



## **The fall of Man,** **his loss of knowledge and it's restoration.**

In the beginning Man had knowledge. About God, about himself and about the world around him.

Question: How do we know what's true?

When Adam and Eve found themselves in the garden they knew things about the world from their natural senses (natural revelation) and they knew because God told them personally in a special way (special revelation). But when Satan tempted them with lies they believed him and they stepped outside of trust in God. They abandoned special revelation, as people do today rejecting the Bible which is the sum of special revelation; God's word.

If they no longer trusted God's words to be true then they had to rely on something else in order to know things- purely natural revelation is what they had left to them. But if you don't trust God, why should you trust your senses or mind given by Him? Natural revelation relies on special revelation. They had inadvertently opened a door into a dark void of ignorance. Man has tried to deny this fact, but it slowly dawns on each one of us when we realize we have no basis to know what life is about by ourselves.

Now you may say, "But I don't need to believe in God to know things!". Well, it depends on what you mean by 'know'. You may sense things and think things, but to *know the truth* about what you sense and think is another matter. How do you really know anything is there at all and life isn't a dream, or an elaborate hoax? How do you know you heard real sounds or saw real sights in the past? How do you know you really touched what you thought you did, or remembered all of these things correctly? How do you know your perception of time is correct? How do you know the laws of the natural world will do tomorrow what they do today? Without a reliable God, to give you reliable senses and thought, and to uphold a uniformity in nature, you're all at sea without a compass or a rudder.

Consider that Adam could trust God's word because he knew God had made him and the universe. God had made his mind through which he thought about things. God had made his body through which he sensed the world. God had given Him his reason and conscience through which he processed truth or falsehood, right and wrong.

But when Adam mistrusted God, in unbelief, all that knowledge disappeared. He may not have realised it at once, but that was indeed the fact. You see, why should he trust his mind now if he didn't trust God? You see you can't pick and choose, you either trust or you have to doubt everything in the end. Special revelation is the 'manual' (as it were) to make sense of natural revelation. If people try to 'go it alone', without trusting in the Bible for truth, then natural revelation will be a great mystery, as it is for so many people today. That's why faith is seen as being given vision to truly understand the world around us.

Then there is something else; The fall of Man affects mind and human nature, meaning that Man's nature is now sinful and corrupted and can't process things properly without being prejudiced against God. Do you trust your reason to think clearly when it comes to God? Yes? But why should you? That's just an arbitrary assumption, which the Bible says is an error. The Bible says your mind and reason are skewed and therefore cannot see clearly, like wearing the wrong glasses. Only the 'eyes' of faith can give you a way to restore your true vision and a sound mind to rightly process it. That is why it's dangerous to believe something is true just because a majority believe it to be so. Unless God sends revival the majority will be naturally prejudiced against God. The fact that Atheists conclude that there is no God confirms the Bible in this fact. Whether mild mistrust in a God you still believe exists, or severe unbelief even in His existence, it all shows fallen Man's mind inclines towards unbelief. It's nothing to do with pure, God given, logic, it's to do with what Man wants and doesn't want- his 'will'. And his will doesn't want God, and therefore he bends his reason accordingly. He convinces himself it's reasonable doubt, when it is nothing of the sort. It's like trying to understand a lightbulb but you can't stand the idea of electricity!

Mankind has been living with this fact of personal willful ignorance, ever since the fall, when he tries to understand the truth about himself and the world around him. The world calls it the 'human condition'. In truth, it's a hole in the heart of Man, a terrible emptiness which only God can fill. You see, trust and belief, in the God of the Bible, are crucial to true knowledge. "But Sir", you may say, "If what you say is true, how can anyone know anything for sure?!". Exactly! That's a very pertinent question. Why do you think we proclaim the message of the Gospel and try to persuade you to faith and conversion as the most needful thing to start with? Because, without that, a man is lost and in the dark when it comes to knowing anything for sure. Modern philosophy has actually long since been forced to come to that conclusion.

Why do we have reason- logical rules of thought? The world can't answer that question. This begs another question; Why should we trust it then? The world doesn't like that question and so just ignores it and trusts their own skewed reason in an arbitrary way. You see it's a hopeless thing to try to find the truth about God in that way, because your own sinful prejudice will carry you away. You must start with faith in order to think straight. Once you trust God you have a basis to trust your senses, you have a basis for all knowledge. But if you abandon faith in God you will find you can't really know anything for sure in the end, about truth or falsehood or right and wrong.

Who are you? Why are you here? What's the meaning and purpose of life? All you'll have are guesses from a limited mind and senses which you can't be sure you can trust. The honest answer from the unbeliever is "I don't know." However, the Bible says Mankind's doubt in God is unreasonable because He has a given sense of God which He chooses not to retain. Not to mention the order of our natural realm and the invisible forces behind it, and our living, conscious ability to sense and process it, is clear proof of God the Creator.

This is explained in Romans 1;

*"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold(down) the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,"*

And late it says;

*"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient (fitting);"*

Notice what it said at the beginning, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unholiness and unrighteousness".

You see unbelief unleashes a torrent of sin into your character and your actions.

Unholiness:- What you are that you should not be, what you aren't that you should be. And

unrighteousness:- What you should do that you don't, and what you shouldn't do that you do.

Because of this God, the Judge of all things, must react with righteous anger. This is what 'Wrath' is, a holy indignation against all that goes against God's character. What is Hell but the final result of a holy fire coming upon the sinner. But why aren't sinner's instantly thrown into hell? Because of God's forbearance. But why does He delay? So He can save His chosen people out of love for them. Chosen not because of anything worthy in themselves but because of His sovereign choice in order to display His great mercy and grace.

But how can He save the guilty? Surely the right thing is that they are punished if God is fair? Indeed, this is another pertinent and crucial question.

What is the answer revealed by God's word?

The answer is a Person. He was predicted from the very beginning in that garden when God cursed Satan in Gen 3.15

*"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."*

"His heel"? Whose heel? A person, a person who would come and engage in conflict with Satan. As time went on, and more special revelation was added in the Scriptures through direct inspiration by the Holy Spirit, more was revealed about this person. He would be the great spiritual deliverer like Joshua and the Judges, a spiritual warrior king like David. He would be the great prophet like Moses (Deut 18.18) which is vital to restore our knowledge of God, and he would be, not only the great High Priest, but a sacrifice as well. So, all three offices were bound up in Him. A king, a strong One. A Priest, one who would represent Man to God. And a Prophet, one who would represent God to Man.

The sacrifices of the old testament ceremonial law were for, positive, dedication, thanksgiving and righteousness as well as, negative, offerings for indwelling sins and transgressions committed. So this person would do all that we should do and offer this righteousness as an offering for us, as well as being a sacrifice to be punished for our sins. In short he would be a vicarious 'substitute'.

In Jeremiah He is called the 'Righteousness Branch' and the 'Lord our righteousness', both God and man. But, maybe one of the greatest Old Testament prophecies of this 'Messiah' (which means anointed king or priest) is in the prophecy of Isaiah 53 about the suffering servant. Here's an abridged extract;

*"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted...But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him;..All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all...Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,...by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."*

The prophecy must have been intriguing for the men of that time, but taken with all the other predictions about Him, which become ever clearer as the old testament goes on, the Jews should have expected a man who would be divine to come and to die a sacrificial death. In doing so, defeating Satan in conflict and defeating death itself (which came as a consequence of that 'fall' in the beginning). More fully revealed in the New Testament, this work would save His people who put their trust in Him and share the spoils, forgiving them and justifying them, declaring them 'not guilty' and giving them a new nature bringing their souls to life. At the same time preserving God's justice.

Even heathen nations came looking for Him in the end, like the wise men from the east, from Babylon. But the majority of the Jews displayed that 'skewed thinking' I was talking about, and they rejected God's remedy for their sins. This was a great sin but was overruled by God who used it as the means to offer up the Man as an atoning 'Sin offering' outside the city of Jerusalem's walls, at the place of the skull, better known as Calvary. There a cruel form of judicial punishment was used called crucifixion. Something that has been carried out on many people for an execution, but this time was different. A Roman centurion who had witnessed many crucifixions witnessed the uniqueness of the event. For the last three hours

of this event the whole land became dark. There was an earthquake at the end. The heavy temple curtain in the Jewish temple was torn from top to bottom. The centurion is said to have responded to all this by saying,

*"Truly this was the Son of God".*

Not only that, but his death wasn't the end. There was such a shaking of the bands of death that it seems it's icy fingers couldn't hold onto it's conquests and as a token of this unique event it says in Matt 27.52

*"And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,"*

How then could death be victorious over the Man Himself? Of course it couldn't, and just like Jonah coming forth from that great fish that had been his certain grave after offering his life for the lives of the sailors, this Messiah (or Christ in the Greek language) came forth to life and appeared to many. A victorious triumph and a vicarious atonement for all who put their trust in Christ as their Saviour.

This doctrine of an atonement made by a punishment of a substitute is called 'Penal Substitutionary Atonement'. Now, people can object to this because of that 'skewed thinking' I have mentioned. They try to reason their way out of it by saying the punishment of an innocent one for another isn't fair. We would agree, unless the innocent one is punished voluntarily and is inseparable from the Judge. Jesus Christ meets both things by giving His life willingly and by being the Son of God inseparable from the Father in the Godhead. However the hardness and obstinacy of that prejudice against the truth of God, I mentioned, is such that men will still object, saying, "Is it not improper and unfair to reward a guilty party?". This question is the other side of the objection to substitution. This is about imputation of the righteousness of the Sacrifice. It doesn't seem fair that an innocent party is punished and likewise, it doesn't seem fair that a guilty party is rewarded. Yet that is what happens in the atonement. But the reason that God sees this transaction as absolutely just is that when we put our faith in him, we become united with Christ. In a sense, we become married, inseparable, so that it is not a transfer of righteousness as much as a holding in common. The reward is shared.

So we return to that little word 'faith' and see that it is crucial. Not faith in and of itself, but faith in Christ. But, if we are so skewed and prejudiced against God, how can we have this trust? The only way is by a work of God. Salvation is all of grace, a free gift, even the faith, to believe God, is a gift.

Now, I said faith is like the eyes of your spiritual senses, so then, being fallen from God must render us blind. Yes, but Jesus healed the blind as a picture to teach us. In Luke 18.41- it says of one such account when a man called upon Jesus to have mercy on him;

*"when he (that is Jesus) was come near, he asked him, Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God."*

Observe, this man knew his need- do you? This man called upon Christ Jesus- can you pray? Then you can receive the same answer in action, the receiving of your sight- faith to believe. That divine intuition, a recognition of the truth. You'll be able to receive that knowledge you lost so long ago in Eden with that representative man Adam.

Does life seem like a great puzzle? Does the search for truth evade you? Does a quest for meaning and purpose remain elusive? Most of all, do you feel the pain of a complaining

conscience at your own sins? Don't harden your heart against the remedy God has provided. The answer is a Person, Jesus Christ the Saviour. Reach out to Him. To know Him is to know the truth, like a light flooding into our dark minds and heart when a door is opened and we see God in Jesus Christ. The fear of God is the beginning of all understanding, all true knowledge. Repent of unreasonable unbelief and put your trust in the answer, revealed by God, to all things. Then your soul will sing like a bird freed from it's cage, and you'll give God the glory due to His name.

2 Cor 4.6

*"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ".*