

Grace, mercy, and peace be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father. Amen.

(Genesis 3:22-24) ²² Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” – ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.”

(Revelation 22:1-5) ¹And [the angel] showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ²In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁴They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. ⁵There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

Text: Gen. 3:22-24; Rev. 22:1-5 A 2/25-18 Passion History, part 2 Psalm 16 Resp. Ps.: 37
Hymns: 744, 369, 367, 341

EDEN TO HEAVEN

All mankind fell in Adam’s fall,
One common sin infects us all;
From sire to son the bane descends,
And over all the curse impends.

Through all man’s powers corruption creeps
And him in dreadful bondage keeps;
In guilt he draws his infant breath
And reaps its fruits of woe and death. (TLH #369:1-2)

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

God told Adam and Eve not to eat fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, warning them that if they did they would die (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:2-3). But they disobeyed God and became sinful. God had originally made Adam and Eve to live forever in their perfect state, and never die. That’s what God intended for our whole human race. But Adam and Eve ruined that for themselves and for us all.

From the legendary fountain of youth to science, and things in between, people seek immortality. But why would anyone want to live forever in a sinful, imperfect body in this sinful world? After Adam and Eve sinned *“the LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’ – therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.”* So that Adam and Eve would not eat fruit from the tree of life and live forever in their sinful state, God drove them out of the Garden of Eden. He placed angels at the Garden’s entrance so that Adam and Eve couldn’t return.

What a bitter day that was for Adam and Eve! They had known what it was like when they and everything else were perfect. Now they and everything else were sinful. How many times during their very long lives must they have wished they had never disobeyed God? But they had to live with the fact that they had sinned, and with the consequences of their sin. And there was no way they could undo sin, and all of sin’s terrible consequences.

After Adam and Eve sinned God did two especially gracious things for them, and for us. One was making sure they couldn’t eat fruit from the tree of life and live forever in their sinful state in this sinful world. Death released them and death releases us from sin forever. And that is because of the other special blessing God gave them and us. After Adam and Eve sinned God promised to send Eve’s Descendent who would defeat Satan and sin (Gen. 3:15).

When Adam and Eve sinned they immediately became subject to sickness, injury, aging, and death. Sin immediately affected everything they thought, said, and did. The same is true for Adam’s and Eve’s descendants: our entire human race. Sin immediately corrupted God’s entire creation – the plants and animals, the stars and planets – everything.

Adam and Eve couldn’t undo sin and its curse, and neither can we. But Jesus can, and did! God kept His promise to Adam and Eve and sent us His Son, Jesus. Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the whole world, and rose again. By His death and resurrection Jesus defeated Satan, sin, death, and hell. The Bible says, *“There is ... now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”* (Ro. 8:1). By their faith in the Savior who was to come, God forgave all of Adam’s and Eve’s sins and took away all their guilt. They lived their lives in God’s forgiveness and grace, and now they are with God in heaven. By our faith in the Savior who has come, God has forgiven all of our sins, and taken away all of our guilt. We can live our lives in God’s forgiveness and grace. And one day we will be with God in heaven!

The second part of our text from Revelation 22 says that in heaven there is *“a pure river of water of life ... proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.”* Eternal life in heaven comes from God through Jesus Christ. *“In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was*

the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse.” In heaven God will undo sin and its curse, giving us perfect health, happiness, and peace forever!

“The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in [heaven], and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face.” We say with Job, *“I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”* (Job 19:25-27). In heaven *“[God’s] name shall be on [our] foreheads.”* When we were baptized *“in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,”* God ‘put His name on us,’ so to speak, claiming us as His own. In heaven we will live with God as His people forever.

“There shall be no night [in heaven]: they need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.” Peter, James, and John were given a glimpse of Jesus’ glory during His transfiguration. In heaven we will always be with Jesus and see Him in all of His glory.

God placed Adam and Eve into the Garden of Eden – the first perfect paradise. There they saw God and walked with God and talked with God, in perfect communion with Him. But they sinned and destroyed that perfect communion with God, so He drove them out of Eden’s paradise.

God immediately gave them and us the promise of our Savior from sin, Jesus. Even as He was on the cross Jesus could assure the believing thief, *“Today you will be with Me in paradise”* (Lk. 23:43). By His death and resurrection Jesus threw the doors of paradise wide open for the thief, for Adam and Eve, for you and me, and for everyone else who believes in Him. Jesus says, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life”* (Jn. 6:47).

Adam’s and Eve’s sin brought sin’s terrible curse upon themselves and upon us all. God sent us His Son who undid sin’s curse. In Jesus we are forgiven and saved. And one day Jesus will take us to heaven.

But Christ, the second Adam, came
To bear our sin and woe and shame,
To be our Life, our Light, our Way,
Our only Hope, our only Stay.

We thank Thee, Christ; new life is ours,
New light, new hope, new strength, new powers:
May grace our every way attend
Until we reach our journey’s end! Amen. (TLH #369:4, 6)