalty. Adam and Eve saw that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).
  - ii. **A Greater Provision:** The animal skins that covered Adam and Eve foreshadow a greater covering that was to come: the final atonement (substitute) made for them and for us by Jesus Christ. Adam and Eve’s fig leaf coverings were insufficient. Any attempt we make to cover our own shame is always inadequate. The substitute God offers in Jesus is sufficient. According to Galatians 3:26-27, to put our faith in Christ is to be “clothed” with Him!

**F. Banishment From Eden:** Self-deliberating, God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” At this point, had Adam and Eve eaten of the Tree of Life, they would have lived on in their sinful condition forever. Nothing could have been a greater tragedy. Mercifully, God determined to protect them from such a fate.

i. Driven From the Garden: First, the Lord banished Adam and Eve from the Garden.

1. Apparently, the entrance to the Garden was on its east side and thus Adam and Eve were driven eastward. When Cain was thrust from the Lord’s presence, he was also sent to the east (4:16). Interestingly, the tower of Babel was in the east (11:2), Lot chose to move east (13:11) and Abraham sent his sons away from Isaac to the east (25:6). Whether or not these references present a significant “eastern” motif, the critical point with regard to Adam and Eve is that they were driven from the Garden where they had enjoyed direct access to God.
2. Speaking of Adam’s banishment, John Wesley wrote, *[God] might justly have chased [Adam] out of the world (Job 18:18), but He only chased him out of the garden: He might justly have cast him down to hell, as the angels that sinned were, when they were shut out from the heavenly paradise (2 Peter 2:4), but man was only sent to till the ground out of which he was taken.*<sup>xviii</sup> God was indeed merciful to Adam.

ii. The Cherubim and the Flaming Sword

1. Second, God sent cherubim to guard the way to the Tree of Life. Ezekiel 1 and 10 and Revelation 4:6-8 describe cherubim as winged-creatures, with features that resemble humans, in part, and animals, in part. According to these passages, cherubim surround God’s throne.
2. God also prevented access by placing a flaming sword that flashed back and forth at the Garden’s entrance. In the Bible, fire represents God’s holiness and judgment. The flaming sword at the Garden’s entrance reminded Adam and Eve that God’s judgment had been passed and that holiness was necessary to regain the life (and access to the Tree of Life) they had lost.

- iii. Regaining Access: God did not destroy the Tree or the Garden; He merely blocked their access. Speaking of our future in the renewed heaven and earth, Revelation 22:14 says, “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life and may go through the gates into the city.” Access to God’s presence and the Tree of Life can only be gained by passing under the holy judgment of God’s sword, and that is exactly what Jesus did on our behalf when He died on the Cross. He took our sins upon Himself and passed under God’s judgment, so that our fellowship with God could be restored.

**Summary Statement:** Throughout this passage we see God extending grace where only His wrath was warranted: grace in His pursuit of Adam and Eve and grace in extending promises of hope and redemption when only wrathful punishment was deserved.

Galatians 3:13 tells us, “*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.’*” Christ took the curse we deserve. As far as we know, Adam and Eve weren’t given specific details about Christ’s coming and work. Still, God’s promise of deliverance was the basis of their hope. But the hope God offered was no real hope unless they received it by faith. They had to choose to put their faith in God’s promises.

**Principle:** *Faith in God’s promises has always been the means of His salvation.*

### Conclusion

God’s ultimate promise can be found in Revelation 22:3. Speaking of the new heavens and new earth, God declares, “No longer will there be any curse!” Adam indicated his faith in God’s promises when he named Eve. How have you indicated your faith in God’s promises? The book of James teaches that true, saving faith is always proven by our actions.

With this lesson, I am distributing a letter regarding salvation. Too many people today have been deceived into thinking that it is the prayer they prayed, confessing their sin and asking Jesus to save them, that will be the means of their salvation. The means of our salvation is not a one-time prayer, but ongoing faith! Real faith isn’t just an intellectual belief in the existence or nature of God or Jesus, for even the demons have that kind of belief (James 2:19). Saving faith is staking our lives on what we say we believe! What tangible steps are you taking to show that you really believe God and His promises? Which promise of God will you stake your life upon this week?

Although our sin is a great offense to our Creator and He must pass judgment, He made a gracious provision for us in Jesus, the promised Deliverer. Will you, by faith, receive His provision?

## *GOD of the WORD: On Salvation*

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Dear Friend,

I am writing to you because of your desire to be in heaven one day and the confusion of so many about the nature of Christian faith. It is tragic when people live with no hope, but it is equally tragic for people to live with false hope. The truth is that many who claim to be Christians are either uninformed or misinformed about the nature of Biblical faith.

“Christians” talk very little about sin these days, which contributes greatly to the problem. This is especially disconcerting, since the Bible says so much about it. In fact, without personal conviction of guilt for one’s sin, the Christian message is meaningless. The gospel (“good news”) of the Bible is only good news to those who know that they need saving.

The preaching of Jesus and Paul start in much the same way that the Bible starts, with facts concerning sin in the world and the universal guilt of human beings. Each of us is guilty because we have inherited a sin nature from our first father, Adam, and also because we have each personally sinned against God. One only has to consider the Ten Commandments to see how short we all fall of His holy standard. Is there one of us who has not stolen something (have you never once stolen someone’s reputation with a careless, slanderous word)? Is there one of us who has not secretly loved (worshipped) anyone or anything in the way that only the Creator deserves? Is there anyone who has never dishonored his or her parents, even privately? Who has never once lied, even stretched the truth just a little? The apostle Paul stated it clearly: “There is no one righteous, not even one... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:10, 23). Furthermore, the penalty for sin is permanent, spiritual death (separation from God throughout eternity [Romans 6:23]). According to the Bible, sin is our main problem. Yet too often, the focus of the Christian message as we hear today, has little (if anything) to do with sin.

A second point of confusion about Christianity revolves around the solution to our “sin problem.” Many people who realize their sin nature hope to please God and earn their way to heaven on their own merit. The trouble is that the Bible does not teach salvation by works. In fact, it indicates that nothing we do will ever enable us to reach God (Romans 3:9-18). He is too holy and we are too sinful. The gap is too wide for any person to bridge by his or her own good works, even Billy Graham or Mother Theresa. In Romans 1:17, the apostle Paul quotes from the Old Testament book of Habakkuk: “*For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written, ‘The righteous will live by faith.’*” What was Paul’s point? He quoted from the Old Testament because in those times, God’s people lived under an obligation to the Law. Nevertheless, Paul points out that even in that day, those whom God deemed “righteous” were those who lived by faith. In other words, the Law was never intended to save anyone, because none could keep it perfectly. God knew of our inability long before He gave the Law. According to Paul, the Law serves to magnify our awareness of the unfathomable gap between God and us: “*No one will be declared righteous in His sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin*” (Romans 3:20). The purpose of the Law is to show us just how far we fall short God’s standard.

With these things in mind, the gospel makes sense. The good news is that God bridged the gap for us, providing a righteousness apart from the law through Jesus Christ and our faith in Him (Romans 3:21-22). Jesus not only died to pay the death penalty we owe to God for our sin, He also lived the perfect life that none of us could have lived. If we put our faith in Christ, God is graciously willing to accept Jesus’ death in substitute for our own and credit us with Jesus’ righteousness. Thus, “the righteous will live *by faith* (Romans 1:17) and “a man is justified *by faith*

apart from observing the law” (Romans 3:28). We contribute *nothing* to our salvation. Jesus has done everything, and our only hope is faith in Him.

Why then does the Bible say so much about obedience and good works? First, the Bible insists that God’s people cannot live blessed lives if they are not obedient to God’s commands (Luke 11:28). It also says that obedience and good works will be the basis of each believer’s heavenly rewards (2 Corinthians 5:10, Colossians 3:24, Revelation 22:12). Most importantly, it says that good works are an essential *evidence* of salvation. Those who are “in Christ” (and going to Heaven) will naturally want to please God (James 1-5, 1 John 2:3). Conversely, anyone who isn’t eager to obey God probably isn’t saved.

Tragically, many people who think they will go to heaven, even those who call themselves “Christians,” will not, for two reasons. Too often, people believe their good works will balance out the debt they owe God. Many also take “faith in Christ” too lightly, as though it is merely an easy, comfortable road to happiness, rather than as a challenging but rewarding road to holiness. But doesn’t the Bible say that God has a wonderful plan for our lives? Yes, it does. It says that God’s wonderful plan is to make us more like Christ (Romans 8:28-29). The Christian life is a rich life (John 10:10), but it is not a pain free life (John 16:33). We should not assume that being a Christian is an easy thing, requiring only a quick prayer or intellectual assent to Christ’s person and work. Trusting Christ to save us involves a commitment of our lives into His service, a commitment to suffering for the sake of His reputation and to hardship in promoting His purposes. True, saving faith involves shifting our loyalty from self-interests to God’s interests. The Christian’s joy is not the result of a trouble-free life. Christian joy comes from the assurance that after death, we are guaranteed an eternal, heavenly home!

If you have never had this assurance before or never understood the nature of true, saving faith, today can be the day of your salvation. Will you “declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead” with this understanding of the implications? If so, “you will be saved” (Romans 10:9)!

With Christ’s love for you,  
D. Hammond

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- <sup>v</sup> <http://www.bartleby.com/236/239.html>
- <sup>vi</sup> <http://deadtheologians.blogspot.com/2007/11/hymnverse-of-week-hound-of-heaven.html>
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