

3. The Fall to Man's Freedom From Slavery

In this chapter, we start with Adam's disobedience to God's command as he yielded to Satan's temptation, and we begin to see God working to bring about the restoration of man and the world to His rule. But first, Adam had to be punished for having sinned when he broke God's command. We trace the unfolding of God's plan for man's salvation and God's choice of Abraham and his children to bring about this salvation. The chapter ends when the chosen people, having been enslaved in Egypt (symbolising man's slavery to Satan), were set free through the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb.

Creation and the Fall of Man

The creation of man is mentioned by Tyndale only as a fact; his concern is more with the state of man after the Fall and God's dealing with man to restore man to fellowship with himself. God had told man that if he broke the one command that he had given to him, that is, to taste the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he would die. But Adam and Eve broke that commandment and died spiritually. Sin entered the world and the world was cursed; and Satan became god of the world.

As thou readest, therefore, think that every syllable pertaineth to thine own self, and suck out the pith of the scripture, and arm thyself against all assaults. First note with strong faith the power of God, in creating all of nought; and mark the grievous fall of Adam, and of us all in him, through the light regarding of the commandment of God.¹

But, as we have seen, God planned to restore the world to its pristine glory, and this meant forgiving man for the sin that he had committed and creating him anew. By breaking God's commandment, Adam brought man into spiritual death, separating him from God. As a result, man became a slave to Satan, who, through man's sin, became the ruler of the world.

God told Satan that he was going to put enmity between Adam's seed and the Devil's seed. Many years later, God told Abraham that one of his

1. William Tyndale, *The Use of Scripture, PS-1*, p. 400.

seed would destroy Satan's power. When God told Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac, Isaac asked his father, "'Behold, the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?' And Abraham said, 'God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering.'" But, Isaac did not have to be sacrificed because a ram was caught in a nearby thicket, and this was sacrificed instead of Isaac (Gen. 22:1-19).

Abraham through works was sure of his faith to be right, and that the true fear of God was in him, when he had offered his son: as the scripture saith, 'Now know I that thou fearest God;' that is to say, Now is it open and manifest that thou fearest God, inasmuch as thou has not spared thy only son for my sake.¹

Tyndale links Christ to the seed that was promised to Abraham, when he wrote in his *Answer to Sir Thomas More*,

Christ asked the apostles (Matt. xvi.) whom they took him for. And Peter answered for them all, saying, "I say that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, that art come into this world." That is, We believe that thou art he that was promised unto Abraham, that should come, bless us, and deliver us. Howbeit, Peter yet wist not, by what means. But now it is opened throughout all the world, that, through his offering of his body and blood, that offering is a satisfaction for the sin of all that repent, and a purchasing of whatsoever they can ask, to keep them in favour; and that they sin no more."²

Tyndale wrote that every human being is a child of God through creation. This makes a problem for some academics as Tyndale seems, at times, to teach universalism.³ However, a careful reading of Tyndale's writings shows that he was not a universalist, every man is created by God, but not every man is re-created through Christ's blood. Tyndale is clearest in *Pathway* where he wrote about the difference between man, as created, and the Christian, as man re-created. "And inasmuch as he is our Lord and God, and we his double possession, by creation and redemption."⁴

God careth for his, and ministereth all things unto them, and moveth Turks, and Saracens, and all manner infidels to do them good: as thou seest in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and how God went with Joseph into Egypt, and gat him favour in the prison, and in every place; which

1. William Tyndale, *Mammon*, PS-1, p. 60f.

2. William Tyndale, *Answer*, PS-3, p. 31.

3. J. Wayne Baker, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant*, p. 209: For Tyndale 'the covenant idea was implicitly, if not always explicitly, universalist.' Quoted in my *The Theology of William Tyndale*, p. 78.

4. William Tyndale, *Pathway*, PS-1, p. 24.

favour Joseph received of the hand of God, and to God gave the thanks thus is God and Christ all in all; good and bad receive I of God. Them that are good I love, because they are in Christ; and the evil, to bring them to Christ. . . . Finally, inasmuch as God hath created all, and Christ bought all with his blood, therefore ought all to seek God and Christ in all, and else nothing.¹

Again, Tyndale wrote, we must love our neighbours, “because God hath created them unto his likeness, and Christ hath redeemed them and bought them with his blood.”²

Tyndale narrowed the scope a little when he wrote, “God hath created us and made us unto his own likeness; and our Saviour Christ hath bought us with his blood.”³ For even though everyone has been “created after his [God’s] image,” and are “the price of his [Christ’s] blood”, Tyndale limited its application to those who had faith in Christ’s sacrificial blood on the Cross. “For faith in Christ’s blood (which is God’s promise) quieteth the conscience of all true believers.”

Tyndale’s emphasis that we are to help our neighbours because they are the price of Christ’s blood covers every human being. This has an importance for us, because we do not know who is one of God’s elect – for it is not for us to judge people, whether they are Turks or Saracens, or who has, and who has not, been elected by God for salvation.

In his ‘Prologue’ to the *1525 New Testament*, Tyndale wrote about the Fall of Adam and about Christ’s blood setting us free from the result of the Fall:

The fall of Adam hath made us heirs of the vengeance and wrath of God, and heirs of eternal damnation. And hath brought us into captivity and bondage under the devil. And the devil is our lord, and our ruler, our head, our governor, our prince, yea, and our god. . . . It is not possible for a natural man to consent to the law, that it should be good, or that God should be righteous, which maketh the law. Man’s wit, reason, and will, are so fast glued, yea, nailed and chained unto the will of the devil. Neither can any creature loose the bonds, save the blood of Christ. This is the captivity and bondage whence Christ delivered us, redeemed, and loosed us.⁴

Adam’s disobedience had resulted in a barrier between God and man; and Adam gave to the Devil his power to rule and take care of the world. Therefore, God had to devise a plan to destroy Satan and end his dominion over the world and also to restore creation to its original glory and man to his life and fellowship with God.

1. William Tyndale, *Obedience, PS-1*, p. 298f.

2. William Tyndale, *Prologue Matthew, PS-1*, p. 470.

3. William Tyndale, *Answer, PS-3*, p. 57.

4. William Tyndale, *1525, New Testament*, pp. 9, 10.

God's creation culminated in the creation of man, but Tyndale is concerned more with the state of man after the Fall and with God's dealing with man; God's purpose was to destroy the Devil and break his hold over man. He was going to re-create man and restore creation to the pristine goodness that it had before the Fall. Tyndale describes the outworking of God's plan through Christ's blood thus:

This is the captivity and bondage whence Christ delivered us, redeemed and loosed us. His blood, his death, [and his ministry on earth, and fulfilling of God's law] peaced the wrath of God, brought the favour of God to us again, obtained that God should . . . be our Father, and that a merciful Father; . . . and will give us his Spirit again (which was taken away in the fall of Adam) to rule, govern, and strength us, and to break the bonds of Satan wherein we were so strait bound.¹

This leads us straight into God's salvation of man from the power of Satan and from the spiritual death that resulted from Adam's sin.

The beginning of Man's restoration

In Gen. iii. God saith to the serpent, "I will put hatred between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; that self seed shall tread thy head underfoot." Christ is this woman's seed: he it is that hath trodden underfoot the devil's head, that is to say, sin, death, hell, and all his power. For without this seed can no man avoid sin, death, hell, and everlasting damnation.²

The next step in God's plan was to choose Abraham and his seed, through which God would achieve his plan for man's salvation.

For he promised Abraham, that in his Seed all the world should be blessed from the curse of sin; and hath abundantly renewed his everlasting mercy unto us in the new Testament, promising that our sins shall be forgiven us in Christ's blood, if we repent, and trust thereto.³

However, Abraham's children had a long and difficult journey before that seed should come into the world, and, of Abraham's descendants, Israel was chosen to inherit God's promise. It was a journey that led to Israel's children becoming a nation, and who became slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt; even as all mankind had, through Adam's disobedience, become slaves to the Devil.

1. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

2. William Tyndale, *Pathway, PS-1*, p. 10; see also, 1525, *New Testament*, p. 3.

3. William Tyndale, *Exposition, 1 John, PS-2*, p. 150.

Joseph saw the sun and moon and the eleven stars worshipping him. Nevertheless, ere that came to pass, God laid him where he could neither see sun nor moon, neither star in the sky, and that many years; and also undeserved; to nurture him, to humble, to meek, and to teach him God's ways.¹

Eventually, Joseph's father, Israel, went down to Egypt with his family, and they prospered until a pharaoh, who did not recognise what Joseph had done for the people of Egypt, came to rule the Egyptians and enslaved them. The children of Israel became slaves in Egypt. The pharaoh oppressed them and made them produce bricks for his buildings. They had no freedom, and to prevent them from getting too powerful, the pharaoh decreed that every baby boy was to be drowned in the River Nile. "How wonderfully were the children of Israel locked in Egypt! In what tribulation, cumbrance, and adversity were they in!² However, baby Moses was saved; he was brought up in the pharaoh's household, before he fled from Egypt and lived in the Sinai Peninsula. Eventually, Moses was sent by God to rescue the Israelites from their slavery. But that seemed to make the Israelites' position worse, and the burden placed on them became even greater. But then, God sent his plagues on the Egyptians, until finally the pharaoh told the Israelites to leave Egypt.

When God was about to send His last plague and slay the first-born of man and beast in Egypt, He provided a way for the first-born of the children of Israel to be saved. God told them to slay a kid or a lamb and to put its blood on the door-posts of their house. The annual Passover festival enabled the Israelites to remember their deliverance from slavery. It was at the end of the Passover meal that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. The Passover

was also a very prophecy of the passion of Christ, describing the very manner and fashion of his death, and the effect and virtue thereof also. In whose stead is the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ come, as baptism in the room or stead of circumcision. To see how Christ was prophesied and described therein, consider and mark, how that the kid or lamb must be without spot or blemish; and so was Christ only of all mankind, in the sight of God and his law.³

Tyndale was more concerned with God's redemption of man from Satan's bondage than with the redemption of the Jews from their slavery under the pharaoh, as is made clear in *Mammon*.

1. William Tyndale, *Obedience, PS-1*, p. 136.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

3. William Tyndale, *Sacraments, PS-1*, p. 354.

In Christ's blood are we blessed from that bitter curse and damnable captivity under sin, wherein we were born and conceived. And Christ's Spirit is poured into us, to bring forth good works, and our works are the fruits of the Spirit; and the kingdom is the deserving of Christ's blood; and so is faith, and the Spirit, and good works also.¹

When Jesus and his disciples were in the Upper Room to celebrate the Passover, Jesus taught his disciples its true meaning (Lk. xxii.):

For the night before his passion, when he had eaten Pesah with his disciples, he said, "I will no more eat of it henceforth, till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." As who should say, 'This memorial which we yearly have hitherto observed, was once fulfilled in the kingdom of this world, when your fathers were delivered out of bondage and servitude of the Egyptians. But it hath yet another signification, hitherto unknown to you, which must be fulfilled spiritually in the kingdom of God by my passion that is at hand, and blood that now shall shortly be shed; by the which ye shall be delivered out of the power of Satan, sin, and hell, and made heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Neither was it the lambs blood that delivered you then: (for what regard hath God in the blood of sheep and calves?) but the blood of Christ (whom that lamb figured, and described his innocence, pureness, and obedience to his Father, and compassion to mankind-ward, whose feeble nature he had put on with all the infirmities of the same, save sin) did then deliver you, to bring you to the faith of this deliverance, and make you through faith partakers thereof.'²

Tyndale then shows that the date of the slaying of the Passover lamb and of putting its blood on the door-posts (celebrated by the Jews every year) signified the Holy Spirit's sprinkling Christ's blood on the door-posts of our conscience, which happened at the Passover meal with the institution of the Lord's Supper.

The blood stricken on the posts saved them, that they were not plagued with the Egyptians, and delivered them out of the captivity of Pharaoh. And the blood of Christ, stricken on the posts of our consciences with a sure faith, delivereth us from the captivity of Pharaoh the devil, and smiting of his angels.³

Tyndale tells us the importance of the Old Testament scriptures, for we need to learn from the history of the Israelites, so that we (Christians) do not make the same kind of mistakes in our worship of God.

1. William Tyndale, *Mammon, PS-I*, p. 83.

2. William Tyndale, *Sacraments, PS-I*, p. 355.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 354.

These are ensamples written for our learning (as Paul saith), to teach us to trust in God in the strong fire of tribulation and purgatory of our flesh; and that they which submit themselves to follow God, should note and mark such things: for their learning and comfort is the fruit of the scripture, and cause why it was written. And with such a purpose to read it, is the way to everlasting life, and to those joyful blessings that are promised unto all nations in the Seed of Abraham: which Seed is Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be honour and praise for ever, and unto God our Father through him.¹

After the Israelites had been freed from Pharaoh's bondage, they had to journey through the wilderness to reach the Promised Land:

The land also that was promised them was far off, and full of great cities, walled with high walls up to the sky, and inhabited with great giants; yet God's truth brought them out of Egypt, and planted them in the land of the giants. This was also written for our learning: for there is no power against God's, neither any wisdom against God's wisdom: he is stronger and wiser than all his enemies. What help it Pharaoh, to drown the men children? So little (I fear not) shall it at the last help the pope and his bishops, to burn our men children; which manfully confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, and that there is no other name given unto men to be saved by, as Peter testifieth, Acts, in the fourth chapter.²

Because we have been freed from our slavery to Satan's power and of our desire and willingness to sin by the Holy Spirit's sprinkling us with the blood of Christ, we are set free to love and serve God.

And therefore Paul saith, "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from death be in you, then will he that raised up Jesus from death quicken your mortal bodies by the reason of the Spirit that dwelleth in you." So that it is not possible for him that knoweth the truth, and consenteth thereto, to continue in sin. And then, finally, if we have the light in our hearts, and walk therein, then we have fellowship with God, and are his sons and heirs, and are purged from all sin through Christ's blood.³

Tyndale tells us that God's hand was behind the history of the Israelites, so that they could learn the spiritual reality behind the events that affected their everyday life. But the events that affected the Children of Israel,

1. William Tyndale, *Prologue Genesis, PS-1*, p. 402f.

2. William Tyndale, *Obedience, PS-1*, p. 134.

3. William Tyndale, *Exposition I John, PS-2*, p. 149.

especially up to their entry into the Promised Land, were to help Christians in their spiritual journey. The importance of the Israelites' journey for the Christian is clear in Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (10:1-13), where he draws our attention to some events on their journey: "Now these things were our examples" (v. 6).

SAMPLE