

Faith Is Action



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THE WAY TO PARADISE

In the Genesis account of creation, as each day's events unfolded, God was pleased with all *the works of His hand*, and upon their completion each day, He said, "*It is good.*" But when He created man, the crown jewel of His creation, in his image and after His own likeness, on the sixth day, He said, "*It is very good.*" Then God rested from all of His works that He had created.

Have you ever wondered why God created Adam and Eve last? Because God did not create man for the earth—*God created the earth for man!* "*The heavens are the Lord's, but the earth hath He given to the children of men*" (Psalm 115:16). People have it backwards today. They want to save the owls and the snails, and I do believe in taking care of God's creation. But Romans 1:25 says that the time would come when they would "*worship the creation more than the Creator*"! Because of this, everything is out of kilter.

God's divine blueprint has been skewed until we find that today men worship the creation, including their own bodies, their own desires, and their own lusts. When God created this magnificent universe with all of its variety and complexity, it was so that Earth could support human life, and every planet is precisely situated to provide the elements necessary for life on earth.

David said in Psalm 19:1-6: "*The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.*" (Whether you speak English or Chinese, etc., there is no language on earth where the message of the creation of God cannot be heard.) "*Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*" God says that the heavens are speaking. The

The Way To Paradise

Sharon Hardy Knotts



planets and stars are speaking words from one end of the world to the other.

“In them he hath set a tabernacle for the sun. His going forth (the sun’s) is from the end of heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.” God placed the sun in the perfect position in relation to our earth, so that it is neither an ice ball nor a fireball, but is compatible with life. And this awesome creation that He created, He created specifically for man, and gave man dominion over it and said, *“Subdue it and have dominion over it”* (Gen. 1:26-28).

The Garden of Eden

Before He created them, God made a beautiful paradise for Adam and Eve. We have no idea just how beautiful Eden was. There are places on earth that are beautiful and breathtaking, such as Hawaii, that give us an idea of what that paradise was like. Even so, these places are under the curse. Imagine what they would be like if there were no curse! God created the exotic paradise of Eden and put Adam in the garden *“to dress (till the ground) and to keep it”* (Gen.2:15). Right here in this little word k-e-e-p, there is a hint of an enemy. An enemy will try to come in and take the dominion away from Adam, so it was imperative that Adam obey what

God commanded.

In this Garden was every kind of fruit tree that was *“pleasant to the eye and good for food.”* And the best part: *“The Tree of Life was also in the midst of the garden.”* That means in the very center of this luscious, splendid Garden of goodness. But there was also another tree: *“the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”*

When God put Adam and Eve there, He only gave them two commandments. The one is obvious, and we always immediately think of it: *“Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”* (Gen.2:16-17). God is the God of grace and liberty and generosity, and how He worded this commandment is very important. He said, *“You may freely eat of all the trees, but one.”* That is important, because when the serpent came to beguile Eve, he flipped it and put God in a negative light and said, *“Hath God said you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”* He changed the wording to a negative, and that’s what the devil does. He seeks to disarm you by putting God in a negative light, because when he can disarm you, he can defeat you. But if you know the Word of God, and you have that Word in your heart, it will come out of your mouth like

a sharp two-edged sword, the one weapon against which Satan has no defense!

The other commandment was the *first commandment* God gave them. He blessed them and said unto them: “*Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.*” In other words, He said, “*Have babies and lots of children*” (Gen.1:28).

The **first** thing God told Adam and Eve to do was to have babies! *Had they obeyed the first commandment and got busy having babies, they wouldn't have been hanging around that tree!* Eve would have had other things on her mind and Adam would too. But when you don't obey the first thing God tells you, you open the door for the enemy to come in to get you to disobey the next thing God tells you. (Some people are waiting on “a word from God”, and they're not getting one, because they haven't done the first thing He said.)

The Serpent's Subtlety

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said you shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not

eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die” (Gen.3:1-3). Now she's getting herself into trouble, because God didn't say anything about touching it. Even if we say that it is understood that in order to eat it, you have to touch it, God did not say, “*Lest you die.*” He said, “*You shall surely die.*” This is how the enemy sucks people in, by saying, “You can get by with doing this, and doing that. It's alright; God doesn't mean that you can't do it.” He makes God's *surely* diluted—or *iffy!*

“For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (vv.5-6). When I read “*with,*” it tells me Adam was standing there and heard the whole conversation. He was the one who was supposed to *keep* the Garden. He was the one that was supposed to speak up. Most Bible scholars do not believe that Eve was there when God told Adam about eating the trees. He told Adam before He created Eve, and she got it secondhand from Adam. Whenever something is received secondhand, it gets weaker. But when

God says to YOU: *“Do not eat of that tree, or you will surely die,”* Adam should have stopped her and not joined her! That’s why Scripture tells us that God holds Adam responsible for the fall of mankind: *“By one man, sin entered into the world”* (Rom.5:12).

“And the eyes of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord...” (These have to be some of the saddest words in the Bible!) *“...And they heard the voice of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself”* (vv.7-10).

It apparently was God’s custom to come down every day to have a time of fellowship with them, and no doubt, He was used to their running to greet Him, much like when daddy gets home from work, and the little ones come running, happy to see him. But when God came at the usual time, they were not there. Up to this point, they were innocent, but when they disobeyed, their eyes were opened and they knew they

were naked. This is the introduction of *conscience* in man, to know good and evil. Before they only knew good, and that’s all God wanted them to know. We understand from this verse that man has a conscience.

Many sinners in the world who commit awful deeds have never been to church. Unfortunately, we now have an unchurched generation who doesn’t know the Bible, and they are at a great disadvantage when Satan tempts them, *but they do have a conscience, and your conscience lets you know when you’re doing something wrong.* This is what Paul argued in Romans 2:14-16 where he said that whether you have the law and the Ten Commandments, or not, *God has written a law on your heart.* The law that is written on your heart either *accuses you or excuses you.* And in addition to the law written on your heart, *creation proves there is a God* (Rom.1:20-23).

The Fading Fig Leaf

They realized they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together to cover their nakedness. This was man’s first attempt to create his own self-righteousness. This following verse is one we quote often, but we usually don’t quote the last part, which I find very interesting in light of this message. Isaiah 64:6: *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all*

our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." A leaf—A fig leaf—*A faded fig leaf!*

Adam and Eve were made in the image and likeness of God, and they had to be covered with something. *What were they covered with?* It wasn't animal skins or fur. What is God covered with? Psalm 104:2: *"Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment..."* God is covered with light! Paul told Timothy that *God dwells in a light that no man can approach unto!* (1Tim.6:15). It's a light like nothing seen on earth. We know better than to look up at the sun on a summer day with the naked eye, but God clothes Himself in a light that outshines the sun!

I hope you understand the tragedy their sin produced: We are supposed to be covered in this same glorious light Adam and Eve were, but now that light has gone out! When you look at the countenance of a born-again, Spirit-filled child of God, you see the light of the Holy Spirit reflected in his face. You can see the light of God shining in his eyes. You know a real Christian when you see one. But when you see a child of God who has become lean in his soul and is going back into the world, the light is gone, and his countenance shows it.

Their feeble attempt to replace

the light of God's glory was to pluck leaves off a fig tree. If you've ever seen a fig tree, its leaves are very large; probably just about the right size to make an apron, the "work of righteousness" that they crafted with their own hands. And things only got worse after this. By the time of Moses, God intervened to give His law to one nation of people, that began with one man, Abraham, whose seed had become a family of seventy when Jacob went to Egypt. Four hundred years later, Moses brought two million people out of Egypt into the wilderness where God separated them from the heathen nations to give them His law. They were to preserve the law of God, and Israel was to be *"a light to the Gentiles."*

Paul said in Romans 9:31: *"But Israel, which followed hard after the law of righteousness, hath not attained the righteousness thereof, because they sought it not by faith, but by the works of the law."* Man-made works. Fading fig leaves. How could Adam and Eve know that in just a few days the leaves were going to fade and die? *"All our righteousness is as a leaf that fades."*

The Cursed Fig Tree

In Mark 11, is recorded the account of when Jesus cursed a fig tree. Normally, preachers use this story in preaching faith,

which in my opinion, is the best illustration on faith and how to receive from God. But let's look at the parallel truths it can give us. Jesus often stayed at night in the little town of Bethany, probably at the home of Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha who often served Jesus in their house. In the morning Jesus and His disciples would travel the few miles to Jerusalem to go to the Temple. This particular morning Jesus was hungry and saw a fig tree afar off. It was loaded with leaves. I believe Jesus' mouth began to water for those figs. But when He got there to pluck the figs, there was not a fig on the tree. There were lots of leaves, but no figs. The Bible says *He cursed it* and said, "*No man will ever eat fruit of you again.*" Really? On the surface this may seem harsh. Why curse the tree?

If you understand this one fact, you'll know why: Because the fig tree, unlike most fruit trees, *produces its fruit first*. Then, after the figs have already come forth on the branches, the leaves emerge. Jesus was upset because He expected there to be figs, but all it had was *profession without possession*. It showed off an outward appearance: "Look at all the leaves I've got! Look at how righteous I am." There are Christians today who have the outward show, and religious men can be so pompous. Paul told Timothy:

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, from such turn away" (2Tim.3:5). How dare they advertise that they have the power of God to set captives free; they have the Word of God to feed hungry souls, and their mouths are watering, but all they give them is a big ecclesiastical show, just like this fig tree. That's why Jesus cursed it, and I can imagine if I'd been there with the disciples, I would have thought, *What's got into Him—cursing a tree?* Because by its showy leaves, it advertised that it had figs, but when He got there, it didn't.

The Blame Game

When God called, "Where are you?", Adam said, "*I was afraid, and I hid from the presence of the Lord.*" This is the first emotion identified in the Bible, and it is tragic that it is fear, and that it is the fear of the presence of God! Adam explained: "*I realized I was naked and I hid.*" We know God wasn't asking Adam questions for information, but if He already knew what happened, why ask? Because this was a crucial point, the pivotal point when Adam could have confessed his sin. God was giving him an opportunity to confess what they had done, but he didn't. Instead, he immediately began to play "*the blame game.*"

"Who told you that you are naked? Did you eat of that tree I

commanded you not to eat?” God started with number one, the one He considered accountable, Adam. What did Adam answer? *“That woman You gave to me...”* I know everybody is thinking that Adam is blaming the woman. But if you really listen to him, he said: *“YOU gave me that woman.”* He was actually laying blame on God. He should have confessed his disobedience, but he didn’t.

Then God turned to the woman, *“What have you done?”* What was her response? *“The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”* We would expect now that God would turn to the serpent, but He didn’t, because Satan did exactly what he intended to do. Jesus said: *“The thief is come (Satan) but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy”* (Jn.10:10). Satan was doing what he always does, so God didn’t bother to question him.

But when God began to pronounce the curses, He started with the serpent: *“Cursed art thou above all cattle. You shall crawl on your belly like the beast of the field, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. I will put enmity between your seed and the seed of the woman. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel”* (Gen.3:14-15). Why did God say the seed of the woman and not of Adam? Because in this first messianic prophecy He spoke of a particular seed, who is Jesus Christ. He was to be born of a

woman, but His Father is Almighty God.

To the woman He said, *“I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he will rule over thee”* (v.16). Then He turned to Adam and said, *“The ground you must till for your food is cursed for your sake, and thorns and thistles shall come forth. In the sweat of your face you will till the ground, until you return to it, because from dust you are and to dust you shall return”* (vv.17-19).

Afterwards, God made coats from animal skins to cover them, because the fig leaves were going to shrivel up within 24 hours. Moreover, God was also sending a message: It takes shed blood to cover sin. *“Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin”* (Heb.9:24). Because sin brings death, God was giving them a graphic illustration, and it had to be hard for them to see Him slay those little animals. This is Paradise we are talking about, with its perfect, idealistic beauty, and all the animals they’d grown fond of. Adam had named them all. They had never seen death. This was a rude awakening, and God was making the point: This is what sin does—Sin is a killer. Sin is a murderer. *“The wages of sin is death”* (Rom. 6:23).

Though the animal was inno-

cent, and its blood was innocent blood, it was animal blood and not the blood of a man, so it could only cover their sin. It could not eradicate the sin nature. Unfortunately, they were going to sin again. Because they did not obey God's first commandment "*to be fruitful and multiply*", they had not had any babies yet. Now they were going to start having babies, but it would come after their fall. Consequently, in Adam all are born sinners. "*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men*" (Rom.5:12).

The Verdict

"And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live forever..." Excuse me, something is wrong here grammatically. The writer did not finish the sentence. It just cuts off abruptly, and then continues: "*Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man and he placed at the east of the Garden of Eden cherubim with a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the Tree of Life*" (vv.22-23).

In verse 22, God was speaking and then abruptly stopped. Stay-

ing true to the context, the translators were wise not to try to manufacture something to finish the sentence with their own idea of what He might have said. They left it hanging as it is. God was saying, "The man is become like as us, to know good and evil, and if we let him stay in this Garden where he has access to the Tree of Life, and he eats the fruit in his sinful condition... Oh—It's too terrible to speak of!" It's as though God put His hand on His mouth and said, "*I won't even speak of that.*" Have you ever been discussing something, and then you start to bring up something that is so awful, you won't even say it? You just let it hang in the air, because everybody knows what you are talking about, and you don't want to put it into words. That's how God felt. But now that they had sinned, if He didn't do something to keep them from the Tree of Life, they would be in that fallen condition forever.

Also, in verse 23 we read that He *sent* the man out of the Garden, and in verse 24 that He *drove* the man out of the Garden. Why say *sent* and *drove*? Just one would have been sufficient for us to understand. "He sent him out" is the normal meaning: "*Go that way.*" But when it says "He drove him out", the same Hebrew word is used throughout the O.T. to speak of *divorce*. God not only sent him out of the Garden, but

God divorced the man. There was a separation, a breakdown in communication, alienation of affection, irreconcilable differences, so God drove them out of the Garden. To make sure that they could not get back in to eat of the Tree of Life, He put two cherubim with flaming swords at the entrance to keep them out from *the way* of the Tree of Life.

Banishment! Paradise lost! Man had been kicked out, and God made it so he could never have a way back to Paradise and the Tree of Life. Ever since, man has been desperately trying to find his way back to Paradise, that place of beauty and rest and peace. But the Bible says in Proverbs 14:12: *“There is a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof is the ways of death.”* You see, man is the problem, so he doesn’t have the solution. The problem can only be fixed by God. Proverbs 16:2 says, *“All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirits.”* Jeremiah 10:23 says, *“I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in a man to direct his steps.”* Jeremiah 17:9: *“For the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and who can know it?”*

Man is still trying to find a way back to Paradise and has sought to use his fig leaves of religious rituals to cover his sins. There are many religions today

and people will tell you: “There’s not just one way to Heaven. There are many ways to Heaven and many ways to God.” But the moment you stand up and quote **John 14:6** where Jesus said, *“I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and no man comes unto the Father (Creator) but by me”*, you’re going to be on the *“haters hit list”*! You can be religious as long as you do not speak of Jesus Christ as being THE WAY of eternal life.

But God said, *“Let the wicked forsake **his way**, and the unrighteous man **his thoughts**, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways and my thoughts than yours, saith the Lord”* (Isa.55:8-9)

Paradise Transported

By the time of Noah, man had become so wicked that *“his every thought was only evil continuously, and it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth”* (Gen.6:5-6). God decided to wipe out civilization on the earth and only save righteous Noah and his family. He needed to do something about the Garden, and we can only surmise that He transported it to Heaven. One reason I

say this is, in Revelation, chapters 21&22, we read about how beautiful Heaven is, and we are told, *“in the midst of it is the Tree of Life.”*

Before His ascension into Heaven, Jesus told His disciples: *“Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions, and if it were not so, I would have told you. But I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am you may be also. And whither I go and the way ye know”* (Jn.14:1-3). Thomas said, “Excuse me, Lord, but we don’t know where you are going, so we don’t know the way.” This is when Jesus gave those famous words: *“I Am the Way!”* If you want to get to the Tree of Life, if you want to get to Paradise, you are going to have to get on the right way. He sent them out, and He put the two cherubim there to keep the way, and from that point, the way to eternal life was not accessible to man.

Now we will fast-forward to the time of Moses and Israel in the wilderness. God called them to Mount Sinai to give Him His law, and Hebrew scholars say that on Mount Sinai God married Israel and the Law was their KETUBAH or marriage covenant. Then God instructed Moses how to build a portable Tabernacle, a portable

church, if you will, so that as they moved from place to place, following the pillar of fire by night, and the cloud by day, it went with them. Even in that wilderness, God had a fancy Tabernacle, because on the night of their exodus, He caused the Egyptians to laden them with silver and gold and precious stones. God paid them for their 400 years of slavery, and so they could bring it to Him for His altar, and the menorah, and to create a beautiful place for His Presence.

The Veil of the Tabernacle

Within the Tabernacle were two main compartments: *The Holy Place* and *The Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies)*. These were separated by a “veil”—a curtain, for which God gave Moses specific instructions, and they were to be carried out to the minutest detail: *“And thou shall rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount.”* (We know Moses went up on the mountain with God two times for 40 days each, to receive these instructions.) *“And thou shall make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made.”*

We may think of “cunning” as being a hunting or gaming word, but here it refers to very intricate, delicate “embroidery.” They were

to take these three beautiful colors and embroider the fine linen. What were they to embroider on it? **Cherubim.** Sound familiar? This veil was designed with beautiful blue and purple and scarlet threads by artisans who could embroider cherubim.

“And thou shall hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood, overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold upon the four sockets of silver. And thou shall hang up the veil under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the veil the ark of Testimony: (The Ark of the Covenant), and the veil shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy (the Holy of Holies). And thou shall put the mercy seat upon the ark of the Testimony in the most holy place” (Ex.26:30-34).

The Ark of the Covenant was basically a box 5 ft. by 3 ft. by 3 ft., overlaid with pure gold inside and out. On its lid was the Mercy Seat with two cherubim that faced each other face to face, and wing to wing, which was beaten out of one piece of solid of gold. It blows your mind! That’s a lot of gold, and the artistry and craftsmanship to be able to do that were amazing. God gave those men a gift to be able to do that. Who are the jewelers and goldsmiths and silversmiths today? The Jewish people, and when you see the names Goldsmith, Silversmith, Goldstein, Silverstein, or any with

silver or gold in them, nine out of ten times they are Jewish, because God gave them these extraordinary gifts to create His Tabernacle for His glory.

This Mercy Seat had two solid gold cherubim guarding the Ark of the Covenant that was the meeting place of the Presence of God. Only once a year, the high priest, and no one but the high priest, was to go into the Holy of Holies to put the blood on the Mercy Seat (also called “the lid of Atonement”) to cover the sins of the people. Before he could even be so bold as to enter therein, he first had to offer up a sacrifice for his own sins. We should understand that this was parenthetical in the plan of God from what He intended. Because of man’s sin, He had to insert the parenthesis of the Law until the time when He would send His own Son to be the Lamb of God. And until then, *the way into the Holy Place of God’s Presence was guarded by the cherubim embroidered on the veil.*

That veil was between 60 to 90 feet tall and was at least 4 inches thick! What kind of work, how much time, how many ladies and/or men did it take to weave a veil 4 inches thick? And to embroider it with cherubim! Just as God had to place the cherubim with flaming swords at the Garden of Eden to keep the way of life, He placed the cherubim upon the veil to keep out sinful man

from His immediate Presence.

God was providing a temporary “way of life” so that once a year there would be the shedding of blood of an innocent lamb to be sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat. It had to be a perfect male of the first year, and they had to cut it open to make sure there were no hidden blemishes. Then taking its blood, the high priest after giving sacrifice for his own sins, put on holy garments and went behind the veil to put the blood upon the Mercy Seat. But it had to be done every single year again and again! God said: “*Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have caused me to turn my face from you*” (Isa.59:2). Then God allowed His presence to come down, but it was behind a veil 90 feet tall and 4 inches thick. They could not get to the tangible presence of God. They didn’t have direct access to the way of life.

The Veil of the Temple

“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law” (Gal.4:4-5). Jesus came to fulfil the righteous demands of the law, to become the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn.1:29). He spent His life to prepare Himself for the hour on the cross:

“Now from the sixth hour

*there was darkness over the land until the ninth hour, And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice saying, ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI, that is to say, My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And behold, **the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom**; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent”* (Mt.27:45-51).

This happened when Jesus said, “*It is finished*” (Jn.19:30). When Jesus said, “*All is done*”, the 4 inch thick veil ripped from the top to the bottom, and THE WAY to the Tree of Life opened up! The cherubim on the veil who were guarding the way of Life opened wide and said, “*The way of life is open. Whosoever will—let him come.*”

We can’t even begin to understand what it was like for those priests serving in the Temple that day, going about their normal chores, when all of a sudden the earth begin to quake. I want to know, What kind of earthquake causes a curtain 4 inches thick to

slit cleanly, straight down the middle, and nothing else was harmed? God was saying, “Since the day I put the cherubim to guard the way to the Tree of Life in Eden’s Paradise, man has been trying with his filthy rags and faded fig leaves to return! But today I have given you the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and the way is open to whosoever will come!”

Abraham’s Bosom Paradise

In Jesus’ day, Paradise was better known as “*Abraham’s Bosom*.” Located in the bowels of the earth, it was also called “*Hades House*” (Lk.16:22). After Jesus died, He went down into Paradise. He knew He was going to Paradise, because when the one thief on the cross said to Him, “*Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom*”, Jesus answered, “*I tell you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.*” (Lk.23:43). We read in Ephesians what He did when He went into Paradise:

“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)” (Eph.4:8-10).
When that veil split in two and the

way to Paradise was opened, Jesus went down into Hades House and ripped off the gates, because He had already said, “*The gates of Hades House shall not prevail against the Church*” (Mt.16:18). There was Abel, the first righteous one who had died in faith, and all the patriarchs were there: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and Aaron, and David, the great king. All these great worthies had died in faith, and Jesus came to transport them out of Abraham’s Bosom to Heaven, because the price of redemption was paid in full. He not only ripped off the gates, He took the keys to death and hell, **and He opened up the way!** (Rev.1:18). He led them from the bowels of the earth, through the atmosphere, through the second heavens, into the third heavens, the Paradise of God. Paul described an experience when he was “*caught up to the third heaven to Paradise*” (2Cor.12:1-4). Now whenever a saint dies in faith in Jesus Christ, Paul said, “*To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord*” (2Cor.5:8). There’s no half-way house, no Hades House, because Jesus tore the gates off, and the way is opened to the Tree of Life.

A few years later, some of the Jewish believers in Christ were trying to go back under the law of animal sacrifices. This was a great sin against God who had given His

only Begotten Son to be the Lamb to die once for all. It is so hard to break people of their religiosity and their self-righteous works. This is what the whole Book of Hebrews is about. Paul said, “If you’re going back to animal sacrifices, then there is no more remission for your sin: *“Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering (sacrifice) for sin”* (Heb. 10:12-18). Not only this, but 30 years later, the Temple was destroyed by Titus the Roman, and there was no more altar for animal sacrifices. And there was literally no veil to separate God from men!

*“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, **through the veil...**”* (Not the veil that was in the Temple, not the veil that was 90 feet high and 4 inches thick, not the veil that was split when Jesus died on the cross! No! It is a new and LIVING WAY!) *“**through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;**”* (vs.19-20). The way to the Tree of Life has been opened up—through the pierced side of Jesus’ flesh!

The Paradise of Heaven

When we compare the last two chapters of the book of Revelation with the beginning chapters of Genesis, we see they coincide. And now that the way to Heaven, the way to

Paradise, has been opened, just like in the Garden of Eden: *There is no curse; there is no darkness; there is no sickness, and there is no death! And in the midst of it is the Tree of Life!* (Rev.21:4, 22:1-5). *And the Spirit says, “Come.” And the Bride says, “Come.” And whosoever will, let him come, and eat of the Tree of Life, and drink of the waters of life freely!”* (Ref. Rev.22:17).

There is only one thing that’s different about the Paradise in Heaven. There is something that was in the Garden of Eden that’s not in Paradise in Heaven: **There is no more devil!** He’s been cast into the pit, *“and the smoke of his torment rises up to Heaven forever and ever”* (Rev.20:10).

Stay on the straight and narrow way, because Jesus said, *“Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it”* (Matt.7:14). I’m homesick for Heaven, because that’s where my citizenship is (Phil.3:20). What a reunion there’s going to be when we are in the New Jerusalem, that glorious city of God, where the Bride of Christ will be (Rev.21:1). And just like Israel was married to God at Sinai, we are going to be married to our Saviour, the Lamb of God (Rev.19:7-9).