June 24, 2017

Prison Ministry

**Story of Redemption** (1947) Chapter **5:** **The Plan of Salvation**

Sorrow filled heaven, as it was realized that man was lost and that world which God had created was to be filled with mortals doomed to misery, sickness, and death, and there was no way of escape for the offender. The whole family of Adam must die. I saw the lovely Jesus and beheld an expression of sympathy and sorrow upon His countenance. Soon I saw Him approach the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father. Said my accompanying angel, He is in close converse with His Father. The anxiety of the angels seemed to be intense while Jesus was communing with His Father. Three times He was shut in by the glorious light about the Father, and the third time He came out from the Father, His person could be seen. His countenance was calm, free from all perplexity and doubt, and shone with benevolence and loveliness, such as words cannot express.

 He then made known to the angelic host that a way of escape had been made for lost man. He told them that He had been pleading with His Father, and had offered to give His life a ransom, to take the sentence of death upon Himself, that through Him man might find pardon; that through the merits of His blood, and obedience to the law of God, they could have the favor of God and be brought into the beautiful garden and eat of the fruit of the tree of life.

 At first the angels could not rejoice, for their Commander concealed nothing from them, but opened before them the plan of salvation. Jesus told them that He would stand between the wrath of His Father and guilty man, that He would bear iniquity and scorn, and but few would receive Him as the Son of God. Nearly all would hate and reject Him. He would leave all His glory in heaven, appear upon earth as a man, humble himself as a man, become acquainted by His own experience with the various temptations with which man would be beset, that He might know how to succor those who should be tempted; and that finally, after His mission as a teacher would be accomplished, He would be delivered into the hands of men and endure almost every cruelty and suffering that Satan and his angels could inspire wicked men to inflict; that He would die the cruelest of deaths, hung up between the heavens and the earth as a guilty sinner; that He would suffer dreadful hours of agony, which even angels could not look upon, but would veil their faces from the sight. Not merely agony of body would He suffer, but mental agony, that with which bodily suffering could in no wise be compared. The weight of the sins of the whole world would be upon Him. He told them He would die and rise again the third day, and would ascend to His Father to intercede for wayward, guilty man.

**The One Possible Way of Salvation**

 The angels prostrated themselves before Him. They offered their lives. Jesus said to them that He would by His death save many, that the life of an angel could not pay the debt. His life alone could be

accepted of His Father as a ransom for man. Jesus also told them that they would have a part to act, to be with Him and at different times strengthen Him; that He would take man's fallen nature, and His strength would not be even equal with theirs; that they would be witnesses of His humiliation and great sufferings; and that as they would witness His sufferings and the hatred of men toward Him, they would be stirred with the deepest emotion, and through their love for Him would wish to rescue and deliver Him from His murderers; but that they must not interfere to prevent anything they should behold; and that they should act a part at His resurrection; that the plan of salvation was devised, and His Father had accepted the plan.

 With a holy sadness Jesus comforted and cheered the angels and informed them that hereafter those whom He should redeem would be with Him, and that by His death He should ransom many and destroy him who had the power of death. And His Father would give Him the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, and He would possess it forever and ever. Satan and sinners would be destroyed, nevermore to disturb heaven or the purified new earth. Jesus bade the heavenly host be reconciled to the plan that His Father had accepted and rejoice that through His death fallen man could again be exalted to obtain favor with God and enjoy heaven.

 Then joy, inexpressible joy, filled heaven. And the heavenly host sang a song of praise and adoration. They touched their harps and sang a note higher than they had done before, for the great mercy and condescension of God in yielding up His dearly Beloved to die for a race of rebels. Praise and adoration were poured forth for the self-denial and sacrifice of Jesus; that He would consent to leave the bosom of His Father and choose a life of suffering and anguish, and die an ignominious death to give life to others.

 Said the angel, "Think ye that the Father yielded up His dearly beloved Son without a struggle? No, no. It was even a struggle with the God of heaven, whether to let guilty man perish, or to give His beloved Son to die for him." Angels were so interested for man's salvation that there could be found among them those who would yield their glory and give their life for perishing man, "But," said my accompanying angel, "that would avail nothing. The transgression was so great that an angel's life would not pay the debt. Nothing but the death and intercessions of His Son would pay the debt and save lost man from hopeless sorrow and misery."

 But the work of the angels was assigned them, to ascend and descend with strengthening balm from glory to soothe the Son of God in His sufferings and minister unto Him. Also, their work would be to guard and keep the subjects of grace from the evil angels and the darkness constantly thrown around them by Satan. I saw that it was impossible for God to alter or change His law to save lost, perishing man; therefore He suffered His beloved Son to die for man's transgression.

 Satan again rejoiced with his angels that he could, by causing man's fall, pull down the Son of God from His exalted position. He told his angels that when Jesus should take fallen man's nature, he could overpower Him and hinder the accomplishment of the plan of salvation.

 I was shown Satan as he once was, a happy, exalted angel. Then I was shown him as he now is. He still bears a kingly form. His features are still noble, for he is an angel fallen. But the expression of his countenance is full of anxiety, care, unhappiness, malice, hate, mischief, deceit, and every evil. That brow which was once so noble, I particularly noticed. His forehead commenced from his eyes to recede. I saw that he had so long bent himself to evil that every good quality was debased, and every evil trait was developed. His eyes were cunning, sly, and showed great penetration. His frame was large, but the flesh hung loosely about his hands and face. As I beheld him, his chin was resting upon his left hand. He appeared to be in deep thought. A smile was upon his countenance, which made me tremble, it was so full of evil and satanic slyness. This smile is the one he wears just before he makes sure of his victim, and as he fastens the victim in his snare, this smile grows horrible.

 In humility and inexpressible sadness Adam and Eve left the lovely garden wherein they had been so happy until they disobeyed the command of God. The atmosphere was changed. It was no longer unvarying as before the transgression. God clothed them with coats of skins to protect them from the sense of chilliness and then of heat to which they were exposed.

**God's Unchangeable Law**

 All heaven mourned on account of the disobedience and fall of Adam and Eve, which brought the wrath of God upon the whole human race. They were cut off from communing with God, and were plunged in hopeless misery. The law of God could not be changed to meet man's necessity, for in God's arrangement it was never to lose its force nor give up the smallest part of its claims.

 The angels of God were commissioned to visit the fallen pair and inform them that although they could no longer retain possession of their holy estate, their Eden home, because of their transgression of the law of God, yet their case was not altogether hopeless. They were then informed that the Son of God, who had conversed with them in Eden, had been moved with pity as He viewed their hopeless condition, and had volunteered to take upon Himself the punishment due to them, and die for them that man might yet live, through faith in the atonement Christ proposed to make for him. Through Christ a door of hope was opened, that man, notwithstanding his great sin, should not be under the absolute control of Satan. Faith in the merits of the Son of God would so elevate man that he could resist the devices of Satan. Probation would be granted him in which, through a life of repentance and faith in the atonement of the Son of God, he might be redeemed from his transgression of the Father's law, and thus be elevated to a position where his efforts to keep His law could be accepted.

 The angels related to them the grief that was felt in heaven as it was announced that they had transgressed the law of God, which had made it expedient for Christ to make the great sacrifice of His own precious life.

 When Adam and Eve realized how exalted and sacred was the law of God, the transgression of which made so costly a sacrifice necessary to save them and their posterity from utter ruin, they pleaded to die themselves, or to let them and their posterity endure the penalty of their transgression, rather than that the beloved Son of God should make this great sacrifice. The anguish of Adam was increased. He saw that his sins were of so great magnitude as to involve fearful consequences. And must it be that heaven's honored Commander, who had walked with him and talked with him while in his holy innocence, whom angels honored and worshiped, must be brought down from his exalted position to die because of his transgression?

 Adam was informed that an angel's life could not pay the debt. The law of Jehovah, the foundation of His government in heaven and upon earth, was as sacred as God Himself; and for this reason the life of an angel could not be accepted of God as a sacrifice for its transgression. His law is of more importance in His sight than the holy angels around His throne. The Father could not abolish or change one precept of His law to meet man in his fallen condition. But the Son of God, who had in unison with the Father created man, could make an atonement for man acceptable to God, by giving His life a sacrifice and bearing the wrath of His Father. Angels informed Adam that, as his transgression had brought death and wretchedness, life and immortality would be brought to light through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

**A View of the Future**

 To Adam were revealed future important events, from his expulsion from Eden to the Flood, and onward to the first advent of Christ upon the earth; His love for Adam and his posterity would lead the Son of God to condescend to take human nature, and thus elevate, through His own humiliation, all who would believe on Him. Such a sacrifice was of sufficient value to save the whole world; but only a few would avail themselves of the salvation brought to them through such a wonderful sacrifice. The many would not comply with the conditions required of them that they might be partakers of His great salvation. They would prefer sin and transgression of the law of God rather than repentance and obedience, relying by faith upon the merits of the sacrifice offered. This sacrifice was of such infinite value as to make a man who should avail himself of it more precious than fine gold, even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir

 Adam was carried down through successive generations and saw the increase of crime, of guilt and defilement, because man would yield to his naturally strong inclinations to transgress the holy law of God. He was shown the curse of God resting more and more heavily upon the human race, upon the cattle, and upon the earth, because of man's continued transgression. He was shown that iniquity and violence would steadily increase; yet amid all the tide of human misery and woe, there would ever be a few who would preserve the knowledge of God and would remain unsullied amid the prevailing moral degeneracy. Adam was made to comprehend what sin is--the transgression of the law. He was shown that moral, mental, and physical degeneracy would result to the race, from transgression, until the world would be filled with human misery of every type.

 The days of man were shortened by his own course of sin in transgressing the righteous law of God. The race was finally so greatly depreciated that they appeared inferior and almost valueless. They were generally incompetent to appreciate the mystery of Calvary, the grand and elevated facts of the atonement, and the plan of salvation, because of the indulgence of the carnal mind. Yet, notwithstanding the weakness, and enfeebled mental, moral, and physical powers of the human race, Christ, true to the purpose for which He left heaven, continues His interest in the feeble, depreciated, degenerate specimens of humanity, and invites them to hide their weakness and great deficiencies in Him. If they will come unto Him, He will supply all their needs.

**The Sacrificial Offering**

 When Adam, according to God's special directions, made an offering for sin, it was to him a most painful ceremony. His hand must be raised to take life, which God alone could give, and make an offering for sin. It was the first time he had witnessed death. As he looked upon the bleeding victim, writhing in the agonies of death, he was to look forward by faith to the Son of God, whom the victim prefigured, who was to die man's sacrifice.

 This ceremonial offering, ordained of God, was to be a perpetual reminder to Adam of his guilt, and also a penitential acknowledgment of his sin. This act of taking life gave Adam a deeper and more perfect sense of his transgression, which nothing less than the death of God's dear Son could expiate. He marveled at the infinite goodness and matchless love which would give such a ransom to save the guilty. As Adam was slaying the innocent victim, it seemed to him that he was shedding the blood of the Son of God by his own hand. He knew that if he had remained steadfast to God, and true to His holy law, there would have been no death of beast nor of man. Yet in the sacrificial offerings, pointing to the great and perfect offering of God's dear Son, there appeared a star of hope to illuminate the dark and terrible future, and relieve it of its utter hopelessness and ruin.

 In the beginning the head of each family was considered ruler and priest of his own household. Afterward, as the race multiplied upon the earth, men of divine appointment performed this solemn worship of sacrifice for the people. The blood of beasts was to be associated in the minds of sinners with the blood of the Son of God. The death of the victim was to evidence to all that the penalty of sin was death. By the act of sacrifice the sinner acknowledged his guilt and manifested his faith, looking forward to the great and perfect sacrifice of the Son of God, which the offering of beasts prefigured. Without the atonement of the Son of God there could be no communication of blessing or salvation from God to man. God was jealous for the honor of His law. The transgression of that law caused a fearful separation between God and man. To Adam in his innocency was granted communion, direct, free, and happy, with his Maker. After his transgression God would communicate to man through Christ and angels.

Next Mailing: Story of Redemption Chapter **6: Cain and Abel and Their Offerings**