

The First Promised Savior

:: genesis 3 ::

[read Genesis 3.1-21]

Solomon, the great king and poet, said in Proverbs 27:

Proverbs 27:26a – The lambs will provide your clothing.

Wool, leather, fur. Man has always used the hides of animals to make coverings for themselves. The origin of this practice is terrible and beautiful. There, in Genesis chapter 3, in the Garden of Eden we see God clothing His people, for the first time, with the skin of an animal.

But He wasn't only giving them a covering; He was giving them a promise. **The first promise of a Savior is wrapped up in the story of the very first garment.**

Eve fell, trading her relationship with God for a piece of fruit. Adam followed close behind, and, when the moment of gratification had passed, they for the first time felt guilt, for the first time felt shame, for the first time felt separated from their Creator.

The serpent had promised greatness. He had promised a **better** understanding of God. He had promised a new, fuller life. Instead, when Adam and Eve ate the fruit they brought death into our world. All that they had hoped to become was ruined and finished in a moment.

The man and his wife hurried to make themselves clothing. They sought to cover their outer nakedness, though they had no way to cover their inner shame.

They rushed to hide themselves from the presence of their Friend when He came into the garden and called out to them, when He sought to walk with them in the cool of the day. Adam and Eve had traded their relationship with their Creator for a piece of fruit and now felt too unworthy to stand in His presence.

And God, knowing their failure, knowing the terrible plague that His people had brought to human history, still called out to them in love. In the Hebrew it says that God called out to them by name, called out to them with an **invitation**. It was not a call of anger or of disappointment, but an invitation, the voice of Mercy.

We know the story. Adam and Eve present themselves to the Lord, they stand before Him as imperfect, as mortal, as sinners. And so God begins His great pattern of compassion and long-suffering as He implements His plan to save the human race from the power of death and sin.

He promises in Genesis 3:15 that He will send a descendent to Adam and Eve who will overcome the enemy, who will right the wrong that was done in the garden.

With the promise made, it was time for the work to begin. Genesis 3:21 shows God making new clothing for Adam and Eve, this time not from fig leaves, but from the skin of an animal. For the first time a sacrifice was made to cover mankind. An animal was slain because Adam and Eve could do

nothing of themselves to cover their sin, they couldn't fabricate a proper garment on their own. Instead, a life was taken so that their lives might be spared. The original language says that God **wrapped** His people in their new garments. It is an intensely personal scene, where, for the first time, God stoops to shelter and secure His people from the fallen world.

We believe that animal was a lamb. It was the pattern of history for God's people to provide a lamb to make atonement, to restore a right standing before God.

It was a lamb that Abel brought as his offering to the Lord in Genesis 4 and his sacrifice was respected by God. It was a lamb that Abraham counted on when walking up the mountain with Isaac, his son of promise, when he said, "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering" in Genesis 22.

In 1 Chronicles 29, David offered 1,000 lambs at the coronation of his son, Solomon. In 1 Kings 8 Solomon offered lambs to God and the Bible says that there were too many to be numbered.

Each time a lamb was offered it was a reminder of that first animal that was slain to atone for Adam and Eve. It was a reminder of God wrapping His robe around His people. It was a reminder of the promise God made, to send a Man to cure the plague of death and sin. To send a Savior that could redeem, that could restore.

As the history of the Old Testament unfolded the picture of the sacrificial lamb pointed more and more to the coming Messiah who would conquer death and sin through sacrifice, through laying down His life.

Isaiah spoke of the sin-bearing Savior and said:

Isaiah 53:5,7(selections) – He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities...He was led as a lamb to the slaughter.

Isaiah spoke of the Messiah that would come to die, but would fulfill that which God promised all the back in the Garden of Eden.

Every time we button a shirt or wrap ourselves in a coat we can think of that first lamb, that first covering, that first promise of the One who would come to undo the sin of the human race, who would conquer death, who would revive and restore the creation, who would be the last sacrifice necessary to atone for the sin of mankind forever.