

Death of Adam: Physical, Spiritual, or Both?

Ed Stevens – July 2019

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Introduction:

There are two major views on resurrection within the Preterist movement: the *Collective Body View* (CBV), and the *Individual Body View* (IBV). These two views part ways at the very beginning of the Bible in Genesis. The disagreement results from how each view defines the “death” that God threatened (and carried out) against Adam “on the very day” he sinned. The CBV defines it as a *spiritual-only* death, while the IBV defines it as a *comprehensive* death (including both physical and spiritual death).

The CBV affirms that the ONLY kind of death Adam died on the day he sinned was spiritual-only. They deny Adam died a physical death in any sense on the day he sinned.

However, the IBV affirms that Adam died both kinds of death on the day he sinned. Adam certainly died spiritually in the sense of “dead in his trespasses and sin” (Eph 2:1; Col 2:13). But that is not the whole story. We believe Adam and Eve also died physically when an innocent lamb was sacrificed on their behalf right there in the garden on the very day they sinned (**Gen 3:21**). They “died with” that lamb and “put on” its skins to cover their guilt and shame. That began the whole substitutionary sacrificial system which pointed straight to Jesus who was the ultimate fulfillment of that typology (Gal 3:13; 2Cor 5:21).

If that lamb had not died in their place *on that very day*, then Adam and Eve would have been struck dead on the spot when God showed up. But because the lamb died physically in their place, they left the garden in a forgiven condition, with their fellowship with God restored. Thus, in a substitutionary sacrificial sense, Adam and Eve DID die physically on that very day when the lamb died physically in their place. And this shows that Adam and Eve suffered both a spiritual and a physical death on the very day they sinned. And both deaths occurred right there in the garden before they were expelled.

The CBV denies that an innocent animal died physically as their *substitute* on the very day they sinned. They instead assert that the only sense in which Adam and Eve died on that day as a penalty for sin was *spiritual-only* (sin-death and alienation-death).

This is why we are providing both biblical evidence and sound argumentation to support the contention that the Death of Adam on the day he sinned was both physical and spiritual. This is why this paper is focused on explaining the meaning and implications of **Gen 3:21** –

“The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them” (Gen 3:21 NAS95).

This scripture is one of the most overlooked and misunderstood verses in Genesis. It is only one short sentence, but every word is pregnant with implications. The following pages provide an amazing compilation of quotes from commentaries, systematic theologies, journal articles, and study bible notes. We believe this material clearly and forcefully shows that Adam and Eve did die physically on that very day when they “died with” that lamb and “put on” its skin. And if that is true, it forever refutes the “spiritual-only death of Adam” foundational argument upon which the whole CBV view is built.

Note about the yellow and blue highlights in the following material:

Yellow highlights = important info to be aware of

Blue highlights = crucial arguments to take note of

Jewish and Rabbinical Commentary on Gen 2-3

Quoted from *The Commentators' Bible* on Genesis

Gen 2:16 – [Kimhi] **The LORD God commanded the man. Of every tree of the garden you are free to eat.** Or perhaps this is also a **commandment**. The Hebrew syntax might well mean **“you must certainly eat.”** The infinitive absolute combined with a finite verb from the same root is used for emphasis (e.g., Deut. 11:13, 22). This would mean that **the man was commanded to keep himself alive by eating what was permitted to him.** [Michael Carasik, Genesis, *The Commentators' Bible*; Accordance electronic ed. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2018), paragraph 705]

Gen 2:17 – [Ibn Ezra] **The tree of knowledge of good and bad.** He must have shown him where it was, since his wife knew that it was “in the middle of the garden” (3:3). **You must not eat of it.** Even though in general I gave you permission to eat from the trees in the garden. – “*Of it*” is redundant (see Old Jewish Publication Society 1917 translation) for the more literal translation that makes this clear), but language frequently employs redundancy (see the Hebrew of Exod. 2:6 for another such example). Or perhaps the implication is “You must not eat any of it.” You will find a complete analysis of the Hebrew word translated “of it” in my *Basic Hebrew Grammar (Sefer Ha-Yesod)*.

You must realize that the man was full of knowledge already at this point; the Holy One could not command someone who wasn't. ... Clearly, the fact that he gave names to each of the animals according to its nature (see v. 20) shows us that he was wise indeed. He must have been. The Holy One would not have brought all His creatures to see what the man would call them if He had known that he was stupid.

As soon as you eat of it. More literally, “*on the day that you eat of it*” (compare OJPS). Jonah ibn Janah thinks this “day” is the **1,000-year day of the Midrash** (see Kimhi's comment). Others explain that Adam died on a Friday, **the same day of the week on which he was created**. Still others understand not that the man would “die” on that day, but that **he would be liable to the death penalty**, or that he would merely be punished in some fashion (as in 2 Sam. 12:5 – David says there that the man who stole a lamb “is a dead man,” but he continues in v. 6, “He shall pay for the lamb four times over.”) I think God is saying, “On that day you will **begin to die**” – you will have attained your full strength and will then **begin to decline**. Or perhaps it is simply, as tradition says, that **the man repented of his sin**. As the Holy One told Jeremiah, “At one moment I may decree that a nation or a kingdom shall be uprooted and pulled down and destroyed; but if that nation against which I made the decree turns back from its wickedness, **I change My mind concerning the punishment I planned to bring on it**” (Jer. 18:7–8).

Gen 2:17 – [Kimhi] **As for the tree of knowledge of good and bad.** Literally, “*of the tree*” (OJPS), perhaps redundantly for emphasis. One might say that death was what Adam will be cursed with in ch. 3, taking “bad” as death and “good” as life. The [Jewish] commentators take “knowledge of good and bad” to refer to knowledge of sex, since this fruit [supposedly] aroused lust. ... They understood the difference between good and bad in general perfectly well before eating the fruit ... **You must not eat of it.** Literally, “*from it*,” so if the two *of*'s are not redundant this phrase would mean “you must not eat of what comes from it” – the fruit. **Notice that he was not commanded not to eat of the tree of life. It was one of the trees of which he was “free to eat” (v. 16).** **As soon as you eat of it.** Literally, on “the day” you eat of it (OJPS).

As our Sages explain, the Holy One's "day" lasts 1,000 of our years, and Adam died at the age of 930, leaving 70 years for the lifespan of his descendants in future generations: "the span of our life is seventy years" (Ps. 90:10). **You shall die.** Rather, "your death will be decreed to come sooner than would otherwise be appropriate for you."

Gen 2:17 – [Nahmanides] **You must not eat of it.** Of its fruit (see 3:3), that is, not of the tree, which was not edible. Both 3:17 and 2 Kings 18:31 use the same figure of speech. **As soon as you eat of it, you shall die.** That is, "you will have committed a **capital crime.**" It does not mean that he would literally die on that "day" (OJPS), nor that he would suddenly know that he was going to die (which the living all know). Rather, like Shimei in 1 Kings 2:42, **he would have earned death, and he would be executed at the king's pleasure.** The same applies to "let them not go inside and witness the dismantling of the sanctuary, lest they die" (Num. 4:20) and "lest they incur guilt thereby and die for it" (Lev. 22:9). The natural philosophers tell us that the man was **destined for ultimate death from the start** because he was compounded of several elements together. Now, however, it was decreed that if he should sin, he would **die for his sin,** at the hands of heaven, just as does anyone who violates the various other commandments that fall into this category—officiating in the Temple while drunk and the like. All such people **die before their time.** "For dust you are [by nature], and to dust you shall return" (3:19). Since previous to the command he did have to eat, the philosophers say, he was certainly already in the realm of growth and decay. But the Sages say that **if he had not sinned, he would have never died,** for the (higher) *neshamah* provides **eternal life.** Certainly the divine will that was put in him when he was formed would have cleaved to him permanently and **kept him alive forever.** See once more my comment to "God saw that the light was good" (1:4). Moreover, you should understand that only those of little faith, who believe that creation is the inevitable result of natural law, think that being of compound nature implies impermanence. Believers, who think that the world was created by the will of a "simple" (i.e., non-composite) God, understand that it will continue to exist as long as that will exists, and this is clearly true. **So "as soon as you eat of it, you shall die" means "when you eat of it, your continued existence will no longer be My will."** Eating in general, therefore, was originally simply for pleasure. **Perhaps, though, the fruit of the garden of Eden did keep those who ate it alive, but (like manna) was completely digestible, leaving no waste to be excreted.** In that case, the change in diet with which they were punished in 3:18-19 would have created the condition of "dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (3:19).

Gen 3:22 – [Kimhi] **What if he should stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life? This was not originally forbidden to him. He was not commanded not to eat of the tree of life. It was one of the trees of which he was "free to eat" (Gen 2:16).** Now, however, he had been cursed with **dying before his time,** and he had to be expelled from the garden because otherwise he might **eat of this tree and lengthen his life.** By "also" God meant: "If I leave him in the garden, even if I now command him not to eat from this tree, he will violate My commandment just as he did with the other tree."

Gen 4:3 – [Kimhi] **In the course of time.** It does not say how much time, but the Hebrew expression—literally "days"—is sometimes used to indicate a year. **Cain brought an offering to the LORD from the fruit of the soil. After a year of tilling the soil, Cain brought an offering to the place that Adam had fixed for prayer and sacrifices, which he performed**

along with his sons. For Adam too brought offerings, both fruits of the soil and sheep and cattle, as a way of thanking God. Though the text says nothing of this, our Sages do describe it. His sons learned from him what to do, and each brought an offering of thanks to God from what his particular line of work had produced. Our verse does not say what particular kind of plant Cain's offering was, but apparently it was of a lesser grade, or perhaps it was what was left after he himself had eaten—in either case, somewhat insulting. That is why his offering was not accepted. He also did not bring the “first” fruits, because the text would have told us so, as it does with Abel. The midrash claims it was flax, and that the prohibition against a garment “combining wool and linen” (Deut. 22:11) is to keep what Cain offered from mixing with what Abel offered.

Gen 4:4 – [Rashi] **The LORD paid heed.** He “turned” to it; similarly in v. 5, He “did not turn” to it. See “*they shall not turn* to the altars that their own hands made” (Isa. 17:8); “*Turn away from him*” (Job 14:6). **What actually happened was that fire came down from heaven and licked up his offering.**

Gen 4:4 – [Ibn Ezra] **Abel, for his part, brought the choicest of the firstlings of his flock.** It stands to reason that we are being told this to imply that Cain did not bring the first fruits as his offering. **The LORD paid heed.** That is, **He accepted the offering.** “*Let me be*” (Isa. 22:4, using the same verb) expressly demonstrates the idea behind sacrifices: **The animal's death substitutes for that of the person making the offering.** **Possibly fire came down from heaven and consumed Abel's offering but not Cain's.**

Gen 4:4 – [Kimhi] **Abel, for his part, brought.** Whether before or after Cain. If before, saying that he “also” brought (OJPS) follows the narrative, not the chronology. **The choicest of the firstlings of his flock.** Out of respect. This way, God would benefit from them before he himself did. The “choicest” are the fattest (see OJPS). **The text does not tell us whether or not he built an altar as Noah did (see 8:20). I imagine he did not slaughter it, but laid it, alive and bound, on the prearranged spot so that fire could come down from heaven and consume it, as had happened with his father's offerings.** Again, they did not slaughter animals because they did not eat meat. So if he really offered only the fat, as some of the Sages think, he must have left the rest for animals and birds to eat. But I lean toward the opinion that **they were whole offerings.** **The LORD paid heed to Abel and his offering. He accepted the offering, because Abel's intentions were good.**

Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (ACCS) – Gen 2-3

Gen 2:16 – [Athanasius, AD 325-373] Knowing once more how the will of man could sway to either side, in anticipation God secured the grace given them by a command and by the place where he put them. For he brought them into his own garden and gave them a law so that, if they kept the grace and remained good, they might still keep the life in paradise without sorrow or pain or care, besides having **the promise of incorruption in heaven.** But if they transgressed and turned back and became evil, they might know that they were incurring that **corruption in death** that was theirs by nature, **no longer to live in paradise but cast out of it** from that time forth to die and **abide in death and corruption.** [Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* 3.4. NPNF 2 4:37–38. Genesis 1–11, ACCS vol. 1, 61-62]

Gen 2:17 – [Augustine, AD 354-430] God, referring to the forbidden fruit, said to the first man whom he had established in paradise: “In the day that you shall eat of it, you shall **die the death.**” His threat included not only the **first part of the first death**, that is, the **soul’s deprivation of God**; not only the **second part of the first death**, that is, the **body’s deprivation of the soul**; not only the **whole of the first death** in which the soul, separated from both God and the body, is punished; but **whatever of death is up to and including that absolutely final and so-called second death** ... in which the soul, deprived of God but united to the body, suffers **eternal punishment**. [Augustine, *City of God* 13.12. *FC* 14:315–16*. Genesis 1–11, *ACCS* vol. 1, 62]

Gen 3:1-3 – [Ambrose, AD 374-397] The Devil Took Advantage of the Woman. [The Devil] aimed to circumvent Adam by means of the woman. He did not accost the man who had in his presence received the heavenly command. He accosted her who had learned of it from her husband and who had not received from God the command which was to be observed. There is no statement that God spoke to the woman. We know that he spoke to Adam. Hence we must conclude that **the command was communicated through Adam to the woman**. [Ambrose, *Paradise* 12. *FC* 42:333. Genesis 1–11, *ACCS* vol. 1, 76]

Gen 3:6 – [Augustine, AD 354-430] The Rebellion Began in the Soul. In paradise, rebellion certainly **began in the soul**. There began the process of giving consent to breaking the commandment. This is why the serpent said, “You shall be as gods.” But **the whole man committed the sin**. It was then that **the flesh was made sinful flesh**, whose faults could be **healed only by the One who came in the likeness of sinful flesh**. [Augustine, *Against Julian* 5.4.17. *FC* 35:261*. Genesis 1–11, *ACCS* vol. 1, 77].

Gen 3:6 – [Ephrem the Syrian, AD 363-373] Surpassing Adam’s Headship. She hastened to eat before her husband that she might **become head over her head**, that she might become the one to give command to that one by whom she was to be commanded and **that she might be older in divinity than that one who was older than she in humanity**. [Ephrem the Syrian, *Commentary on Genesis* 2.20.3. *FC* 91:113. Genesis 1–11, *ACCS* vol. 1, 78].

Gen 3:7 and Gen 3:21 – [Irenaeus, AD 135-202] Their Clothing. Now “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”¹⁴ The understanding of transgression leads to penitence, and God extends his kindness to those who repent. **For [Adam] showed his repentance in making a girdle, covering himself with fig leaves**, when there were many other trees that would have irritated his body less. He, however, in awe of God, made a clothing that matched his disobedience.... **And he would no doubt have kept this clothing forever, if God in his mercy had not clothed them with tunics of skin instead of fig leaves**. [Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.23.5. 15 *LQAH* 2:128. Genesis 1–11, *ACCS* vol. 1, 82]

Gen 3:21 – [Ephrem the Syrian] Were these garments from the skins of animals? Or were they created like the thistles and thorns that were created after the other works of creation had been completed? Because it was said that the “Lord made ... and clothed them,” it seems most likely that when their hands were placed over their leaves they found themselves clothed in garments of skin. Why would beasts have been **killed in their presence**? Perhaps this happened so that by the animal’s flesh Adam and Eve might nourish their own bodies and that with the skins they

might cover their nakedness, but also that **by the death of the animals Adam and Eve might see the death of their own bodies.** *Commentary on Genesis 2.33.1.* [Andrew Louth, Marco Conti, and Thomas C. Oden, eds., Genesis 1–11, ACCS 1; ICCS/Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 98.]

Gen 3:8 – [Ed’s Comment] Note that God came to them “in the cool of the day” which was in the late afternoon during the last hours of daylight near the “End of the Day.” The purpose of His coming was to bring them to account, to seek their confession and repentance. The time of this court session was in the last hours of the daylight, at the End of the Day. It was evidently His normal time of meeting with them and communing with them on a daily or weekly basis, since Adam and Eve covered their nakedness in anticipation of His arrival. But this day was different. The appointed time of communion became instead a time of judgment (rebuke, admonition, repentance, promise of deliverance). And it pre-figured the appointed time of judgment which would come at the End of Days (AD 70) when all the dead would be raised out of Hades and judged.

Gen 3:21 – [Ed’s Comment] Other than the two quotes listed above, *ACCS* does not provide very much useful information from the church fathers here on Gen 3:21. Instead, it was mostly speculation, showing that they did not see the redemptive significance and typology of the garments of skin. Some of them even thought that the garments of skin were made ugly and uncomfortable by God’s design in order to heap shame upon Adam and Eve and increase their suffering. But that is not characteristic of God’s care for his human creation. *Philo* (contemporary of Paul) noted that the skins of a ram (male lamb) provide very beautiful and protective garments (*Deca 77*; cf. *Laws 1:188; 1:237; 3Gen 3*). And it covers their nakedness much better and much longer than fig leaves could ever do. Plus, the garments of skin pointed to the son of Eve who would come to vicariously die on our behalf to provide his garments of righteousness to cover our sin guilt.

Comprehensive Cross References to Gen 3:21 –

Pseudepigrapha, **Jubilees 3:26**; Philo, **Questions And Answers On Genesis I (53)**; **Ambrose**, Concerning Repentance - Book 2.99; **Gregory of Nyssa**, Funeral Oration on Miletus; **Jerome**, Letter 051 - From **Epiphanius** Bishop of Salamis to John Bishop of Jerusalem.5, Letter 128 - To Gaudentius.3; **Clement of Alexandria**, *Stromata* Book 3.14; **Methodius**, Discourse on the Resurrection 1.2; **Tertullian**, On the Apparel of Women Book 1.1. [T. E. Clontz and J. Clontz, *The Comprehensive Bible: Complete Cross Reference Index*, Accordance electronic ed. (Clewiston: Cornerstone Publications, 2008), paragraph 218.]

Gen 3:22 – [Ephrem the Syrian] **God Prevents Adam from Eating of the Tree of Life:** If Adam had rashly eaten from the tree of knowledge he was commanded not to eat, how much faster would he hasten to the tree of life about which he had not been so commanded? But it was now decreed that they should live in toil, in sweat, in pains and in pangs. **Therefore, lest Adam and Eve, after having eaten of this tree, live forever and remain in eternal lives of suffering, God forbade them to eat, after they were clothed with a curse, that which he had been prepared to give them before they incurred the curse and when they were still clothed with glory.** *ACCS* Commentary on Genesis 3:22. Genesis 1–11, *ACCS* vol. 1.

Reformation Commentary on Scripture (RCS) – Gen 2-3

Gen 2:17 – [Andrew Willet, 1562-1621] The first question here is, what death God threatened to Adam, whether the death only of the body, or the soul, or of both. **We do not think that only the spiritual death of the soul is signified here, whereby the soul is separated by sin from God** (*Philo, Eucherius*), for we see that the Lord himself threatened **the death of the body to Adam** in Genesis 3:19: “You are dust, and to dust you shall return.” **Neither is the death of only the body here implied, as some have thought, but the death of the soul by sin also,** which brings forth the death of the body, as the apostle shows in Romans 5:12... **There was first sin in the soul, before there followed death in the body.** We also do not think that **everlasting death** is here excluded (*Pererius*), for the apostle says, “We were by nature the children of death, as were others” (Eph 2:3); and if by Adam’s transgression we were the children of wrath, how much more was he who made us so? And if by sinning Adam did not make himself guilty of **eternal death**, why was the promise made unto him immediately upon his fall of **the Messiah** (Gen 3:15), **whose office is to redeem us from sin and everlasting damnation?** We therefore think with **Augustine**, that by death here is understood whatsoever death, whether of the soul or body, temporal or eternal. For **Augustine** defines **four kinds of death**: the temporal death of the soul, when it is for a time separated from God by sin; the eternal death of the soul, when it is separated from the body; the temporal death of the body, when it is separated from the soul; and the eternal death of the body in hell. So Adam first died in his soul, by losing his innocence; he died in body, returning to dust; and he was also subject to everlasting death both of body and soul—but from that he was redeemed by Christ. *Commentary on Genesis 2:17* [John L. Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1, 93-94].

Gen 2:17 – [John Calvin, 1509-1564] “DEATH” MEANT A LIFE OF MISERY UNDER THE TYRANNY OF SIN: **What kind of death** does God mean in this place? It seems to me that a definition is to be sought from its opposite, by which I mean that it is to be inferred from **the kind of life that was lost**. They were, in every respect, happy: their life therefore looked after body and soul alike, for right judgment flourished in their souls along with a proper moderation of the affections, for life also reigned there. In their bodies there was **no defect**, so that they were **wholly immune to death**. **Their earthly life would have been temporary, of course, but they would have passed into heaven without dying and without injury.** Death is therefore now a terror to us: first, because it is a kind of annihilation for the body; then, because the soul perceives the curse of God. We must also consider what the cause of death is, namely, **alienation from God**. From this it follows that **this word death includes all the miseries** in which Adam involved himself by his defection. Indeed, as soon as he revolted from God, the fountain of life, he was cast down from his former state, in order that he might perceive that **human life without God is wretched and lost, and is therefore no different than death**. Thus, their condition after their sin is not improperly called both **death and the absence of life**. The **miseries and evils** of both body and soul, with which they will be beset so long as they remain on earth, are a kind of **entryway into death, till death itself entirely engulfs them**. Indeed, Scripture everywhere names as “dead” all those who are oppressed by the tyranny of sin and Satan and who breathe nothing but their own destruction. **So the question is superfluous as to how it was that God threatened Adam with death on the day when he touched the fruit, when the punishment was deferred for so long, for at that moment Adam was consigned to death and death began its reign in him, until grace should arrive and bring a cure.** [John Calvin. *Commentary*

on Genesis 2:16-17. CTS 1:127–28* (CO 23:45–46). Found in Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1, 94].

Gen 2:17 – [Cardinal Cajetan, 1539] **Death is Both Natural and a Punishment**: Note well that we do not say that human beings, before they had sinned, were immortal (because **death is natural** to human beings as a necessary consequence of their materiality). Rather, we say that **they would have been preserved from death as a divine gift**—of which gift human beings were deprived on account of their sin of disobedience. For this reason, death, which was utterly natural to humankind, is **also a punishment** brought about by the sin of the first humans. Commentary on Genesis 2:17 [Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1, p. 95 (Cardinal Cajetan, *Commentarii illustres*, 1539, p. 23)]. [Note from Ed: This guy did not take Genesis 1-3 as historically literal.]

Gen 2:17 [Kenneth A. Mathews, *New American Commentary*] – Out of God’s goodness and mercy he informs the man that **the consequence of disobedience is death**; what is at stake is whether he will choose to trust God’s words. There is no suggestion from the passage, as is assumed by some, that Adam was **created immortal** but subsequently forfeited immortality by his sin. There is a difference between man’s creation, in which he receives life by the divine inbreathing (2:7), and the **perpetuation of that life gained by appropriating the tree of life** (cf. 3:22). **Immortality is the trait of deity alone** (1 Tim 6:16). Calvin rightly noted that without sin Adam’s “earthly life truly would have been temporal; yet he would have **passed into heaven without death, and without injury,**” thereby receiving eternal life. **Perpetuating or renewing earthly life was possible through the “tree of life” (v. 9), but once sin was committed, the sanction of disobedience necessarily meant the man and woman’s expulsion from the garden and its tree of life (3:22–24).** [Kenneth A. Mathews, Genesis 1:1–11:26, *New American Commentary* 1A; ed. E. Ray Clendenen and Kenneth A. Mathews; Accordance electronic ed. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 211-212]

Gen 2:17 – [John Gill commentary on Genesis] “*for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die; or “in dying, die”* [Footnote: Hebrew, *mot tamut*, see Pagninus, Montanus, et al]; which denotes **the certainty of it**, as our version expresses it; and **may have regard to more deaths than one**; not only a **corporeal death**, which **in some sense immediately took place**, man became at once a **mortal creature**, who otherwise continuing in a state of innocence, and by eating of the tree of life, he was allowed to do, **would have lived an immortal life**; of the eating of which tree, by sinning he was debarred, his natural life not now to be continued long, at least not for ever; he was immediately arraigned, tried, and condemned to death, was found guilty of it, and became obnoxious to it, and **death at once began to work in him**; sin sowed the seeds of it in his body, and a train of miseries, afflictions, and diseases, began to appear, which **at length issued in death**. Moreover, a **spiritual or moral death** immediately ensued; he **lost his original righteousness**, in which he was created; the **image of God in him was deformed**; the powers and **faculties of his soul were corrupted**, and he became **dead in sins and trespasses**; the consequence of which, had it not been for the **interposition of a surety and Saviour**, who engaged to **make satisfaction** to law and justice, must have been **eternal death**, or an **everlasting separation from God, to him and all his posterity**; for the wages of sin is death, even **death eternal**, Rom. 6:23. So the Jews interpret this of death, both in this world and

in the world to come [Footnote: *Tikkune Zohar*, correct. 24. fol. 68.1. correct. 54. fol. 90.2. correct. 66. fol. 100.1].

Gen 2:21 – [Martin Luther, AD 1483-1546] **Transformation or Change in a State of Innocence:** But the sleep of Adam – so sound that he was not aware of what was being done to him – is a picture, as it were, of **the transformation which would have taken place in the state of innocence. The righteous nature would have experienced no death but would have lived in the utmost joy, in obedience to God, and in admiration of the works of God until the time of the change had arrived.** [Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1, 101.

Note from the editor (John L. Thompson) of the *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*: [In all this discussion among the various Reformation writers about Genesis 1-3] it is often **difficult to discern a single Protestant party line.** Not only is there frequently **no consensus**, there are also outright disputes. Anabaptists dissent from Reformed writers over the nature of free will after the Fall; **Protestants analyze the first sin with different results;** John Calvin regularly insinuates a tacit critique of Martin Luther, whom he read closely. Some even changed their minds from one commentary to another (as did Wolfgang Musculus, on Eve). [Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1, 115]

Gen 3:15 – [Martin Luther, AD 1483-1546] Adam and Eve are not cursed like the Serpent: For Adam and Eve not only do not hear themselves cursed like the serpent; but they even **hear themselves drawn up, as it were, in battle line against their condemned enemy, and this with the hope of help from the Son of God,** the Seed of the woman. **Forgiveness** of sins and full reception into grace are here pointed out to Adam and Eve. Their guilt has been **forgiven;** they have been **won back from death** and have already been **set free from hell** and from those fears by which they were **all but slain when God appeared.** *Lectures on Genesis* 3:15. [Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1, 157].

Gen 3:15 – [Huldrych Zwingli, AD 1484-1531] **The Serpent is fittingly overthrown by the woman's seed:** The serpent's head was not crushed by the woman but rather by her seed, namely, Christ...The mystery here lies deeply hidden. For what was so great if there was hostility or treachery between the woman and the serpent? Here, already from the beginning, **deliverance is promised**, as well as that blessed seed through whom all the nations would be blessed. The sense of God's word is, **"through a woman you seduced, through a woman you will succumb.** Indeed, since **you saw woman (speaking by extension of the whole sex) as a suitable means for carrying out your tricks and plotting, however weak she may be, however foolish and susceptible to your tricks, she will nonetheless bring forth the seed that will crush your head."** . . . For the devil is the prince of this world, under whose tyranny and power we were all taken captive, until that blessed seed should be born from the woman, Christ Jesus our Lord. *Annotations on Genesis* 3:15. [Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1, 159-160]

Gen 3:15 – [Andrew Willet] **THE FAITH OF ADAM AND EVE FALTERED BUT WAS NOT WHOLLY EXTINGUISHED:** Whereas we say that all sins are venial to the faithful and elect, Bellarmine replies that Adam committed a mortal and damnable sin, because it was said unto

him, “in the day you eat of it, you shall die the death.” But we say that though this sin was damnable in its own nature, yet **by God’s grace through Christ it was made venial and pardonable to Adam – unless Bellarmine would say, with the heretic Tatian, that Adam was damned.** By this text he would also prove that Adam and Eve lost their faith, because they did not believe the sentence of God that they should die if they transgressed the commandment. However, this proves that they failed in faith, but not that their faith was utterly lost and extinguished: **for if Adam had no faith remaining, to what purpose should God have propounded the promise of the Messiah to a faithless man?** COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 2. [Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1, 162]

Gen 3:16 – [Johannes Brenz, 1499-1570] WHY THE PUNISHMENTS ENDURE: If Adam and his wife are now **justified by faith** from hearing the gospel and **absolved of their sins**, why are they still punished? Why doesn’t God suspend the punishment he imposed on Adam as much as on the woman? **There is no doubt but that if Adam and his wife had died immediately after having believed the gospel about the virgin’s son, they would have reached the heavenly kingdom. Why therefore are they afflicted?**

There are the weightiest of reasons for this. It should not be thought that the punishments that follow and are divinely imposed on them are inflicted so that by them their sins would find atonement before God. **In God’s sight, there is no other expiation of sin than the passion and death of the son of the virgin: an expiation that Adam had already accepted by faith.** But there are other reasons. First, after they received the remission of sin, God imposed on them a cross or affliction, so that it would be a memorial of the sin committed in paradise, and of the sermon that he promptly spoke to Satan about how he was perpetually cursed and how his head would be crushed by the virgin’s son. Indeed, even as we are ungrateful, so also are we forgetful, so that even if great blessings are bestowed on us, we do not easily remember. So, it seemed good to God to afflict humans after they had been forgiven for their sin, so that in just that way they would be admonished and reminded of what happened in paradise, and they would naturally show their thanks to God that while they deserved to be perpetually damned, they were **nonetheless freed by God’s mercy through the virgin’s son.** Second, he imposes a **corporal punishment**, the **eternal one having been remitted**, so that it would be an **example to posterity**, lest they suppose that God is pleased by disobedience and sin, and so **be warned against sinning**... In addition, also after the remission of sins had been received, God imposes adversities on them to bear in order to **restrain the remnants of the flesh** that still inhere in them. Just as by doing nothing, so also **by suffering nothing do people learn to conduct themselves wickedly.** Therefore, a person **bears the cross in order to remain dutiful amidst adversities**, for in prosperity we are inclined to neglect our duty. Finally, the Lord imposes a cross on them in this world **so that he might train them to desire the happiness of the world to come and the heavenly kingdom.** Commentary on Genesis 3:16. [Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1, 172]

Gen 3:19 – [John Calvin] DEATH IS UNNATURAL AND DREADFUL: Now, after he had been stripped of his divine and heavenly excellence, what remains in the face of his life’s exit but that he should realize that he himself is earth? **This is why we dread death: because the dissolution [of body and soul] is contrary to nature, it cannot naturally be desired. Truly, the first man would have passed over to a better life if had he remained upright, but in that case the soul would not have departed from the body, and there would have been no**

corruption, no form of destruction—in short, no violent change. Commentary on Genesis 3:19. [Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1, 170]

Gen 3:20 – [Martin Luther] **“EVE” IS A SIGN OF ADAM’S HOPE**: If Adam had not been **aware of the future life**, he would not have been able to cheer his heart; nor would he have assigned so pleasing a name to his wife. But by assigning this name to his wife he gives clear indication that the Holy Spirit had cheered his heart through **his trust in the forgiveness of sins by the Seed of Eve**. He calls her Eve to remind himself of **the promise through which he himself also received new life**, and to **pass on the hope of eternal life to his descendants**. This hope and faith he writes on his wife’s forehead by means of this name as with colors, just as those who are freed from their enemies set up trophies and other marks of their joy. Lectures on Genesis 3:20. [Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1, 173]

Gen 3:21 – [Konrad Pellikan] *Skins Told of God’s Care and Human Mortality*: God’s mercy did not desist from doing kindness, even clothing the sinners with garments of skins, which I think is to be understood simply, as a kindness not unworthy of the Creator, no more than his production of other things. It is as if he were to say, “You provided imprudently for yourselves. I will show you a **more suitable means of clothing** from the hides of certain animals, whence you may be **reminded of your own mortality**. These are prepared without much trouble, unlike linen, wool or silk.” *Commentary on Genesis* 3:21. [Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1]

Gen 3:21 – [Martin Luther] *Skins as Reminders of the Fall*: Whenever they looked at their garments, these were to serve as a **reminder to them to give thought to their wretched fall** from supreme happiness into the utmost misfortune and trouble. Thus they were to be **constantly afraid of sinning, to repent continually, and to sigh for the forgiveness of sins through the promised Seed**. This is also why He clothed them, not in foliage or in cotton but in the **skins of slain animals**, for a **sign that they are mortal** and that **they are living in certain death**. Therefore just as the name Eve is a joyous omen of life, so these skins are a reminder not only of past and future sin, but also of their present misfortunes, which their sins deserve. *Lectures on Genesis* 3:21. [Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1.]

Gen 3:21 – [Johannes Brenz] *Skins Were God’s Sacramental Gift to His Children*: God does not leave them without a **sign of his favor**. Indeed, after he sees that Adam and Eve had **listened** with all diligence to the proclamation of the gospel about the seed of the woman, and that **faith** had been begotten from it along with peace of conscience, he added **something like a sacrament**—garments made from animal skins...God clothed them so that by this **sign or sacrament** he might **attest that he had received them in grace** and **would care for their salvation, guarding and preserving them**. It’s just like when parents declare their favor toward their children by promising and procuring new and different garments to clothe them. How wonderfully the children jump about, how they wave their hands and clap for their parents, even if the garments be made from common cloth! Likewise, when Adam and Eve were clothed by God with new garments, they too would have shown remarkable delight, for by this sign they would have **realized the immense charity of God the Father toward them** and would have **strengthened their faith** against every misfortune that might happen to them. Our sacraments

are established for this same purpose, so that by them we too might **strengthen our faith**.
Commentary on Genesis 3:21. [Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1.]

Gen 3:21 – [Peter Martyr Vermigli] *Clothing Signals God’s Compassion for Sinners*: Clothes are a **symbol of our sin and God’s mercy**. If God bestows clothing on those whom he condemns and keeps them warm, it behooves judges to encourage those whom they condemn by showing some human kindness, by which they may endure their punishment more easily. God lavishes upon us not only his goods but also their use—and so **he does not merely provide the clothing, but he actually clothes them**. From this you ought to deduce, allegorically, that the clothing given to us by God can cover our nakedness, that is, strengthen our conscience so it does not shrink from the sight of God. Even though **this clothing calls to mind a dead animal**, bear in mind that **Christ, having suffered on our behalf, truly covers our sins**. This clothing is given by God, because by faith **we obtain that which is God’s gift and not from ourselves**. But our works, like fig leaves, strengthen us not the least bit in order to withstand the sight of God. Someday, **this clothing given to us by God will be changed**, because at present, as long as we live under the cross and share in the death of Christ, it has a vile appearance. But when we come to be **sharers in Christ’s resurrection in reality and no longer merely in hope, the clothing which now seems filthy will be made so glorious as to be called a wedding garment**.
Commentary on Genesis 3:21. [Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1.]

Gen 3:21 – [Dirk Philips] *Coats of Skins Promised a Future Covering with Christ’s Righteousness*: Humanity has become wretched, poor, and naked through Adam and is thus born out of him. Over against this, Christ Jesus is the garment of righteousness, yes, **the innocent and unblemished Lamb of God with which every believing and baptized Christian is clothed**. But how this comes to pass is **portrayed for us in Adam and Eve**. That is, that Adam and Eve before the fall in Paradise were innocent, upright, and naked, and needed no garment, for they were of a good nature, without falsehood, and knew no evil. Yes, they were made after the image and likeness of God and were created for eternal life. The pious nature which was imaged in them by God was the garment with which **they were gloriously clothed**. But as soon as they had eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, against the command of God, they recognized their nakedness, felt shame, and made a cover of fig leaves. However, they could not find cover nor hide from God but had to **stand red with shame before the Lord** on account of their transgression, and therefore suffer and bear his punishment. Nevertheless, he did not leave them comfortless but comforted them overall with his boundless mercy, inwardly with the **promise of Christ**, outwardly with **bodily attire**. For God had promised Christ Jesus to them as a **Redeemer and conqueror of the serpent**. As a **true sign of this**, he gave them **coats of skin** with which to clothe themselves as a witness that Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God, would **cover and take away the sin of Adam and of the whole world, and that all believers should be clothed with him**. *Enchiridion*. [Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1.]

Gen 3:21 – [Andrew Willet] *The Skins Have a Moral*:

It pleased God to clothe them ... to show them how their mortal bodies might be **defended from cold and other injuries**, for this use of skin or leather clothing was the first used in the world; to **cover their nakedness for the sake of modesty** (and therefore the Chaldee paraphrast calls them “garments of honor”); ... so that they might **know the difference between God’s works and man’s invention**, between coats of leather and fig leaves; and **to put them in mind**

of mortality by their clothing of dead beasts' skins, as Origen well notes. *Commentary on Genesis 3:21*. [Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1.]

Gen 3:22 – [Konrad Pellikan, AD 1478-1556] **GOD'S IRONY MASKS COMPASSION**: This seems ironic: he upbraids him for his folly and rashness, as if to say, “See how much Adam has accomplished, for he already sees evil and good. Now, then, **so he will at least not live in that misery forever, let us prohibit access to the tree of life, lest he presume to take from it as well and live always in everlasting torment.**” *Commentary on Genesis 3:22*. [Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1.]

Gen 3:22 – [David Chytraeus, AD 1531-1600] **God's Reproach Was Not Envious or Bitter But Strategic and Compassionate**: The reproach is indirect but nonetheless sorrowful and emphatic. Accordingly, it was uttered by God not only for that time, when he was **about to expel them from paradise**, so that it would be a penitential sermon about admitting that enormous ingratitude by which they had **desired to be equal to God**; but mainly so that it would be an **admonition to later generations about avoiding the devil's snares and lies**. Indeed, it was God's strategy to repeat the very words of that liar and murderer in this reproach, so that the cause and occasion for Adam's incurring so many and such great calamities would **remain fixed in his mind**—namely, that they allowed themselves to be led away from God's word, yielded to the devil's lies and **sought equality with God**. Therefore, not only from this rebuke but also from the mass of punishments that followed, Adam and all his offspring **ought to learn that this is the height of wisdom: to adhere and rely constantly on God's word.**

Nor are God's words born of envy or cruelly meant to insult Adam in his wretchedness. Rather, they are the impassioned words of the Son of God, who shows that he is moved with feeling and sympathy for Adam's immense distress, as if he were to say, “Oh, Adam, how miserably you have been deceived by the devil, who promised you equality with God and the highest degree of God's image and wisdom! **Now you are cast out of paradise and have lost not only your previous gifts but also eternal life, which you could have retained by eating from the tree of life. And yet you will be like God, eventually, when your body, purged by the cross and by death, will be renewed, just as 1 John 3 says, “When he appears, we will be like him.”**” *Commentary on Genesis 3:22*. [Thompson, ed., *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, vol. 1.]

Modern Commentaries on Gen 2-3

Gen 3:20-21 [Kenneth A. Mathews, *New American Commentary*] –

Following the lengthy pronouncement of judgment, **two events signal a continuing hope for the couple** – a hope that ironically the ominous verdicts themselves had contained. The first event is **Adam's naming of his wife “Eve”** (v. 20), and the second is **God's provision of animal skins for garments** (v. 21). The two events indicate that the couple will survive through the gracious intervention of God.

The name *hawwâ*, meaning “living,” is traditionally rendered “Eve,” following the Greek translation *Zōē* (“Life”; v. 20). Her name occurs sparsely in Scripture (Gen 4:1; 2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:13; also *Tob 8:6*). Hebrew *hawwâ* is phonetically related to the word *hay* (“living”); thus by a phonetic play, Adam explains why she is named Eve. She is the “mother of all living,” for all human life will have its source in her body. This assumes a prodigious posterity, and it is a

tribute to Adam's faith in the prospect that God had revealed (vv. 15–16). Adam had learned, albeit through the most calamitous lesson, to accept God's word in faithful obedience. Another implication of Adam's naming the woman is his exercise of responsible headship (cf. 2:23). Before and after the fall, the man is exercising the same prerogative of naming. In the former case he is her source of life, and by naming her "woman" (*'iššâ*) he acknowledges her companionship, but here he admits his indebtedness to her for life's future.

Following **Adam's act of faith**, the Lord acts immediately in behalf of the vulnerable couple by providing adequate protection to cover their embarrassment and to preserve them in the new hostile environment to which they will be banished (v. 21; cf. vv. 7, 18, 23). In the same way that the woman's pain at birth is a reminder of their disobedience, their clothing confirms that they have sinned against God and that no longer can they walk before deity in innocence (2:25). The language of the verse alludes to tabernacle setting and worship. "Garments" (*küttōnet*) and "clothed" (*lābaš*) are reminiscent of the Pentateuch's description of priestly garments, particularly for Aaron as high priest (e.g., for "garments," Exod 28:4, 39–40; 29:5, 8; 39:27; 40:14; Lev 8:7, 13; 10:5; 16:4; also Ezra 2:69; Neh 7:70[69], 72[71]; for "clothed," e.g., Exod 28:41; 29:8; 40:14; Lev 8:13.). This is another lexical link with the symbols of the tabernacle, where **the priest must be properly clothed before God in the administration of his service** (Exod 20:26; 28:42). But Aaron's priestly garb was woven of colored yarn and fine linen, and his sons wore fine linen garments (e.g., Exod 28:4–5; 28:39; 39:27; Lev 16:4), while the garments of Adam and Eve are made of "skin." **In the Mosaic law the skin of an animal offered for sin or guilt atonement was reserved for the officiating priest (Lev 7:8). Here God bestows "garments of skin" upon the guilty in the garden. Although the text does not specify that animals were slain to provide these coverings, it is a fair implication and one that likely would be made in the Mosaic community, where animal sacrifice was pervasive.** Since the garden narrative shares in tabernacle imagery, it is not surprising that allusion to animal sacrifice is found in the garden too. Through an oblique reference to animal sacrifice, the garden narrative paints a theological portrait **familiar to the recipients of the Sinai revelation** who honored the tabernacle as the meeting place with God. Sacrifice renewed and guaranteed that special union of God with his people (e.g., Day of Atonement, Lev 16). This mode of provision then for Adam and Eve affirmed God's abiding goodwill.

Moreover, that God "made" (*āśâ*) these garments stands in striking relief to the seventh day, when God ceased from all that he had "made" (*āśâ*) (2:2–3). "Made" routinely describes God's creative work, occurring eleven times in 1:1–2:4. God has "made" the woman (2:18) and the animals of the fields (3:1) as acts of creation, **but now his action in behalf of the couple is salvific in character.** The God of the garden as Creator and Savior **mirrors the God of tabernacle sacrifice, whom Israel had come to recognize** by the voice of Moses and the prophets. [Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, NAC 1A; ed. E. Ray Clendenen and Kenneth A. Mathews; Accordance electronic ed. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 254-255]

Gen 3:15 and 3:21 [*Stacia McKeever*] – The Creator promised Adam that if he disobeyed the command to not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, he would surely die (Gen 2:15-17). This indeed happened after Adam disobeyed. Adam and Eve would now return to the dust from which they were formed (Gen 3:19). **In an act of mercy, God sent them from the Garden of Eden so that they would not live forever in their sinful state (Gen 3:22-23) in the now-corrupted creation (Genesis 3; Rom 8:18-22).**

A Temporary Solution: **The first animal death occurred when God made coats of skin to cover Adam and Eve (Gen 3:21). Throughout the rest of the Old Testament, this pattern of atonement for sins is followed: physical death of a perfect animal (i.e., without blemish or spot) on behalf of the sinner, although the blood of these bulls and goats could not take away sins (Heb 10:4). This pattern culminated in the real thing, which God had promised in the beginning – Gen 3:15 – the physical death of the perfect Lamb of God on the Cross on behalf of his people.** Jesus died—he was separated from his Father, and died a physical death, just as the first Adam did. But Jesus rose from the dead (1Cor 15:20-22) – something Adam could not do. [Stacia McKeever, “What Does Jesus’s Death Accomplish?” Found on the *Answers in Genesis* website.]

Gen 3:21 – Dr. Jason Lisle (The Bible and Modern Astronomy)

The Bible teaches that the first man (Adam) rebelled against God (Gen 3). As a result, sin and death entered the world (*Rom 5:12*). We are all descended from Adam and Eve (Gen 3:20) and have inherited from them a sin nature (*Rom 6:6, 20*). This is a problem: **sin is a barrier** that prevents man from being **right with God** (*Isa 59:2*), but God loves us (despite our sin) and provided a **plan of redemption**—a way to be **reconciled** with God.

After Adam and Eve sinned, God made **coats of skins** to cover Adam and Eve (**Gen 3:21**). He therefore had to **kill an animal(s)**. This literal action is **symbolic of our salvation**: an innocent Lamb (Christ—the Lamb of God) would be **sacrificed to provide a covering** for sin (*John 1:29*). In the Old Testament, people would **sacrifice animals to the Lord as a reminder of their sin (Heb 10:3)** and as a **symbol of the One to come** (the Lord Jesus) who would **actually pay the penalty for sin**.

The animal sacrifices **did not actually pay the penalty** for sin (*Heb 10:4, 11*). Animals are not related to us; **their shed blood cannot count for ours, but the blood of Christ can**. Christ is a blood relative of ours, since He is descended from Adam as are we; all human beings are of “one blood” (*Acts 17:26*). Furthermore, since Christ is also God, His life is of infinite value, and thus, **His death can pay for all the sins of all people**. That is why only the Lord himself could be our savior (*Isa 45:21*). Therefore, **Christ died once for all** (*Heb 10:10*)

[Dr. Jason Lisle. *The Bible and Modern Astronomy, Part 2*. Article on the *Answers in Genesis* website in their Answers/Science/Astronomy section.]

Gen 3:20-21 – [Bruce K. Waltke] 20. *named*. To the woman’s generic designation, Adam adds a personal name that **defines her destiny**. *mother of all the living*. Adam’s naming of Eve is the **beginning of hope**. Adam shows his **restoration to God** by believing the promise that the faithful woman will bear offspring that will defeat Satan. While this story is filled with death—judgment on the serpent, painful labor, conflict of wills – **a ray of hope remains in the promise that the seed of the woman who feels enmity toward the serpent will defeat the incarnation of evil**.

21. *garments*. Adam and Eve’s “coverings” of 3:7 were only loin cloths, inadequate to cover their shame. **Now with the “sacrifice” of an animal, God crafts for them tunics that reach down to the knees or ankles. The killing of an animal necessary to make garments of skin may suggest/imply the image of a sacrifice for sin.** Brueggemann explains, “With the sentence given, God does (3:21) for the couple what they cannot do for themselves (3:7). They cannot deal with their shame. But God can, will, and does.” [Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 50]

clothed. This depicts an image of God's tender care for the couple. Through his **sacrifice**, he **restores the alienated couple to fellowship** with him and one another. [Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 95.]

Gen 3:21 – [Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes*] [Note: Barnes appears to be quoting almost verbatim the comments of James G. Murphy's *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (1873).] As Genesis 3:20 records an instance of humble, apprehending faith in the divine word, so here we have a manifest act of mercy on the part of God, indicating the pardon and acceptance of confessing, believing man, rejoicing in anticipation of that future victory over the serpent which was to be accomplished by the seed of the woman. This act is also suitable to the present circumstances of man, and at the same time strikingly significant of the higher blessings connected with restoration to the divine favor. He had discovered his nakedness, and God provides him with a suitable covering. He was to be exposed to the variations of climate, and here was a durable protection against the weather. But far more than this. He had become morally naked, destitute of that peace of conscience which is an impenetrable shield against the shame of being blamed and the fear of being punished; and **the coats of skin were a faithful emblem and a manifest guarantee of those robes of righteousness which were hereafter to be provided for the penitent in default of that original righteousness which he had lost by transgression.** **And, finally, there is something remarkable in the material out of which the coats were made. They were most likely obtained by the death of animals; and as they do not appear yet to have been slain for food, some have been led to conjecture that they were offered in sacrifice—slain in prefiguration of that subsequent availing sacrifice which was to take away sin.** ...

This leads us to a law, which we find frequently exhibited in Sacred Scripture, that some events are **recorded without any connection or significance apparent on the surface** of the narrative, while at the same time they **betoken a greater amount of spiritual knowledge than we are accustomed to ascribe to the age in which they occurred.** The bare fact which the writer states, being looked at with our eyes, may have no significance. But regarded, as it ought to be, with **the eyes of the narrator**, cognizant of all that he has to record up to his own time, it becomes **pregnant with a new meaning**, which would not otherwise have been discovered. Even this, however, may not exhaust the import of a passage contained in an inspired writing. To arrive at the **full sense** it may need to be **contemplated with the eyes of the Holy Spirit, conscious of all that is to become matter of revelation to the end of time.** It will then stand forth in all the comprehensiveness of meaning which **its relation to the whole body of revealed truth** imparts, and under the guise of an everyday matter-of-fact will **convey some of the sublimest aspects of divine truth.** Hence, the **subsequent scripture**, which is the language of the Holy Spirit, may **aid us in penetrating the hidden meaning** of an earlier part of revelation.

God is the Prime Mover in this matter. The **mercy of God** alone is the source of pardon, of the mode in which **he may pardon and yet be just**, and of the power by which **the sinner may be led to accept it with penitence and gratitude.** **In the brevity of the narrative the results only are noted; namely, the intimation and the earnest of pardon on the side of God, and the feelings and doings of faith and repentance on the side of the parents of mankind. What indications God may have given by the impressive figure of sacrifice or otherwise of the penalty being paid by another for the sinner, as a necessary condition of forgiveness, we are not here informed, simply because those for whom a written record was necessary would learn it more fully at a subsequent stage of the narrative.** This suggests two remarks

important for interpretation: First. This document is written by one who **omits many things done and said to primeval man**, because they are unnecessary for those for whom he writes, or because **the principles they involve will come forward in a more distinct form in a future part of his work**. This practice speaks for Moses being not the mere collector, but the composer of the documents contained in Genesis, out of such preexistent materials as may have come to his hand or his mind. Second. **We are not to import into the narrative a doctrine or institution in all the development it may have received at the latest period of revelation.** This would be contrary to the manner in which God was accustomed to teach man. That concrete form of a great principle, which comported with the infantile state of the early mind, is first presented. The germ planted in the opening, fertile mind, springs forth and grows. The revelations and institutions of God grow with it in compass and grandeur. The germ was truth suited for babes; the full-grown tree is only the same truth expanded in the advancing development of people and things. They equally err who stretch the past to the measure of the present, and who judge either the past or the future by the standard of the present. Well-meaning but inconsiderate **critics have gone to both extremes.** [*Barnes' Notes on the OT*, Gen 3:21.]

Gen 3:21 – Bible Knowledge Commentary (BKC) by Allen P. Ross

All God's dealings with people as sinners can be traced back to this act of disobedience by Adam and Eve. **God is a saving God, however, and the fact that He clothed ... Adam and Eve testifies to that. An animal was sacrificed to provide garments of skin, and later all Israel's animal sacrifices would be part of God's provision to remedy the curse—a life for a life. The sinner shall die! (Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 6:23) Yet he will live if he places his faith in the LORD, who has provided a Substitute. The skin with which God clothed Adam and Eve perpetually reminded them of God's provision. Similarly in the fullness of time God accepted the sacrifice of Christ, and on the basis of that atonement He clothes believers in righteousness (Rom. 3:21-26).**

Gen 3:21 – NT Use of OT (G. K. Beale)

The Genesis 3 Background of Paul's "Clothing" Metaphors (in Colossians, etc.). . . . in the light of the two allusions to the divine "image" and "knowledge" in Col 3:10 from Gen. 1–3, the references to clothing in Col 3:9–10 may be an allusion to Gen. 3. **In Gen. 3:7 we are told that Adam and Eve, directly after their sin, tried to cover their sinful nakedness by their own autonomous efforts: "they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings."** On the other hand, in an apparent expression of their beginning restoration to God after the fall (especially in light of Gen. 3:20), Gen. 3:21 says that "the LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed [*endyō*] them." The clear implication is that their first suit of clothes was removed and replaced by divinely handmade clothing, indicating that the handmade clothing was associated with their alienated condition and sinful shame (Gen. 3:7–11) and was an insufficient covering for those who have begun to be reconciled to God (their "loin coverings" were not proper attire to wear in God's holy presence is clear from the fact that "they hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God" and still considered themselves "naked" [Gen. 3:8–10]; this view of the clothing in Gen. 3:8 is also in *Sib. Or.* 1:47–49).

Likewise, Paul, in Col 3:9–10, refers to believers who have "stripped off the clothes [*apekdyomai*] of the old [sinful] man" and "clothed yourselves [*endyō*] with the new man," which indicates their inaugurated new-creation relationship with God (thus, the clothes consist in the new man; the NRSV and the NLT also have apparel metaphors: "you have stripped off . . . and have clothed yourselves" [similarly, NJB, NETB]; see Eph. 4:22–24 for closely parallel

wording; similarly, *Barn.* 6:11–12, which also quotes Gen. 1:26, 28). The imagery is not precisely “laying aside” and “putting on,” the usual rendering of the English translations, but rather is sartorial language [i.e., having to do with a tailor, one who makes clothing for another]. Believers have laid aside the clothes of the first Adam (the “old man”), in which they could not come into God’s presence, and have “clothed themselves” with the last Adam (“the new” man), in whom they have been “renewed” (so also, seeing a contrast between the first Adam and the last Adam, Calvin 1999: 211; Simpson and Bruce 1957: 272–74; H. M. Carson 1966: 84; O’Brien 1982: 190–91). By donning [p. 867] their new clothing, they have begun to return to God and will do so consummately in the future (so also R. P. Martin [1974: 107]; Wright [1986: 138], who also see a contrast between identification with the old Adam and the new Adam).

Hence, one is in the position either of the old, fallen first Adam, who is the corporate “embodiment of unregenerate humanity,” or of the new, resurrected last Adam, who is the corporate “embodiment of the new humanity” (O’Brien 1982: 190–91 [the latter side of the identification is made clear by Rom. 6:5–11; 13:14; Gal. 3:27]).

Some early Jewish and Christian writings express the belief that Adam and Eve were clothed in glorious garments before the fall and lost that glory and then tried in the wrong way to cover their inglorious shame with fig leaves. Some also held that the new set of clothes given to Adam and Eve in Gen. 3:21 actually possessed some degree of glory, or designated Adam as the first high priest, or pointed to a greater inheritance of the final glorious clothing of immortality, the first and third notions plausibly lying behind the clothing picture of Col. 3:10. Others also believed that the glorious clothing that the devil possessed as a holy angel before his fall was given to Adam and Eve. (For the Jewish references supporting this, see Beale, *ad loc.*)

Paul refers in Col. 2:11 to the believers’ old clothing as “the body of the flesh,” which was “unclothed” (*apekdysis*), in contrast to their new condition, which he characterizes as “made without hands” (*acheiropoiētos*)—that is, divinely created by causing them to be “raised” and “made alive with Christ” (2:12–13 [for “flesh” being equivalent to the old age characterized as uncircumcision, see commentary on Col. 2:11–13 under the section “Paul’s Rationale for the Nullification of the False Teaching in 2:17” above]). This is consistent with the use elsewhere of “handmade” (*cheiropoiētos*) to refer to sinful, idolatrous, and corruptible old-world realities in contrast to an “already and not yet” new-creational reality “made without hands” (e.g., human-made temples of the old age [Mark 14:58; Acts 7:48; 17:24; Heb. 9:11, 24] in contrast to the new, eschatological temple, which is equivalent to God’s dwelling in the new creation with his resurrected people [Mark 14:58; 2 Cor. 5:1]) (on the further significance of the verbal contrasts between *cheiropoiētos* and *acheiropoiētos*, see commentary under Col. 2:8–23 above; Beale 2004: 152–53, 309–12, 375–76).

Early Christian tradition also understands the removal of old clothing and putting on new clothing to represent a new, converted condition in a new creation of a latter-day Eden (*Odes Sol.* 11:10–14; *Ascen. Isa.* 9:6–18; likewise *Apoc. El. (C)* 5:6; *4 Ezra* 2:33–48; *Gos. Truth* 20:28–34; cf., from the Nag Hammadi texts, *Trim. Prot.* 48:6–18, as well as especially the Jewish *T. Levi* 18:10–14; so also the following Jewish texts, though without mention of Eden: *Jos. Asen.* 14:12[13]–15[17]; 15:5[4]–6[5]; *Apoc. Ab.* 13:14; also *2 En.* 22:8–10). In *L.A.E.* 20:1–5 *Apocalypse* (a Jewish work, ca. 100–200 AD) is expressed the belief that after Adam had lost “the righteousness with which he had been “clothed” (*endyō*), he made for himself “skirts” (*perizōma*) from a fig tree to “cover” his nakedness and shame, and at his death he was clothed with divinely given garments, indicating his beginning restoration to God (see also 28:1–4 *Apocalypse*; 43:1–4 *Apocalypse*; Armenian *L.A.E.* 48[40]:2–3, 5b–6; see chaps. 47–48 *Vita*).

Most of the aforementioned uses refer not to a new status alone, but one that also entails an inheritance, whether this is the inheritance of eternal life with God and of rule in a new creation (the focus of the texts associated with Gen. 1–3) or more general eschatological blessings. Even in the ancient Near East or in the OT, to receive a robe from a parent or to be disrobed by a parent indicated, respectively, the rights of inheritance or the state of disinheritance (Hugenberger 1994: 198–99).

This Jewish and early Christian background, especially the Adamic-Genesis and eschatological uses, are very similar to Paul’s use of Gen. 3 and enhance the presence of an allusion to the Gen. 3 clothing in Col. 3:9–10 and even its inaugurated application. This is apparent from observing that the majority of the most relevant aforementioned texts related to Gen. 1–3 or new creation also speak of a new spiritual or redemptive-historical status inaugurated, but not consummated, for the people of God, especially speaking in terms of resurrection, new creation, or incorruption. Paul himself elsewhere expresses virtually the same sartorial contrast in relation to Adam and Christ [p. 868] with regard to the consummation (most clearly in 1 Cor. 15:51–54). Is it coincidental that the notion of the believer’s “inheritance” from God occurs in the context of Colossians (1:12; 3:24), one of which is sandwiched in between an allusion to Gen. 1:28 (in 1:10b) and Gen. 1:26–27 (1:15)? Virtually the same clothing metaphor occurs in Gal. 3:27 and is even more closely linked to gaining an “inheritance” (Gal. 3:29). (I am indebted to research students Ben Gladd and, especially, Keith Williams for their survey and listing of references to clothing in Judaism, which have alerted me to study the various contextual uses of several of these references and their relationship to Col. 3. Just before submitting the completed manuscript of the present chapter, I discovered the relevant monograph by Kim [2004], who has made all the same essential points that I make about the “clothing” background of 3:9–10 on the basis of most of the same biblical, Jewish, and Christian texts.)

Paul appears to be using the Gen. 3 “clothing” language analogically: believers are seen to have discarded the clothes of the old, fallen Adam (their old nature and position in the old Adam) and been clothed with the attire of the last Adam (the new nature and position in the new Adam), with which Adam was proleptically clothed to indicate his restored relationship with God.

Gen 3:21 – James Montgomery Boice Commentary (Accordance module)

Covering of Skins: The third and main point of our text is that God must provide the covering, for only God is adequate to deal with the sin problem. The text says, “The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them” (v. 21). It does not say here what animals God killed to get the skins with which he then clothed Adam and Eve. But I tend to think, though this is a guess and may well be wrong, that the animals were probably lambs and that the skins were lambskins. This incident is meant to point to Jesus as our only sufficient Savior and to his righteousness as our covering. Jesus is pictured as “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). During those long ages before the coming of Jesus, when the promises of his coming were passed on from generation to generation among those who waited for it, the promises in the words of Scripture were preserved upon skins, generally lambskins, which were carefully prepared and sewn together to make large rolls of writing known as scrolls. With this imagery and practical matter to go on, it is reasonable to suppose that God killed lambs to clothe our first parents. But whatever the case, we are to know that God killed animals, made garments from their skins, and then clothed Adam and Eve after taking their inadequate fig-leaf clothes from them.

Death for Life: In order for Adam and Eve to be clothed in the skins of animals the animals

had to die. In a similar way, in order for us to be clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which is what the skins symbolize, Jesus had to die. The Bible says, “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb. 9:22). It was necessary for the innocent One to die in order that the guilty might live.

This truth must have appeared quite wonderful when it was first revealed to Eve and Adam. They had been warned that they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil upon penalty of death. God had said, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die” (Gen. 2:16–17). Yet up to this point no one had died. Adam and Eve had sinned. They must have expected death as the immediate penalty for their sin. When God came to them in the garden they must have shivered at the prospect of this judgment. But they did not die (though their spirits died, which they showed by attempting to run away from God when he called them). In fact, not even the serpent died. Up to this point there had been no death at all. And now, the death that occurs is not their death, though they richly deserved it, but the death of innocent animals—lambs. And the One who killed those animals was God.

Two thoughts must have gone through Adam’s and Eve’s minds. First, an instinctive horror of death. “So this is what death is,” they must have exclaimed as they looked down in horror at the bodies of the slain animals. “How horrible!” In that instant it must have dawned on them that if death is the result of sin (“the wages of sin is death”), then sin is far worse than they could possibly have imagined it to be. And they must have determined, so far as possible, to refuse to sin and to be obedient to God.

The second thought, mingling with their awareness of sin’s horror, must have been a deep and growing wonder at the mercy of God who, though he had every right to take their lives in forfeit of his broken commandment and had said that death must follow sin, was nevertheless showing that it was possible for an innocent victim to die instead.

We know as we look back on this event from the perspective of later revelation that it was not the blood of the slain animals that actually took away the sin of Eve and Adam. It was not the death of animals that permitted God to forgive sin and proclaim sinners just. The only death that could possibly do that was the death of Jesus, and the only blood that could cleanse was his blood. On the other hand, we understand that the death of the animals pointed to his death.

On this occasion, God was showing that it was possible for one animal, an innocent substitute, to die for one sinning *individual*—one animal for Eve, one animal for Adam. Later in Jewish history, at the time of the Exodus from Egypt, God commanded each Jewish family to take a lamb into the house, examine it for the space of three days, kill it, and then spread its blood on the doorposts and lintel of the house as a sign to the angel of death, who that night would pass through the entire land and slay the firstborn of every household that was not so covered. This was the Passover, and the symbolism was now broadened to show how one animal could die for one *family*. A little later, when God gave the law, he also gave instructions for the Day of Atonement, on which day the high priest was to kill an animal on behalf of the nation and then sprinkle its blood on the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant within the Holy of Holies of the Jewish tabernacle. Now it is one animal for one *nation*. At last the day came when John the Baptist was standing beside the Jordan and, seeing Jesus, pointed him out for the benefit of his disciples, saying, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the *world*” (John 1:29).

One substitute for one individual, one substitute for one family, one substitute for one nation, one substitute for the world!

Gen 3:21 – Moody Bible Commentary

Having responded to their sin with paternal gentleness and merciful chastisement, God sealed His response with a **vivid act of forgiveness**, and in so doing **He established the pattern by which sin is thereafter properly atoned for (i.e., divinely forgiven)**. This picture of atonement/divine forgiveness in Gen 3:21, and not that of the exile from the garden in verses 22–24, is the proper “conclusion” to the episode of the couple’s sin. The exile is more consistent with the events of the next chapter in reflecting the inevitable aftermath of human sin. Also in Jewish liturgy verse 22 marks the beginning of the next Sabbath reading section, with verse 21 serving as the conclusion to the previous section that began in 2:4.

In Gen 3:21 three indispensable elements of true atonement/divine forgiveness may be discerned. First, it requires a *blood sacrifice* (cf. **Heb 9:22**, “Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness”), as implied by the guilty parties being clothed with garments made from animal **skin**, logically requiring the death of an animal. Second, the work of providing the sacrifice is, ultimately, *God’s work*, for He alone is the subject of the two verbs **made** and **clothed** (underscoring, by contrast, the complete passivity in this process of Adam and Eve). Third, God’s work of atonement, once achieved, is *durable*, that is, *permanent*, as borne out by the contrast between the fig leaves with which the couple attempted to cover their shame and the **skin** (leather) garments that God provided.

Gen 3:21 – [G. J. Wenham] New Bible Commentary (Accordance module)

Expulsion from the garden proved the hollowness of the serpent’s promise that they would **not die** (Gen 3:4). For though Adam and Eve continued some sort of life outside the garden, it was a shadow of the **fullness of life inside Eden**, where they had enjoyed intimate fellowship with God. Now the **full cost of sin is apparent**.

Gen 3:21 – Burton Coffman commentary (www.StudyLight.org)

The garments supplied by God necessitated the slaying of animals, and some have concluded from this that **the institution of animal sacrifices began here ...**

Gen 3:21 – Leupold’s Commentary

That God does provide for the proper clothing of man’s body does suggest and does render reasonable the conclusion that **He will provide for the proper covering of man’s guilty soul. ...** Since the slaying of beasts for man’s needs was thus sanctioned, this may have suggested to man the idea of sacrifice, yet not of sacrificial meals, for man had as yet no divine warrant for the use of animal food.

Gen 3:21 – Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary

God made coats of skins – taught them to make these for themselves. This implies the **institution of animal sacrifice**, which was undoubtedly of divine appointment, and instruction in the only acceptable mode of worship for sinful creatures, **through faith** in a Redeemer (“*without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness*” **Hebrews 9:22**). [Jamieson, Robert; Fausset, A. R.; Brown, David. “Commentary on Genesis 3:21”. *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*. Public domain.]

Gen 3:21 – Matthew Henry Commentary

We have here a further instance of **God's care concerning our first parents**, notwithstanding their sin. Though he corrects his disobedient children, and put them under the marks of his displeasure, yet **he does not disinherit them**, but, like a tender father, provides the herb of the field for their food and **coats of skins for their clothing**. Thus the father provided for the returning prodigal, Luke 15:22, Luke 15:23. **If the Lord had been pleased to kill them, he would not have done this for them.** ... These coats of skin had a significance. **The beasts whose skins they were must be slain, slain before their eyes, to show them what death is,** and (as it is in Eccl. 3:18) that they may see that they themselves were beasts, mortal and dying. **It is supposed that they were slain, not for food, but for sacrifice, to typify the great sacrifice, which, in the latter end of the world, should be offered once for all.** Thus the first thing that died was a sacrifice, or Christ in a figure, who is therefore said to be the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world* [Rev 13:8; cf. Rev 5:6, 12; 6:9]. These sacrifices were divided between God and man, in **token of reconciliation**: the flesh was offered to God, a whole burnt-offering; the skins were given to man for clothing, **signifying that, Jesus Christ having offered himself to God a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour, we are to clothe ourselves with his righteousness as with a garment, that the shame of our nakedness may not appear.** Adam and Eve made for themselves aprons of fig-leaves, a covering too narrow for them to *wrap themselves in*, Isa. 28:20. Such are all the rags of our own righteousness. But God made them coats of skins; large, and strong, and durable, and fit for them; such is the **righteousness of Christ**. Therefore *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*.

Gen 3:21 – Hawker's Poor Man's Commentary

“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” Were not these the skins of beasts **slaughtered for sacrifice**? They could **not be for food**, for at this time no animal food was made use of. And if it were so, how beautiful is it to **trace sacrifices immediately after the fall**. And let the Reader further remark, that not only was **the blood of Jesus hereby set forth in type and figure**, as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world: but also **the righteousness of Jesus, as a covering and a garment of salvation sweetly shadowed forth also**. And Reader! do not overlook that other interesting part of the verse: **the Lord God made Adam and his wife the covering**. He that provides the **righteousness must put it on also**. cf. Romans 13:14. [Hawker, Robert. “Commentary on Genesis 3:21”. *Hawker's Poor Man's Commentary*. 1828. Public domain. Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com.]

Gen 3:21 – John Wesley's Explanatory Notes

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. These **coats of skin had a significancy**. The beasts whose skins they were, **must be slain; slain before their eyes to shew them what death is**. And probably 'tis supposed they were **slain for sacrifice**, to **typify the great sacrifice which in the latter end of the world should be offered once for all**. Thus the **first thing that died was a sacrifice**, or **Christ in a figure**. [Wesley, John. “Commentary on Genesis 3:21”. *John Wesley's Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*. 1765. Public domain. From *Christian Classics Ethereal Library* Website.]

Gen 3:21 – Adam Clarke’s Commentary

God made coats of skins. It is very likely that the skins out of which their clothing was made were taken off animals whose blood had been poured out as a sin-offering to God; for as we find Cain and Abel offering sacrifices to God, we may fairly presume that God had given them instructions on this head; nor is it likely that the notion of a sacrifice could have ever occurred to the mind of man without an express revelation from God. Hence we may safely infer:

1. That as Adam and Eve needed this clothing as soon as they fell, and death had not as yet made any ravages in the animal world, it is most likely that the skins were taken off victims offered under the direction of God himself, and in faith of HIM who, in the fullness of time, was to make an atonement by his death.
2. And it seems reasonable also that this matter should be brought about in such a way that Satan and death should have no triumph, when the very first death that took place in the world was an emblem and type of that death which should conquer Satan, destroy his empire, reconcile God to man, convert man to God, sanctify human nature, and prepare it for heaven.

Gen 3:21 – Expositor’s Bible Commentary (John H. Sailhamer)

The author may also be anticipating the notion of sacrifice in the slaying of the animals for the making of the skin garments, though he has given no clues of this meaning in the narrative itself. Later in the Pentateuch the Lord instructed the people to make tunics for the priests who were to enter into the presence of God at the tabernacle. The purpose of the tunics was to cover the priests’ nakedness (*’erwah*) lest they incur guilt and die (Exod 28:42). The author may be anticipating this “lasting ordinance” (Exod 28:43) in drawing our attention to God’s covering the nakedness of the man and the woman. In this way the role of the priests, developed later in the Pentateuch, is foreshadowed by God’s work in ages past—his work of restoring to man the blessing of his presence and fellowship.

Gen 3:21 – Keil & Delitzsch OT Commentary

God also displayed His mercy by clothing the two with coats of skin, i.e., the skins of beasts. The words, “God made coats,” are not to be interpreted with such bare literality, as that God sewed the coats with His own fingers; they merely affirm “that man’s first clothing was the work of God, who gave the necessary directions and ability” (*Delitzsch*). By this clothing, God imparted to the feeling of shame the visible sign of an awakened conscience, and to the consequent necessity for a covering to the bodily nakedness, the higher work of a suitable discipline for the sinner. By selecting the skins of beasts for the clothing of the first men, and therefore causing the death or slaughter of beasts for that purpose, He showed them how they might use the sovereignty they possessed over the animals for their own good, and even sacrifice animal life for the preservation of human; so that this act of God laid the foundation for the sacrifices, even if the first clothing did not prefigure our ultimate “clothing upon” (2 Cor. 5:4), nor the coats of skins the robe of righteousness.

Gen 3:21 – Pulpit Commentary

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats (*cathnoth*, from *cathan*, to cover; cf. χιτών; Sanskrit, *katam*; English, *cotton*) of skin (or, the skin of a man, from *ur*, to be naked, hence a hide). . . tunics prepared from the skins of animals . . . probably slain in sacrifice. . . Willet and Macdonald prefer to think that the garments were actually fashioned by God. . . **And clothed them.** . . . [This was] a foreshadowing of the robe of Christ’s righteousness

(Delitzsch, Macdonald, Murphy, Wordsworth, Candlish; cf. Psalm 132:9, 16; Isaiah 61:10; Romans 13:14; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10). Bonar recognizes in Jehovah Elohim at the gate of Eden, clothing the first transgressors, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, as the High Priest of our salvation, had a right to the skins of the burnt offerings (Leviticus 7:8), and who, to prefigure his own work, appropriated them for covering the pardoned pair.

Gen 3:21 – New International Commentary (NICOT)

This verse should not be read as an awkward doublet of verse 7. It serves as a contrast with verse 7, the covering of fig leaves versus the covering with tunics of animal skins. The first is an attempt to cover oneself, the second is accepting a covering from another. The first is **man-made** and the second is **God-made**. Adam and Eve are in need of a salvation that comes from without. God needs to do for them what they are unable to do for themselves.

It is important for understanding the drift of this chapter that we note that the **clothing precedes the expulsion** from the garden. God's act of grace comes before his act of judgment. **The couple are not expelled nude from the garden. They are not sent beyond the garden totally vulnerable.** In the same way Cain is marked before he is exiled (4:15), and God announces the post-Flood covenant even before the Flood commences (6:18).

[Some] see in the *coats of skin* a hint of the use of animals and blood in the sacrificial system of the OT cultus.

[COMMENT FROM ED ON THE ABOVE: It is NOT reading too much into this verse (Gen 3:21) to suggest a typological connection between the garments of skin and the Mosaic sacrificial system. It does not need to be read into the text. It is already necessarily implied that God slayed an animal (or animals) to provide garments of skin. And it seems that this is how Adam and Eve learned about the substitutionary and propitiatory sacrificial system, which they taught to their sons Cain and Abel, who appeared before the Lord at the entrance to Eden to offer their sacrifices (Gen. 4:3-4, 16). The Jewish rabbinical commentator Kimhi and others point out that "the presence of the Lord" mentioned here (Gen 4:3-4, 16) was evidently located at the entrance to Eden where the two cherubim were stationed. And it provided the typological basis for not only the Mosaic sacrificial system, but prefigured the substitutionary death of Christ on the Cross. This persuasively (if not conclusively) implies the origin of the substitutionary sacrificial system right there in the Garden "on the very day they sinned." And that sacrifice pointed straight to Jesus the "seed of Eve" who would crush the Serpent's head by this very same kind of substitutionary sacrifice. This means that a physical death (shedding of physical blood) literally occurred "on the very day they sinned." And that animal died in their place. It was their death that it died. They died with that animal, and put on its skin, so that their shame and guilt was covered when they were in the presence of God.

Gen 3:20-21 – Martin Kessler and Karel Deurloo. *A Commentary on Genesis*

In addition to the man calling his wife "Eve!" (Gen 3:20) a short seemingly peculiar sentence is added: "*YHWH God made for the man and his wife garments of skin and clothed them*" (3:21). ... man was naked first, then he clothed himself with loincloths (3:7). The relationship of man-woman was saved as well by the loincloths, but these appeared totally unsatisfactory in the relationship with YHWH God. They needed to hide themselves. **How could they ever again appear before him? Only if he as their "tailor" provided them with clothing. A big step forward, therefore, was their being clothed with garments that cover the entire body (2Sam**

13:18f; cf. the priestly dress in Exod 28). This may seem humorous to us, but it is related with total seriousness: **It is YHWH God himself who, by covering the man and his wife with garments, makes a meeting possible again.** One hears the same seriousness from Paul in connection with **man's final meeting before returning to God "if we are found clothed and not naked" (2Cor 5:3).**

Systematic Theologies on Gen 2-3

Evangelical Dictionary of Theology (B. Demarest)

Fall of the Human Race: ... Finally, the fall of Adam and humanity in him (Rom 5:12, 15-19; 1Cor. 15:21-22) impacted God who created the man and woman. **God's act of making clothing of skins for Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:21) suggests that God began the long process of covering sin, first by the sacrifice of animals and then through the sacrifice of his own Son (2Cor. 5:4).**

The Fall and Theology. The historical reality and import of the fall have been denied in some circles. Judaism generally holds that Adam's transgression affected only Adam and that it resulted in physical, not spiritual, death. Pelagians likewise claim that Adam's sin had no impact on his offspring. Humans are born into the world, they argued, morally capable of obeying God and performing the good. Modern liberalism, postulating an evolutionary ascent of the human race, uniformly denies the historicity of Adam's fall and the hereditary transmission of sin. Neo-orthodox theologians such as Barth and Brunner argue that the Genesis account of the fall is a saga or legend rather than history. According to Barth, Adam is a general title for Everyman [and that] we dare not ask how, when, or where the fall occurred. As an event in primal history (*Urgeschichte*), **the fall conveys the fundamental truth that humans are subject to the law of sin and death.** Augustine, the Reformers, and Reformed evangelicals aver that Adam's sin corrupted the entire human family (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:21-22). Following Augustine, some hold that original sin and guilt transmitted from Adam to the human race by genetic mechanisms (seminal theory). Others, indebted to covenant theology, believe that Adam's sin was reckoned to the human race by **divine imputation**, much as Christ's righteousness was reckoned to those who believe (**representative theory**). [B. Demarest. "Fall of the Human Race," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 436]

Strong's Systematic Theology (Augustus H. Strong)

It is not essential to this view to maintain that a **formal divine institution of the rite of sacrifice, at man's expulsion from Eden**, can be proved from Scripture. Like the family and the state, sacrifice may, without such formal inculcation, possess divine sanction, and be ordained of God. **The well-nigh universal prevalence of sacrifice, however, together with the fact that its nature, as a bloody offering, seems to preclude man's own invention of it, combines with certain Scripture intimations to favor the view that it was a primitive divine appointment.** From the time of Moses, there can be no question as to its divine authority.

It has been urged, in corroboration of this view, that **the previous existence of sacrifice is intimated in Gen. 3:21 — "And Jehovah God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins, and clothed them."** Since the killing of animals for food was not permitted until long afterwards (Gen. 9:3 — to Noah: "Every moving thing that liveth shall be food for you"). **The inference has been drawn that the skins with which God clothed our first parents were the skins of animals slain for sacrifice. This clothing furnishing a type of the righteousness of Christ,**

which secures our **restoration to God's favor**, as the death of the victims furnished a **type of the suffering of Christ**, which secures for us **remission of punishment**. [Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, 726]

Grudem's Systematic Theology (Wayne Grudem)

At the time of Adam and Eve, there was only the bare hint of the possibility of a relationship with God found in **the promise about the seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15** and in **God's gracious provision of clothing for Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:21)**. [Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 520]

The **punishment of death began to be carried out on the day that Adam and Eve sinned**, but it was carried out **slowly over time**, as their bodies grew old and they **eventually died**. The promise of **spiritual death was put into effect immediately**, since they were cut off from fellowship with God. The death of **eternal condemnation** was rightfully theirs, but the **hints of redemption** in the text (see **Gen. 3:15, 21**) suggest that this penalty was **ultimately overcome by the redemption that Christ purchased**. [Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, p. 525]

Chafer's Systematic Theology (Lewis Sperry Chafer)

The immediate change in Adam and Eve which their sin wrought is revealed in the record that they were ashamed, having discovered that they were unclothed. **This incident in the narrative, like the protoevangelium of Genesis 3:15, reaches into deeper realities which were foreshadowed in this initial experience of mankind**. In its Scripture use, clothing is the symbol of righteousness. The shame which these two experienced was not between themselves but rather between themselves and God. They did not hide from each other, but they did hide from God. They had experienced a change in their very constitution which separated them from God. If they were at once to be **expelled from the garden**, it was because of the truth that they had first voluntarily **broken their relation with God by hiding from His presence**. Whatever may have been their own consciousness at that time, the faithful record of God's Word offers the undisputable evidence that they deemed themselves no longer worthy to meet God face to face. Much truth, likewise, lies hidden in the facts that they attempted to clothe themselves, which clothing was of no value; and that **God clothed them with skins, which meant the shedding of blood. Thus another great doctrine of the Bible is enacted in type at least: "Without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22)**, and "being justified ['declared righteous'] freely ['without a cause'] by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24). [Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, p. 218]

Gulley's Systematic Theology (Norman R. Gulley)

Because the Holy Spirit authored both testaments, there is a unity between them. Some challenge this unity based on a perceived distinction between law (Old Testament) and grace (New Testament). But what does Scripture say? The writer of Hebrews refers back to ancient times, saying, "For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did" (Heb. 4:2). **The gospel was present as soon as there was sin. This is why the creator Christ made skins to clothe the nakedness of Adam and Eve, a telling type of the gospel (Gen. 3:21)**. Have you ever compared the third chapter of the first and last books of Scripture? **In both Christ is covering human nakedness, one physical (in Eden) and one (spiritual) in the church (Rev. 3:15-18)**. The first was a type of the second, for the gospel is the same throughout. This is why John calls it the

“eternal gospel” (Rev. 14:6), and can speak of the Lamb “slain from the creation of the world” (Rev. 13:8) and names being “written in the book of life from the creation of the world” (Rev. 17:8). [Norman R. Gulley, *Prolegomena*, Systematic Theology, vol. 1, 675]

Only after judgment did [God] introduce the gospel, **“God made tunics of skin, and clothed them” (Gen. 3:21, NKJV) to replace their fig leaves. This suggests an animal or animals were sacrificed, even as Abel did in the next chapter (Gen. 4:4), a precursor of the animal sacrifices at the sanctuary and temple.** Adam and Eve had to leave Eden because eating fruit from the Tree of Life would immortalize sin (3:22–23). It is vital that sin be seen for what it is, for its results. Judgments had to precede mercy and grace. In so doing God dramatically revealed both the immutability of His law and how terrible is disobedience. God could not forgive disobedience without a **fitting sacrifice**. “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). **Christ would have to die to give humans another chance at eternal life.** Christ’s death shows the unchanging importance of God’s law since law breaking requires the death of God’s Son. What an infinite sacrifice! What a holy love is expressed in these verses—and this is just the beginning. [Norman R. Gulley, *God as Trinity*, Systematic Theology vol. 2, 46-47]

The fall of Adam and Eve, tragic though it was, revealed what God is like. Adam and Eve covered their nakedness with figs leaves (Acts 3:7), representing human works they hoped would save them from the consequences of sin. **Christ didn’t destroy them and start all over again with another human couple; instead, He clothed them with skins to cover their nakedness caused by sin (Gen. 3:21). The clothing of Adam and Eve by the Creator indicates the killing of an animal or animals in order to obtain skins. Arguably the animals were lambs, representing Jesus, “the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world” (Rev. 13:8b).** As soon as there was sin, there was a Savior.

This history is full of sanctuary imagery. **In slaying and covering (a two-phased ministry), the Creator Christ acted as Savior and priest to Adam and Eve. The cherubim guarding the gate on the east side of Eden (Gen. 3:24) reminds us of the cherubim in the heavenly sanctuary (a position held by Satan before his rebellion) and the cherubim in the throne room of the earthly sanctuary/temples.** God was enthroned between the cherubim in the sanctuary in [Vol. 2, p. 440] heaven (Ps. 80:1; 99:1; Isa. 37:16) and in the sanctuary on earth (1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2b), and thus it was said the “Lord Almighty” “dwells on Mount Zion” (Isa. 8:18b). “You sit enthroned between the cherubim” (Ps. 80:1b). **Beyond the cherubim was the most holy place where the tree of life stood in the center of the garden (Gen. 2:9). The message of hope given to Adam and Eve was the first gospel promise about Satan’s final defeat and ultimate salvation for willing humans (Gen. 3:15).**

The placement of this sanctuary type at the east gate of Eden reminds one of the temple described by Ezekiel: “Then the man brought me to the gate facing east, and I saw the glory of the Lord of Israel coming from the east” (Ezek. 43:1–2a). “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: The gate of the inner court facing east is to be shut on the six working days, but on the Sabbath day and on the day of the New Moon it is to be opened....On the Sabbaths and New Moon the people of the land are to **worship in the presence of the LORD at the entrance to that gateway” (Ezek. 46:1–3).**

The next biblical record is about the offerings brought to God by Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:1–5). Undoubtedly Adam and Eve told Cain and Abel that the purpose of sacrifices was to worship the Savior who had been promised for their salvation, because He is the only

Savior of humans. Cain and Abel knew that fig leaves were of no avail (from their parents' experience, Gen. 3:6–9, 21), for salvation comes only through a substitutionary atonement, and one day Christ would become that sacrifice for humans. Yet Cain brought fig leaves in the form of fruit from his garden, but **Abel brought a lamb substitute.** The brothers came to worship, one from his heart, the other from a desire to fulfill ritual (for appearances). **God accepted the substitutionary sacrifice but not the human works.** In his act of formalism Cain reflected Satan, and in killing his brother he revealed the spirit of self-centeredness that describes the enemy. “Do not be like Cain who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous” (1 John 3:12). [Norman R. Gulley, *God as Trinity*, Systematic Theology vol. 2, 439-440]

The sin problem can only be solved by God. As soon as there was sin, there was a Savior. In Eden the pre-incarnate Creator Christ took the skins from slain animals and clothed Adam and Eve, promising them that He would one day destroy Satan and redeem humans (Gen. 3:15, 20–21). On the basis of that future ministry, Christ became the Savior of humans as soon as sin entered the world. In this respect, Christ was “the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world” (Rev. 13:8b). The promise made to Adam and Eve after the Fall was the first gospel promise, but the promise was repeated many times in the Old Testament. [Norman R. Gulley, *Creation, Christ, Salvation*, Systematic Theology vol. 3, 416]

During His entire life Jesus developed a sinless human character which He offers to humans as their righteousness, as if they had lived that life. This is likened to a garment of righteousness that covers humans who repent and desire to receive it, and was typified by the skins of the lambs slain for Adam and Eve that covered their nakedness. It was the pre-incarnate Christ as Creator of Adam and Eve who provided the covering for these first sinners (Gen. 3:21). These are the wedding garments that the Bride of Christ needs to wear to get into the wedding supper of the Lamb in heaven (Matt. 22:3–14). Christians need the “white clothes” (Rev. 3:18). [Norman R. Gulley, *Creation, Christ, Salvation*, Systematic Theology vol. 3, 438]

Gill’s Works of Divinity (John Gill)

The grace of the covenant, and the blessings of it, were manifested and applied to our first parents, by certain actions and things done; as by the **Lord God making “coats of skin,” and “clothing them with them,”** which were **emblems of the robe of righteousness,** and garments of salvation, Christ has wrought out; that righteousness which God imputes without works; and is unto all, and upon all them that believe, as their clothing and covering: and those coats being made of the skins of slain beasts, very probably slain for sacrifice, which man was soon taught the use of; may have respect to the sacrifice of Christ, the woman’s seed, which should be offered up, as was agreed on in the covenant of grace, and by which atonement would be made for sin, and upon which justification from it proceeds; all which are momentous articles of faith. [John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, John Gill’s Works on Divinity, vol. 1, paragraph 1615]

John Gill’s Commentary on Gen 3:21

Unto Adam also, and to his wife,.... Besides the kind intimation of grace and favour to them, another token of God's good will towards them was shown, in that whereas they were naked and ashamed:

“did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them”; ... these were made of the skins of beasts, not of the skin of the serpent, as the Targum of Jonathan; but of creatures slain, not merely for this purpose, nor for food, but for sacrifice, as a type of the woman's seed, whose heel was to be bruised, or who was to suffer death for the sins of men; and therefore to keep up and direct the faith of our first parents to the slain Lamb of God from the foundation of the world, and of all believers in all ages, until the Messiah should come and die, and become a sacrifice for sin, the sacrifices of slain beasts were appointed: and of the skins of these the Lord God, either by his almighty power, made coats for the man and his wife, or by the ministry of angels; or he instructed and directed them to make them, which was an instance of goodness to them; not only to provide food for them as before, but also raiment; and which though not rich, fine, and soft, yet was substantial, and sufficient to protect them from all inclemencies of the weather; and they might serve as to put them in mind of their fall, so of their mortality by it, and of the condition sin had brought them into; being in themselves, and according to their deserts, like the beasts that perish: as also they were emblems of the robe of Christ's righteousness, and the garments of his salvation, to be wrought out by his obedience, sufferings, and death; with which being arrayed, they should not be found naked, nor be condemned, but be secured from wrath to come. [John Gill: *The New John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*, modernized and adapted for the computer by Larry Pierce of *Online Bible*. All Rights Reserved, Larry Pierce, Winterbourne, Ontario. A printed copy of this work can be ordered from: *The Baptist Standard Bearer*, 1 Iron Oaks Dr, Paris, AR, 72855. Found here: <https://www.studydrive.net/commentaries/geb/genesis-3.html>. 1999]

Stanley M. Horton's Systematic Theology (Stanley M. Horton)

The divine-human relationship of open communion, love, trust, and security was exchanged for isolation, defensiveness, blame, and banishment. Adam and Eve and their relationship degenerated. Intimacy and innocence were replaced by accusation (as they shifted the blame). Their rebellious desire for independence resulted in pain in childbirth, toil, and death. Their eyes were truly opened, knowing good and evil (through a shortcut), but it was a burdensome knowledge unbalanced by other divine attributes (e.g., love, wisdom, knowledge). Creation, entrusted to and cared for by Adam, was cursed, groaning for deliverance from the results of his faithlessness (Rom. 8:20–22). Satan, who had offered Eve the heights of divinity and promised that the man and woman would not die, was cursed above all creatures and condemned to eternal destruction by her offspring (see Matt. 25:41). Finally, the first man and woman brought death to all their children (Rom. 5:12–21; 1Cor. 15:20–28).

The Jewish Midrash takes God's warning that **death would come when (literally, “in the day”) they ate of the tree (Gen. 2:17)** as a reference to Adam's physical death (Gen. 3:19; 5:5) since a day, in God's sight, is as a thousand years (Ps. 90:4) and Adam lived only 930 years (Gen. 5:5). Others see it as a **necessary consequence of being cut off from the tree of life**. Many Jewish rabbis noted that Adam was never immortal and that **his death would have come immediately if God had not delayed it out of mercy**. ...

Yet, even in judgment God graciously made Adam and Eve coverings of skins, apparently to replace their self-made coverings of leaves (Gen. 3:7, 21). 18 Note the possible symbolism of the God-given coverings, which necessitated the spilling of blood, suggesting atonement (cf. Gen. 4:2–5; Heb. 9:22). [Horton, *Systematic Theology*, 260–261]

Michael Horton's *The Christian Faith* (Michael Horton)

So soon after the fall God was ready with the announcement of the merciful salvation that he had already planned in eternity. **Instead of confirming Adam, Eve, and the whole human race in everlasting death, God promised the triumph of the seed of the woman who would crush the serpent's head [Gen 3:15]. Although they could not cover their guilt, God "made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them" (Gen 3:21). Already we have intimations of the "Lamb of God" who will bear our sins and clothe us in his righteousness (Jn 1:29).** [Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*, 437]

Niehaus's *Biblical Theology* (Jeffrey J. Niehaus)

God has positive commands for the man in Eden, but he also gives, in this passage, the one negative command of the Adamic covenant. Adam must not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when he eats of it, he will surely die (Gen. 2:17). Here, as in the decalogue later, both positive and negative apodictic commands appear. The positive commands were stated in Genesis 1:28, and more of them are implied in the purposes of Genesis 2:15, perhaps even in the license God gives Adam to eat of any other tree of the garden (Gen. 2:16). Consequently, it is clear that Adam's enjoyment of the covenantal blessings depends on his obedience to God's commands, and particularly his non-violation of the command of Gen 2:17.

The same—that is, the presence of conditionality—is true of anyone under the Mosaic covenant. We will later argue that the same is true, either implicitly or explicitly, for all of God's covenants. In that sense, one may say that all God's covenants are "covenants of works." On the other hand, God graciously initiates every human–divine covenant, and all of those covenants are therefore acts of his grace. **And because he always seeks to forgive and restore what was lost, each covenant contains the element of forgiveness, either implicitly or explicitly, and each covenant—after the Fall—aims to restore what was lost, and that restoration can only come about by God's gracious gift.** So, in another sense, all of the divine–human covenants are covenants entailing grace, or "of grace," or gracious covenants. In this we agree with Hafemann: The long-standing division between covenants of works and covenants of grace is an erroneous division. All covenants involve works, and all come about and are maintained only by God's grace. Some further comments on works and grace in God's first two covenants with humans are now in order.

We have seen already that the Adamic or Creation covenant entails works. It is also a gracious covenant because God has graciously—that is, as a gift—created both the vassals and their kingdom environment (the world) and provided everything needed for their life and prosperity. **God's grace comes through yet again when he deals with Adam and Eve in their sin. At that time, the figurative meaning of the word "day" in the sentence "for in the day you eat of it you shall surely die" (Gen. 2:17) becomes clearer, since Adam and Eve do not die on that day. God allows their lives to continue for some time, and that continuance allows scope for his grace to be made manifest. Once God has pronounced judgment on the humans and on the serpent, he does a remarkable thing. God clothes the man and the woman with animal skins (Gen. 3:21).** Although this verse falls outside the passage we are considering, it deserves attention as an aspect of grace in the present discussion. It now becomes clear that God has been gracious not only in his covenant making but also with his vassals in their covenant breaking. **The church has long understood the skin garment episode as an adumbration of Christ and his sacrifice, in much the same way as the later Levitical animal sacrifices anticipate that of the Son. Surely**

this is correct, but it is not an exhaustive explanation of the significance of Genesis 3:21. The act that God commits when he clothes Adam and Eve can and should, like much else in these early chapters, be understood in the context of the ancient near eastern world in which Moses wrote. And whatever else the act may signify, an ancient near eastern person would most likely have understood it to be an **investiture in office or station**. ... Such practice, incidentally, may go far to explain a hitherto unappreciated aspect of **the prodigal son parable**. When the father gives his younger son a ring and a robe he, in effect, **welcomes him back** into the family: It is an act of investiture that **restores the son to his station or position** in the household. **The father does not restore his inheritance, of course, since that has been squandered**, so he can say to his older son, “Everything I have is yours” (Luke 15:31). But he does **restore the prodigal son to his place in the household**. That is like what God did with Adam and Eve, his prodigals: **They had forgone** (or “squandered”) **the garden that God had given them, but God restored them to their position in his household**, a restoration that included a reconfirmation of their royal office and the blessing of fecundity. The latter may easily be surmised from the fact that humans did continue to be fruitful and multiply, and did begin to rule over the earth and subdue it, as we continue to do to this day.

But what can explain God’s gracious act? His grace does not avert justice, because **the man and the woman would still die**. God must remain true to all of his covenantal commitments because doing so actually means that he remains true to his own nature, out of which covenantal relationships and commitments arise. But he also does the one thing that his covenant does not require: **He reinstates his fallen vassals so that the covenant might continue. And so it did, with humans ruling and multiplying, although in a sinful and fallen world**. [Jeffrey J. Niehaus, “The Common Grace Covenants,” in vol. 1 of *Biblical Theology*, Accordance electronic ed. (Wooster: Weaver Book Company, 2014), 77-80.]

Beale’s NT Biblical Theology (G. K. Beale)

It seems likely also that Adam and Eve’s nakedness at the end of Gen. 2 is meant to point to the need for clothing, the bestowal of which would have been part of their later escalated blessing. They grasp for their reward in the wrong way and at the wrong time. They ineptly try to provide clothing for themselves (Gen. 3:7), but **God subsequently clothes them to signify their inaugurated restoration to him (Gen. 3:21)**. [G.K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 41]

God’s Plan for Man (Finis Dake)

Immediately after the fall of man, God’s mercy was made manifest. He **promised a redeemer** and revealed that He would be **born of a woman** without natural generation and that He would defeat Satan and restore man’s dominion. Through the coming seed of the woman, Adam and all his posterity could look for freedom from Satan, the new master of man and his dominion. This was taught man by the prophecy of **Gen. 3:15** and **demonstrated in type by the shedding of the blood of animals and the clothing of man with the skins of the animals (Gen. 3:21)**. By the slaying of this animal God showed Adam and Eve the terribleness of their sin and **the penalty and that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin (Heb. 9:22)**. From then on through the rest of the Bible, until the first coming of Christ, **man shed blood as a token of his faith** in the coming redeemer, who was to shed His own blood to atone for sin and restore man’s dominion (Mt 26:28; Acts 20:28; Eph 1:7; 1Jn 1:7-9; Rev 1:5; 5:8-10).

Millard J. Erickson's Christian Theology (Millard J. Erickson)

[Note from Ed: I have quoted Erickson here for the purpose of showing that many theologians struggle with the issue of death here in Genesis 2-3. He admits that there is a complex enigma here to which he does not have a satisfying solution. So it is no surprise to see that he totally leaves Genesis 3:21 (“garments of skins”) out of his consideration. In the scripture index in the back of his book, there are no references to Gen 3:21. It is as if the physical death of that animal never happened, or that it is totally unrelated to the death that was threatened against their sin. He does not see any sacrificial significance of that animal death. And he is not alone. Many other commentary writers miss it as well, including Don Preston and Max King (their books do not have Gen 3:21 in their scripture indices either). Notice how Millard Erickson still thinks physical death in some sense was included in the death threat against Adam.]

One of sin's obvious results is death. This truth is first pointed out in God's statement forbidding Adam and Eve to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: “for when you eat of it you will surely die” (Gen 2:17). It is also found in clear didactic form in Romans 6:23, “the wages of sin is death.” ... This death that we have deserved has several different aspects: (1) physical death, (2) spiritual death, and (3) eternal death. ... Paul in Romans 5:12 attributes death to the original sin of Adam. Yet while death entered the world through Adam's sin, it spread to all humans because all sinned.

This raises the question of whether humans were created mortal or immortal. Would they have died if they had not sinned? Calvinists have basically taken the negative position, arguing that physical death entered with the curse (Gen 3:19) [Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 260]. Arminians generally tend to agree with Calvinists rather than Pelagians on this point [H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology*, vol. 1, pp. 34-37, 91-95].

The Pelagian view, on the other hand, is that humans were created mortal. Just as everything about us dies sooner or later, so it is and has always been with humans. The principle of death and decay is a part of the whole of creation [Augustine, *Treatise on the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins and Baptism of Infants*, 1.2].

The Pelagians point out that if the Calvinist view is correct, then it was the serpent who was right and Jehovah was wrong in saying, “for when you eat of it you will surely die,” for Adam and Eve were not struck dead immediately upon committing their sin [Dale Moody, *The Word of Truth: A Summary of Christian Doctrine Based on Biblical Revelation*, p. 295]. Physical death in the Pelagian view, is a natural accompaniment of being human. The biblical references to death as a consequence of sin are understood as references to spiritual death, separation from God, rather than physical death.

The problem is not as simple as it might at first appear. The assumption that mortality [subject to death] began with the fall, and that Romans 5:12 and similar New Testament references to death are to be understood as references to physical death, may not be warranted. A roadblock to the idea that physical mortality is a result of sin is the case of Jesus. Not only did he not sin himself (Heb 4:15), but he was not tainted by the corrupted nature of Adam. Yet he died. How could mortality have affected someone who, spiritually, stood where Adam and Eve did before the fall? This is an enigma. We have conflicting data here. Is it possible somehow to slip between the horns of the dilemma?

First, we must observe that physical death is linked to the fall in some clear way. Genesis 3:19 would seem to be not a statement of what is the case and has been the case from creation, but a pronouncement of a new situation: “By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to

dust you will return.” Further, it seems difficult to separate the ideas of physical death and spiritual death in Paul’s writings, particularly in 1 Corinthians 15. Paul’s theme is that physical death has been defeated through Christ’s resurrection. Humans still die, but death’s finality has been removed. . . . Louis Berkhof appears to be correct when he says, “The Bible does not know the distinction, so common among us, between a physical, a spiritual, and an eternal death; it [instead] has a synthetic [synthesis, blended, comprehensive] view of death, and regards it as separation from God” (Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 258-259).

On the other hand, there are the considerations that Adam and Eve died *spiritually* but not physically the moment or the day that they sinned, and that even the sinless Jesus was capable of dying. How is all of this to be untangled?

I would suggest [that] the state of Adam before the fall [was that] he was not inherently able to live forever, but he need not have died. Augustine makes a similar point in distinguishing between being “mortal” [able to die] and being “subject to death” (*Merits and Forgiveness of Sins*, 1.3). Given the right conditions [i.e., the Tree of Life], he could have lived forever. This may be the meaning of God’s words when he decided to expel Adam and Eve from Eden and from the presence of the Tree of Life: “He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and life forever” (Gen 3:22). The impression is given that Adam and Eve, even after the fall, could have lived forever if they had eaten the fruit of the tree of life. What happened at the time of their expulsion from Eden was that the humans, who formerly could have either lived forever or died, were now separated from those conditions that made eternal life possible, and thus it became inevitable that they die. Previously they *could* die; now they *would* die.

To sum up: the potential of death [“able to die”] was within the creation from the beginning [before the fall], but so was the potential of eternal life [“able to life forever” if they ate from the Tree of Life]. Sin, in the case of Adam and each of us, means that death is no longer merely potential [“able to die”] but actual [“subject to death” and “destined to die”].

[Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1998. pp. 628-632]

[ED’S OBSERVATION ON MILLARD ERICKSON’S COMMENTS ABOVE:

Erickson points out that there is a theological factor involved in this whole discussion regarding the kind of death Adam died on the day he sinned. **Pelagians** tend to *spiritualize* the death of Adam, while **Calvinists** see it as including both physical and spiritual death. And there is another thing I noticed. A majority of those who took a *physical* death of Adam position were **Young Earth Creationists** and Global Flood advocates. And the majority of those who took the *spiritual-only* death of Adam position were **Old Earthers** and/or Local Flood advocates. So there appears to be a significant correlation between the spiritual-only Death of Adam view and the Old Earth and/or Local Flood views. That relationship seems to be based on their **similar hermeneutic**. They both tend to follow a **spiritualizing or allegorizing hermeneutic**, whereas the Young Earth and Global Flood advocates follow a more **historical and literalizing hermeneutic**.]

Typology of Gen 2-3

The Typology of Scripture (Patrick Fairbairn)

[FROM ED] This is the most thorough treatment of sacrificial typology that I have read. He convincingly argues that the substitutionary sacrificial system was already in place by the time Cain and Abel brought their offerings in Genesis 4 and that this implies that they had learned about sacrifices from their parents, Adam and Eve. This points very decisively toward the conclusion that **Gen 3:21 was the beginning of the sacrificial system when God slayed an animal to provide “garments of skin” to clothe Adam and Eve.** Fairbairn addresses all of the major objections to this view in his very detailed and well-argued chapter on the sacrificial system. We have pulled the very best quotes from his book and put them in a separate PDF entitled, *Sacrificial System-Fairbairn.pdf*. Request your free copy by email attachment. [Patrick Fairbairn. *The Typology of Scripture*. Two Volumes in One: Complete and Unabridged. (Vol. 1, pp. 240-241) Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1952.]

The Study of the Types (Ada R. Habershon)

Types of Calvary (chapter 5) In these days when the doctrine of Atonement by substitution is so often denied, the study of the types is of the utmost importance. It has frequently been noticed that **the red line of the blood runs all through the Old Testament, and that thus we are constantly reminded of the shed blood, without which there is no remission [Heb 9:22].** In the many foreshadowings of the work of Calvary we see a life laid down instead of the life of another, not merely as an example of self-sacrificing love, as men now try to teach. ...

If the disciples had understood that He was the great Antitype to which all had pointed, their faith would not have been so shaken; for they would have seen that it was **only through death that He could redeem man.** It is therefore of the utmost importance that we should be familiar with the Old Testament scenes and institutions which typified His death, even the death of the cross. Paul tells us in 1Cor 15 that **“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”** The fact of His death needed not the testimony of the Scriptures, but **the reason of that death** could only be understood by the study of the prophecies and the types of the Old Testament.

To enumerate each of the latter would be impossible; but if only the best known are studied, it will be seen how **all point to the great event which was the center of the world’s history** – and yet how varied is the teaching, for each one seems to emphasize some particular truth.

The types which **foreshadowed the death of our Lord:** First, we have those where there was the **actual shedding of blood.** Before the offerings were instituted in Leviticus, **many animals had been slain in sacrifice.** We need only turn over a single page in our Bibles to see how **God must have taught Adam and Eve to offer sacrifices.** The *coats of skin* [Gen. 3:21] with which He clothed them evidently point to this, for to supply them **there must have been death;** and so the garment which God provides can only be ours through the **death of Christ.** In the earlier part of this chapter we have Adam and Eve making for themselves aprons of fig-leaves, garments that were not fit for His presence; but He Himself clothes them with that which **speaks of Christ.** In the following chapter, *the lamb* offered by Abel, in contrast to the fruits of the earth presented by Cain, teaches emphatically at the very beginning of God’s Word that **“without shedding of blood there is no remission” [Heb. 9:22];** and also shows that like Abel

we can know even now that we are **accepted of God** because of the Lamb that was slain instead of us.

In both the third and fourth chapters of Genesis we have man's way and God's way contrasted. The fig-leaves and the **coats of skin**, the fruit and **the lamb**, tell us that man's best is not enough, but that **God has given His best**. God must have taught Abel the need of the blood; for we are told in Heb. 11:4 that "by faith" he offered the lamb, and we know that "faith cometh by hearing." God testified of his gifts: but Cain's gift, though beautiful to look at and the fruit of much labor, was a false gift. ... **Religion without Christ and his death is a false gift.**

The Garments of the Believer (chapter 12): Satan, in the garden of Eden, stripped man of his robe of innocency, and left him naked and unfit for God's presence. ... When Adam and Eve found out their condition, they at once tried to remedy it – "The eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons." They probably thought, as so many of their descendants have since done, that they were doing "their best." ...

Though we have this sad picture of man's condition in Gen. 3, the chapter does not close without the Holy Spirit telling us of God's remedy. "Unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." With the first dress, the fig-leaf aprons, God had nothing to do; and with these coats of skins man had nothing to do. They were entirely provided by God, and spoke of Christ Himself, "the Lord our righteousness," who becomes indeed our robe of righteousness as we obey the command, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

These coats of skins remind us of one of the laws of the burnt-offering in Leviticus, which ordained that "the priest that offers any man's burnt-offering, even the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt-offering which he hath offered." The burnt-offering represented, as we have seen, the Godward aspect of Christ's work in all its perfect acceptance; an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. The priests might not partake – it was all for God, all consumed on the altar; but Aaron's sons presented it, and to them belonged the skin, in which they might clothe themselves – a beautiful figure of the standing of the believer as "accepted in the Beloved."

The change of raiment that is needed by each of us is illustrated by several Bible incidents. We do not read that Adam and Eve put the coats of skins over their fig-leaf aprons. They had surely done with the latter forever.

[Ada R. Habershon. *The Study of the Types: Priests and Levites, A Type of the Church*. (Two Volumes in One) Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, Seventh Printing, 1977.]

Scholarly Articles and Study Bible Notes on Gen 2-3

Rose Guide to the Temple (Randall Price)

The Bible reveals that God created humans in his image and that he desired from the beginning of creation to have a relationship with them (Genesis 1:26; 3:8). **But when sin entered the world through the tragic event known as the Fall in the garden of Eden, humankind became alienated from God and forced God to exile them from his presence (Genesis 3:8–19, 23).** To prevent them in this fallen state from reentering the garden, which represented a sanctuary where God's holiness had dwelt, God stationed cherubim to guard the entrance (Genesis 3:24).

Yet God also revealed a way in which human sin could be forgiven and the broken relationship restored. God himself provided a substitute (an animal) whose blood (life)

would atone for sin (Genesis 3:21). This began the sacrificial system. God also revealed the way in which he would return his presence to humanity and restore the earthly relationship once enjoyed in Eden; this was through the building of a sanctuary and maintaining a priesthood to serve God (Exodus 25:8; 27:21). First a tent-like structure called the tabernacle served as the sanctuary; it was later replaced by a permanent structure, the temple in Jerusalem. The sacrificial system was conducted within the tabernacle in the wilderness and later in the temple in Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 12:5–14).

God commanded that an ark of the covenant be constructed and topped with figures of cherubim like those once stationed outside the entrance to Eden (Exodus 25:10; 25:18–20). This ark was placed in the holiest room of the tabernacle and later the temple. **This revealed that once atonement had been made it was again possible for humankind to enter God's presence which was manifested at the ark. However, this was done only through a mediator, the high priest, who represented God's people (Exodus 28:12, 29). The sacrifices and the atonement conducted by the priests of Israel foreshadowed a coming sacrifice and a high priest who would make atonement once for all.** [Randall Price, *Rose Guide to the Temple*, 4.]

ESV Study Bible

God clothes the couple (v. 21). While this final action recognizes that the human couple is now ashamed of their nakedness in God's presence, as a gesture it suggests that God still cares for these, his creatures. **Because God provides garments to clothe Adam and Eve, thus requiring the death of an animal to cover their nakedness, many see a parallel here related to (1) the system of animal sacrifices to atone for sin later instituted by God through the leadership of Moses in Israel, and (2) the eventual sacrificial death of Christ as an atonement for sin.** [Dennis and Grudem, *The ESV Study Bible*, paragraph 1164.]

Andrews University Study Bible (Jon L. Dybdahl)

God covers Adam's and Eve's nakedness. The language used to describe the garments is reminiscent of the clothing of the priests in the tabernacle. **Interestingly, before the priests can begin their service they also need to experience the state of being naked and receiving new garments (Ex. 29:4–5). The sacrificial slaughter of animals is implied when God clothes His wayward children and thus covers their shame.** [Dybdahl, *Andrews University Study Bible*, 11.]

Ryrie Study Bible (Charles Caldwell Ryrie)

The garments of skin were God's provision for **restoring Adam's and Eve's fellowship with Himself and imply slaying of an animal** in order to provide them. [Ryrie, *The Ryrie Study Bible, Expanded*, paragraph 245.]

Journal Articles on Gen 2-3

Conservative Theological Journal (CTJ)

After the first deliberate act of personal sin, a new barrier was established between holy God and sinful man. This obstacle of separation caused an immediate alteration in the previous arrangement of personal relationships. The direct personal relationship (face to face) between the Lord God and Adam shifted to an indirect association that could only be restored through the personal desire and provision of God alone. **The temporary provision of a blood sacrifice**

illustrated the **extreme price for sin**—the **substitutionary death** of an innocent creature (**Gen 3:21**). Another personal benefit of this provision of God was the “garments of skin” that **covered their shame** before God and each other but also replaced their own futile attempt to cover themselves earlier (**Gen 3:7**).

Even in this first judgment of human sin, God stated several prophetic promises for the immediate and distant future: a) eventual victory over evil by a specific individual (**Gen 3:15**—i.e., the Messiah), b) imminent expectation of children for Adam and Eve (**Gen 3:16**), and c) a general hope for an extended life granted after this judgment (**Gen 3:20**). Even in judgment God graciously gave hope of restoration for the future.

As a final consequence for their willful disobedience and to prevent them from existing in an eternal sinful state, they were “(forcibly) driven out” of the ideal environment of the garden of Eden to an unknown and unfamiliar world separated from the presence of God. Then the Lord God “stationed” two significant deterrents “to guard the way to the tree of life” (**Gen 3:22–24**), if they attempted to act upon any desire or temptation to return to their original blissful existence that was now irrevocably forfeited.

- **Barrier of sin/Indirect relationship with God** (**Gen 3:21 vs. 3:8**)
- **Redemption of man/Personal act of grace by God** (**Gen 3:21**)
- **Restoration of spiritual relationship/Provision of God** (**Gen 3:21**)
- **Indirect relationship with God/Vicarious sacrifice** (**Gen 3:21**)

[Russell L. Penney, “Issue 7: December 1998.” *ConTJ* 2:7 (Dec 1998): pp. 444-445, 452, 453.]

Conservative Theological Journal (Ervin Starwalt)

From the beginning, some of the first notable changes that would attest to a new dispensational arrangement were a different location (cf. **3:24**), additional descendants in the first family (**4:1–2**), and a **sacrifice-based relationship of blood atonement** with God (**4:3–5**). The **blood sacrifice** was the only **acceptable means of reconciliation** for those faithful ones who sought to remain in personal fellowship with Him. Of course, this alteration of relationship (now indirect) was portrayed in the first act of personal redemption as personally accomplished by the Lord for Adam and Eve (**Gen 3:21**). [Ervin Starwalt, “Issue 8: April 1999.” *ConTJ* 3 (Apr 1999): p. 109.]

Journal of Dispensational Theology (Kenneth R. Cooper)

This one plan was hinted at even as Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden (**Gen. 3:15**), and when God covered them with the **skins of animals**, requiring the **shedding of blood** to be an adequate coverage (**Gen. 3:21**), thereby giving a **type of Calvary** where the **blood of Christ was poured out** in order to institute the new covenant and make adequate coverage for our sins. [Kenneth R. Cooper, “Issue 30: Sep 2006.” *JODT* 10:30 (Sept 2006): 7.]

Journal of Dispensational Theology (JODT)

Footnote 16, Page 31: The traditional view of “death” affirmed by evangelicals is that no living creatures died prior to Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden, which would mean that the **first “death” that occurred was when the Lord himself slaughtered animals** to provide skins for Adam and Eve (cf. **Gen 3:21**). [Jacob Gaddala, “Issue 44: Apr 2011.” *JODT* 15:44 (Apr 2011): 31.]

Emmaus Journal (David J. Macleod)

In Genesis chapter 3 we find God clothing Adam and Eve in skins (v.21), symbolizing his **forgiveness of their sins**. [David J. Macleod, “The Messiah and Marriage: An Exposition of Matthew 19:1–6 1.” *Emmaus Journal* 15:2 (Winter 2006): p. 13.]

Central Bible Quarterly (Larry Thornton)

Fallen man still retains the right to choose as before the fall though his mind is depraved. He still is to have dominion over the earth by work in using property to sustain himself, but the work is now in toil and in the sweat of his brow. **In his sinful state man was given revelation as to how he might have fellowship with God until a perfect sacrifice should be made for man’s sin (Gen. 3:21; 4:2–7).** [Professor Larry Thornton, “Direct Teaching of Christ On Economics.” *Central Bible Quarterly* 13 (1970): 5.]

Journal of Ministry and Theology (Dr. Gary Gromacki)

God made garments of skin for Adam and Eve. **God had to kill an animal in order to provide skins for them to wear. Possibly He sacrificed a lamb. This would have been the first lamb slain. The text does not say what animals He killed, but a lamb would have been appropriate.** Sacrifice was necessary for them to be clothed. God made the **first sacrifice**. Whenever Adam and Eve put on clothes, they would be **reminded of the sacrifice** God made for them. [Gary Gromacki. “Adam: Man Or Myth?.” *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 15 (Spring 2011): 66]

Bibliotheca Sacra (Robert Clark)

Priesthood is a function that has been in operation since the beginning of the human race. In Old Testament times there were three orders of men that were especially set apart by anointing with holy oil, for a particular vocation; these were the kingly, the prophetic and the priestly orders. A king, in Old Testament times, was one who was to rule men for God. A prophet was one who spoke for God to men. And a priest was one who spoke for men to God. The priestly office came first in time, as it did also in respect to man’s need. **When our first parents sinned and fell from the high estate into which they had been created, God Himself exercised the office of a priest when He slew animals and provided a covering** for His unfortunate creatures (Gen 3:21). He was, **in type**, propitiating the Divine government on behalf of the sinful state of mankind (Rom 3:25). Abel was doing priestly service “when he offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts” (Heb 11:4). In the patriarchal period the head of the family was the priest. He would build an altar, offer a sacrifice and call on God for help. We read that as Abraham journeyed from place to place, he built an altar unto the Lord and called on the name of the Lord (Gen 12:7, 8). Later, when Israel had been [BibSac 92:368 (Oct 35) p. 444] delivered from Egyptian bondage and was about to receive the Law, God proposed to make them “a kingdom of priests” (Exod 19:6); but Israel refused the obligation through fear of too close contact with God (Exod 20:19) and God accepted their renunciation (Deut 18:16, 17). Moses became the Mediator with God for them. **The Aaronic priesthood became the temporary depository of all Israel’s priesthood, until Christ the antitypical High Priest came.** [Robert Clark, “The Imperial Priesthood of the Believer (Revelation 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5,9) -.” *BibSac* 92 (1935): 443-444.]

Journal of Ministry and Theology (Terry Mortenson)

So, as in the case of the fall, God did not judge only man in the flood. The non-human creation also was judged. Because of man's wickedness, millions of land animals and birds perished. With tsunamis set off by the fountains of the great deep breaking open (Gen 7:11), millions of sea creatures would have also died as they were washed up on the land or buried in sediments coming off the land. The massive flooding would have also ripped up all the land vegetation.

This connection of God's judgment of man with the suffering and death of non-human creatures associated with man is seen elsewhere in Scripture as well. **For example, the first recorded animal death** is implied by **Genesis 3:21**, when God made coats of sin as a covering for Adam and Eve. This seems **the most logical explanation for how Abel knew to sacrifice animals from his flock for his sin** (Gen 4:4), which is the **first explicit description** of animal sacrifice in the Bible. The **whole later sacrificial system of Israel** shows that God used the death of innocent animals ("without blemish") as a covering for sin. **Accepting millions of years of animal death before the fall breaks asunder this connection between animal death, sin, and restoration of man's relationship with God.** [Terry Mortenson, "The Fall and The Problem of Millions of Years of Natural Evil." *JMAT* 16 (2012): 131-132.]

Bibliotheca Sacra (Sidney Greidanus)

Genesis 3:15 is a preview of the death of Christ. In that Scripture the fact of Christ's death, its relation to angelic authorities, and its relation to sin and judgment are intimated. It is fitting that a recognition of the cross and its final triumph should appear in those chapters where all beginnings are recorded.

The coats of skin (Gen 3:21). Jehovah undertook in behalf of the first sinners of the human race. It is declared that He Himself clothed them with skins, **the implication being that blood was shed.** Reason rather than revelation asserts that **animal sacrifice was then introduced by God, and that it was from this action on Jehovah's part that Abel knew the truth by which he was guided in presenting an accepted sacrifice to Jehovah.** Few types are as complete as this. God undertakes for man; the **imputation of sin to a substitute** is implied; and the **covering of the sinner** is revealed. [Dallas, Texas, "Soteriology." *BibSac* 104 (1947): 23, 21.]

Bibliotheca Sacra (Sidney Greidanus)

Clothing of Adam and Eve. In the midst of the ruin of sin and the judgment which followed the fall of Adam and Eve, the Scriptures record a gracious thing which God did for fallen humanity. In Genesis 3:21 (A.R.V.) it is written: "And Jehovah God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins, and clothed them." It was, of course, a supply of a physical need for clothing which God recognized, but it seems evident that **the meaning is deeper than this.** God was representing to them the fact that **He would supply that which would cover the nakedness of sin and provide a righteous covering through the death of Christ, a thought which is given frequent utterance in Scripture (Job 29:14; Ps 132:9; Isa 61:10; 64:6; Rom 3:22; Rev 19:8).** [Dallas, Texas, "Series in Christology." *BibSac* 105:419 (July 1948): 294-295.]

Bibliotheca Sacra (Sidney Greidanus)

The knowledge of God was handed down from Adam to his sons. Through them not only the person of God was known but the **principle of sacrifice was perpetuated.** Abel's offering (Gen 4) shows that he must have understood how sinners could only approach God through a **blood sacrifice**, which fact was **made known to Adam when God clothed him with the coat of skins**

(Gen 3:21). This knowledge of sacrifice continued through the generations leading to Noah and Abraham. A grand example of the traditional knowledge of God among the Gentiles is found in Job and his friends. They understood the person of God and His judgments upon sin. Another truth which was known by tradition was that of a promised redeemer (Gen 3:15). Thousands of years later, Job declared his faith in the hope of a redeemer who was to come (Job 19:25). [Englewood, Colorado, “God and the Gentiles Part 1.” *BibSac* 109:436 (Oct 1952): 367.]

Bibliotheca Sacra (Sidney Greidanus)

“Why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt 27:46). *The Interrogation in the Fourth Utterance from the Cross:* The answer to the question of our Lord involves one in the continuing discussion of the atonement, and yet we cannot do more than relate our text to some of the leading features of that debate. There are three well-known theological answers to the question of Christ’s atonement. **The first is the theory of Peter Abelard,** best known as the subjective, or moral influence, view. The cross reveals the love of God and produces faith and love in believers, which is the basis of the forgiveness of sins. This theory finds a measure of support from Peter’s statement: “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, *leaving us an example*, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Pet 2:21, italics mine). **This, however, has nothing to do with the forgiveness of sins, and this is the weakness of Abelard’s view.**

A **second answer** is the theory which has been returned to popularity in comparatively recent times by Gustaf Aulén’s exceptionally good little book, *Christus Victor*. He called it “the ‘classic idea’ of the atonement.”¹⁰ The classic idea, first suggested by Ignatius probably, at least outside the Biblical records, sees the atonement as a conflict between God and Satan with man in the middle. Christ defeats Satan on the cross by dying for sin and thus frees man from bondage to Satan, who held man captive as a result of sin. There is a large emphasis on the classic view in the Bible. For example, John writes: “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8; cf. Col 2:15; Heb 2:14–15). **And, furthermore, it is prominent in the first promise of redemption in the Bible, the protoevangelium of Genesis 3:15 (the penal satisfaction theory is also suggested in Gen 3:20–21).** It is not saying too much to contend that the basis of Christ’s atonement is the vindication of God in His victory over sin and Satan. **But the classic view does not say all there is to say about atonement.**

A **third answer** [and the correct one, ees] was that of **Anselm of Canterbury**, the so-called objective, or **satisfaction**, view. In his famous *Cur Deus Homo*, he pointed out that **Christ made satisfaction to God for man’s sin by offering Himself as a substitutionary sacrifice for men.** Anselm’s view finds expression in many Biblical passages and is probably the most popular view among evangelicals. Our Lord sets it forth in the words: “For even the Son of man came, not to be ministered unto but to minister, and *to give his life a ransom for many*” (**Mark 10:45**, italics mine; cf. **Rom 3:24–25**). While there is a measure of truth in each theory (and quite a bit of error in Abelard’s), and while it is honest also to admit that no one theory does full justice to the transcendent greatness of the atonement of Christ, yet if we are to construct a Biblical theory of the atonement, it must stress the features of Anselm’s view. In my opinion, it is along the lines of Anselm’s **penal satisfaction theory** that a solution to the meaning of the cry of desolation is to be found.

The interrogation, “why?” The question of our Lord was not a question that arose out of unbelief, as we noted above. It, rather, is best understood as a request on the level of His genuine humanity for more information regarding the experience of the desolate judicial separation from God which He was undergoing for our sins. It represented one of the many features of the “perfection” of our incomparable Redeemer (cf. Luke 2:40, 52; Heb 2:10; 5:7–10; Mark 13:32).

The explanation, “forsaken.” The word *forsaken* is the clue to the meaning of the cross. It expresses in the most direct and forthright manner the **separation of God from Jesus of Nazareth**. That separation is **spiritual death**, and it represents the penalty for sin that Jesus paid for men. That this separation must have been **substitutionary**, that is, for others, is indicated by the following questions:

1. Would a loving God forsake the only good man who ever lived (cf. Matt 3:17; Ps 37:25)? The answer to that question must be “no.” Then Jesus, the only good man who ever lived, must have been **forsaken for others**.

2. Would a loving God injure the only innocent man who ever lived? The answer must be the same, with the **same conclusion**. There is no question that this involves an offence to man’s self-righteousness, but let us listen to Cranfield on this point. “Various attempts have been made to get rid of its offence: e.g., it has been suggested that Jesus had the whole psalm in mind and that therefore the saying was really an expression of faith cut short by physical weakness which prevented him from quoting more; or that Jesus felt forsaken but was not really forsaken. **But such softening explanations are unsatisfactory. Rather is the cry to be understood in the light of Jn 14.36, 2Cor. 5.21, Gal 3.13. The burden of the world’s sin, his complete self-identification with sinners, involved not merely a felt, but a real, abandonment by his Father. It is in the cry of dereliction that the full horror of man’s sin stands revealed. But the cry also marks the lowest depth of the hiddenness of the Son of God—and so the triumphant τετέλεσται of Jn 19.30 is, paradoxically, its true interpretation. When this depth had been reached, the victory had been won.**”¹¹

In view of this it is difficult to understand how a leading Protestant can write, in the light of the clear teaching of the New Testament (cf. **Gal 3:13; 2Cor 5:21**), “If God dealt with Him as if He were a sinner and the greatest sinner, then we must say of God (as a cynical Frenchman did say of God of these penal theologies): ‘Your God is my devil.’”¹² True to the Scriptures was the statement Professor James S. Stewart of the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, made in the Stone Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary a few years ago; “This is the heart of the atonement: Jesus Christ stood in the stead of others.”¹³

The necessity of substitution. The necessity for substitution in the atonement is bound up in the demands of a holy God, who must have His righteousness and justice satisfied in order that He may be legally free to extend His love to the lost. Put in other words, the good pleasure of God to save sinners, founded in His love and justice, has expressed itself in the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ. **As Scripture itself has expressed it: “For he hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2Cor 5:21). Or, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree” (Gal 3:13).**

The cry of dereliction, then, was occasioned by the atonement. It vividly expressed for men the unknown sufferings of the vicarious Sufferer as He bore the guilt and penalty of sin for us men at the hands of a loving but holy God. As a stanza from one of our hymns puts it,

“He pleads His passion on the tree,
He shows Himself to God for me.”

The truth was expressed in the Old Testament in various ways, **the sin-offering of Leviticus**, the ordinance governing the cleaning of the leper, the experience of the brazen serpent, etc. It is found implicitly in the very psalm Jesus cited. For, after uttering his complaint in vss. 1–2 the psalmist then cries out: “But thou *art* holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of

Israel” (Ps 22:3). That pointed clause, “But thou art holy,” vividly denotes the necessity of atonement. And since this was the only way our redemption could be secured, God took the initiative and carried it out, so that the prophet’s words are wonderfully true, “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him” (Isa 53:10).

The triumphant conclusion. If the Savior is perplexed for a moment, it is only for a moment, because He soon is heard shouting, “It is finished” (cf. John 19:30), and commending His spirit to the Father (Luke 23:46). And now, as a direct result of the experience of being forsaken on Golgotha, the author of Hebrews is able to assure us confidently that He has confirmed the Old Testament promise to us, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb 13:5).

The fourth utterance from the cross, then, does give us a satisfying rationale for the comprehension of the cross and the atonement. It enables us to understand the compelling appeal it had for the first Christians, because it exerts upon us, too, its ancient power. And we, in response, sing:

“Well might the sun in darkness hide
And shut his glory in,
When Christ the mighty maker died
For man the creature’s sin.”

May I say just a few words in conclusion to this brief and simple exposition. In the first place, the picture before us in this august scene contains implicitly a solemn warning. (The death that He died opens a window on the terrible consequence of eternal death. If it produced from Him, the only sinless man, this agonizing cry in the midst of such utter desolation, what must it portend for those who shall for their own sin fully and justly suffer what Paul calls, “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord” (cf. 2 Thess 1:9)?

Finally, I think I now understand in a better way the beloved apostle’s majestic utterance, “Great is the mystery of godliness” (1Tim 3:16). **Who can fully comprehend the cross? Yet who, touched by God’s Spirit, can fail to appreciate it?** Henry C. Mabie, missionary statesman and author of books on the cross, used to tell of the gospel being preached to a South African tribe. The chief of the tribe listened intently and called for the repetition of the story of the cross. While the missionary was again lifting up His Savior, the chief rushed forward, crying, “Hold on! Hold on! Take Jesus Christ down from the cross. Take Him down, I say. Jesus Christ does not belong on that cross—I belong on that cross.” Luther was right. The theology of the cross is the theology of light: “In perfect love he dies; For me He dies, for me. O all-atoning sacrifice, I cling by faith to Thee.”

Footnotes:

¹ Helmut Thielecke, *The Silence of God*, pp. 67, 68–69.

² The perfect participle *estaurōmenon* (AV, “crucified”), and extensive perfect, lays a great deal of stress upon the cross. It suggests that Paul in his preaching painted the picture so vividly before them that it remained indelibly imprinted upon their minds (cf. 1:23; Gal 3:1). Moule remarks that the perfect looks at the event as “an abiding force” (cf. C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, pp. 14, 202). The anarthrous construction supports this emphasis. Phillips has caught its force beautifully: “You may as well know now that it was my secret determination to concentrate entirely on Jesus Christ Himself and the fact of His death upon the Cross” (J. B. Phillips, *Letters to Young Churches*, p. 40). Way has: “I

determined to make no display of knowledge before you, except of the Messiah—and of Him only as a crucified Messiah” (cf. Arthur S. Way, *The Letters of St. Paul*, p. 25).

³ The theology of the cross—the theology of light.

⁴ The term **Calvary** (cf. AV, Luke 23:33) is derived from the Latin Vulgate. In Latin *calvaria* means a **skull**. Our hymnology, which has made the term *Calvary* so meaningful to evangelical Christians as the place where redemption was accomplished, is thus indebted to the Latin Vulgate. **Golgotha** comes from the Aramaic *gûlgoltâ*. **There is an ancient legend that Adam was buried there, which suggests tantalizing correspondences. The identification, of course, cannot be proved.**

⁵ The texts of Matthew and Mark differ slightly in the opening words of the cry. Matthew reports the two words of address in their Hebrew form, while Mark has them in Aramaic. It is difficult, therefore, to be sure of the exact words of the cry. We might add at this point that the doctrine of verbal inspiration is not affected by the question. It is the prerogative of the writer to report the words in either language (our Lord undoubtedly spoke often in Aramaic, and yet His words are almost always reported in Greek by the evangelists). We are, nevertheless, interested in seeking to discover His precise words.

The words are an evident citation of Psalm 22:1, with Mark’s rendering in its entirety being independent of the Septuagint (cf. T. W. Manson, “The Old Testament in the Teaching of Jesus,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 34 (1951–1952): 327–28).

The Matthaean version, Hebrew in its opening address and Aramaic in its interrogation, is perhaps original. It would be more easily confused with Elijah’s name (cf. vs. 47). Further, Targum Onkelos has this same ‘eli, ‘eli in its rendering of the Psalm, so the rendering would be familiar to every Aramaic speaking Jew (cf. Gustaf Dalman, *The Words of Jesus*, pp.53–54), although less likely to be expected in this Aramaic context. This is also the judgment of Joachim Jeremias (cf. “Ηλ(ε)ίας,” *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, II, 937).

One thing is certain: The words are not invented. They formed a constant source of embarrassment to some early believers, as is evidenced by their omission in Luke and John perhaps, and by the variations in the textual tradition (cf. C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark*, p. 455).

⁶ Joachim Jeremias, *The Central Message of the New Testament*, pp. 14–17.

⁷ Arthur W. Pink, *The Seven Sayings of the Saviour on the Cross*, p. 75.

⁸ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Treasury of the New Testament*, III, 744.

⁹ Thielecke, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

¹⁰ Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor*, p. 4. The theory has sometimes been confused with the ransom-to-Satan view.

¹¹ Cranfield *op. cit.*, pp. 458–59.

¹² George A. Buttrick, *Great Themes of the Christian Faith*, p. 18.

¹³ James W. Reapsome and Herschel O. Engebretson, “Princeton—Then and Now,” *Sunday School Times*, 104. No. 24:440 (June 16, 1962).

[S. Lewis Johnson, Jr, “The Death of Christ.” *BibSac* 125:497 (Jan 1968): 15-20.]

In Gen 3:21 we see God’s grace in that He “made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.” God equips them to face the hostile environment outside the garden. [Sidney Greidanus, “Preaching Christ from the Narrative of the Fall.” *BibSac* 161 (2004): 272.]

Sermons and Other Studies

Gen 3:21 – [R. C. Trench, Sermon Bible Commentary]

The whole mystery of justification is wrapped up in the details of this story.

- I. We have the fact as in a parable that man is utterly impotent to bring to pass any satisfying righteousness of his own. He can see his shame, but he cannot effectually cover or conceal it. The garments of our own righteousness are fig-leaves all, and we shall prove them such. Let God once call to us, and we shall find how little all these devices of our own can do for us. We shall stand shivering, naked and ashamed, before Him.
- II. While we thus learn that man cannot clothe himself, we learn also that God undertakes to clothe him. As elsewhere He has said in word, "I am the Lord that heals you," so here He says in act, "I am the Lord that clothes you." **He can yet devise a way by which His banished shall return to Him.**
- III. We note in this Scripture that the clothing which God found for Adam could only have been **obtained at the cost of a life**, and that the life of one unguilty, of one who had no share or part in the sin which made the providing of it needful. We have here **the first institution of sacrifice; God Himself is the institutor.** It is a **type and shadow, a prelude and prophecy of the crowning sacrifice on Calvary.**

Are not the lessons which we may draw from all this plain and palpable enough? (1) There is no robe of our own righteousness which can cover us and conceal our shame. (2) That righteousness which we have not in ourselves we must be content and thankful to receive at the hands of God. (3) Not Christ by His life, but by His life and death, and mainly by His death, supplies these garments for our spirits' need. [R. C. Trench, *Sermons preached in Westminster Abbey*, p. 118. References: Gen. 3:21 – J. Keble, *Sermons for the Christian Year*, vol. iii., p. 181; B. Waugn, *Sunday Magazine* (1887) p. 210; L. D. Bevan, *Christ and the Age*, p. 209]

Gen 3:21 – Pulpit Commentary [Sermon on Gen 3:21 by J. F. Montgomery]

Spiritual meaning of clothing (Rev 3:18; 7:14; 2Cor 5:3). **And note that the root meaning of "atonement" in Hebrew is "to cover." Thus the covering is a type of justification; God's gift to convicted sinners** (cf. Zech 3:4; 3:5; Luke 15:22; and the lack of this covering, Matt 22:11). With Adam's attempt and God's gift compare the sacrifices of Cain and Abel. Abel's sacrifice of life accepted through faith (Heb 11:4), i.e. because **he believed and acted upon God's direction.** **Thus atonement, covering, through the sacrifice of life** (cf. Gen 17:11), typical of Christ's sacrifice, must have been ordained of God. And thus, though not expressly stated, we may conclude that Adam was instructed to sacrifice, and that the skins from the animals thus slain were a type of the covering of sin through the one great sacrifice (Rom 4:7).

Gen 3:21 – Pulpit Commentary

II. ACCEPTANCE (Gen 3:21).

1. In the Divine scheme of salvation **acceptance ever follows on the exercise of faith.** See the language of the New Testament generally on the subject of a sinner's justification. **The covering of our first parents with coats of skin, apart altogether from any symbolical significance in the act, could scarcely be regarded as other than a token of Jehovah's favor.**

2. According to the same scheme, **the clothing of a sinner ever accompanies the act of his acceptance**. In New Testament theology the Divine act of justification is always represented as proceeding on the ground that **in the eye of God the sinner stands invested with a complete covering (the righteousness of Christ) which renders him both legally and morally acceptable**. That all this was comprehended with perfect fullness and clearness by the pardoned pair it would be foolish to assert; but, in a fashion accommodated to their simple intelligences, **the germ of this doctrine was exhibited by the coats of skin with which they were arrayed**, and it is at least possible that they had a deeper insight into the significance of the Divine action than we are always prepared to allow.
3. In the teaching of the gospel scheme the **providing of a sinner with such a covering** as he requires must ever be the work of God, though not improbable that **the coats of skin were furnished by the hides of animals, now for the first time offered in sacrifice by Divine appointment**, the simple circumstance that they were God-provided, apart from any other consideration, was sufficient to suggest the thought that only God could supply the covering which was needed for their sin.

III. DISCIPLINE (Gen 3:22-24).

Rightly interpreted, neither the language of Jehovah nor that of Moses warrants the idea that the expulsion was designed as a penal infliction; but rather as a measure **mercifully intended and wisely adapted for the spiritual edification of the pardoned pair**. Three elements were present in it that are seldom absent from the discipline of saints.

1. Removal of comforts. The initial act in the discipline of Adam and his wife was to eject them from the precincts of Eden. **And so oftentimes does God begin the work of sanctification in his people's hearts by the infliction of loss**. In the case of Adam and his spouse there were special reasons demanding their removal from the garden, as, e.g.,
 - (1) its non-suitability as a home for them now that their pure natures were defiled by sin; and
 - (2) the danger of their continuing longer in the vicinity of the tree of life. And the same two reasons will frequently be found to explain God's dealings with his people when he inflicts upon them loss of creature comforts; the non-suitability of those comforts to their wants as spiritual beings; and the presence of some special danger in the things removed.
2. Increase of sorrow. Besides being ejected from the garden, the first pair were henceforth to be subjected to toil and trouble. Adam in tilling the ground, and Eve in bearing children. And this, too, was a **part of God's educational process** with our first parents; as, indeed, the sufferings of this present life inflicted on his people generally are all **commissioned on a like errand, viz; to bring forth within them the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and to make them partakers of his holiness**.
3. Sentence of death. The words "whence he was taken" have an echo in them of "dust thou art," and must have **extinguished within the breasts of Adam and his wife all hope of returning to Eden on this side the grave**; perhaps, too, would assist them in **seeking for a better country, even an heavenly**. To prevent saints from seeking Edens on the earth seems to be one of the main designs of death.

IV. Hope (Gen 3:24).

Though excluded from the garden, man was **not without cheering ingredients of hope** in his condition.

1. **The Divine presence was still with him.** The cherubim and flaming sword were symbols of the ineffable majesty of Jehovah, and tokens of his presence. And never since has the world been abandoned by the God of mercy and salvation.
2. **Paradise was still reserved for him.** The cherubim and flaming sword were appointed "to keep the way of the tree of life;" not simply to guard the entrance, but to protect the place. So is heaven a reserved inheritance (1Pe 1:4).
3. **The prospect of readmission to the tree of life was yet before him.** As much as this was implied in the jealous guarding of the gate so long as Adam was defiled by sin. It could not fail to suggest the idea that when purified by life's discipline he would no longer be excluded (cf. Rev 22:14).
4. **The gate of heaven was still near him.** He was still permitted to reside in the vicinity of Eden, and to commune with him who dwelt between the cherubim, though denied the privilege as yet of dwelling with him in the interior of his abode. If debarred from the full inheritance, **he had at least its earnest.** And exactly this is the situation of saints on earth, who, unlike those within the veil, who see the Lord of the heavenly paradise face to face, **can only commune with him, as it were, at the gate of his celestial palace.**

Lessons to Learn—

1. To **believe** God's promise of **salvation.**
2. To be **grateful** for God's gift of **righteousness.**
3. To **submit** with cheerfulness to **God's paternal discipline.**
4. To live in **hope** of entering **God's heaven.**

Gen 3:21 – Preacher's Homiletical Commentary

A gracious providence puts clothes on the backs of sinners.

The guilty clothed: 1. By God. 2. With priceless robe. 3. For shelter. 4. For happiness.

We have here, in figure, the **great doctrine of divine righteousness** set forth. The robe which God provided was an **effectual covering** because He provided it; just as the apron was an **ineffectual covering** because man had provided it. **Moreover, God's coat was founded upon blood-shedding.** Adam's apron was not. So also, now, **God's righteousness is set forth in the cross;** man's righteousness is set forth in the works, the sin stained works, of his own hands. When Adam stood clothed in the coat of skin he could not say, "I was naked," nor had he any occasion to hide himself. The sinner may feel perfectly at rest, when, by faith, he knows that God has clothed him: but to feel at rest, till then, can only be the result of presumption or ignorance. To know that the dress I wear, and in which I appear before God, is of His own providing, must set my heart at perfect rest. There can be no permanent rest in anything else. – (C.H.M.)

William Magee. *Discourses and Dissertations on Atonement and Sacrifice*

Pages 43-46 – It is clear from the words of scripture, that both Cain and Abel made oblations to the Lord. It is clear also ... that Abel's was animal sacrifice [and] that Abel's was accepted, while that of Cain was rejected. ... If we look to the writer to the Hebrews, he informs us that the ground on which Abel's oblation was preferred to that of Cain, was that Abel offered his in faith; and the criterion of this faith also appears to have been the *animal* sacrifice. ... Abel offered that which was much more of the true nature of sacrifice than what had been offered by Cain. ... What then are we to infer? **Without some revelation granted, some assurance held out as the object of faith, Abel could not have exercised this virtue: and without some peculiar mode of sacrifice enjoined, he could not have exemplified his faith by an appropriate offering. ... Let us**

consider whether this could have a connexion with any divine assurance communicated at that early day.

It is obvious that the promise made to our first parents conveyed an intimation of some future deliverer [Gen 3:15], who should overcome the tempter that had drawn man from his innocence, and remove those evils which had been occasioned by the fall. This assurance, without which, or some other ground of hope, it seems difficult to conceive how the principle of religion [the expectation of redemption] could have had place among men, became to our first parents the grand object of faith.

To perpetuate this fundamental article of religious belief among the descendants of Adam, some striking memorial of the fall of man, and of the promised deliverance, would naturally be appointed. And if we admit that the scheme of redemption by the death of the only begotten Son of God was determined from the beginning; that is, if we admit that when God had ordained the deliverance of man, he had ordained the means: if we admit that Christ was *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*; what memorial could be devised more apposite than that of animal sacrifice – exemplifying by the slaying of the victim, the death which had been denounced against man's disobedience – thus exhibiting the awful lesson of that death which was the wages of sin, and at the same time representing that death which was actually to be undergone by the Redeemer of mankind, and hereby connecting in one view the two great cardinal events in the history of man – the Fall and the Recovery: the death denounced against sin, and the death appointed for that Holy One who was to lay down his life to deliver man from the consequences of sin.

The institution of animal sacrifice seems then to have been peculiarly significant, as containing all the elements of religious knowledge. And the adoption of this rite, with sincere and pious feelings, would at the same time imply an humble sense of the unworthiness of the offerer; a confession that death, which was inflicted on the victim, was the desert of those sins which had arisen from man's transgression; and a full reliance upon the promises of deliverance, joined to an acquiescence in the means appointed for its accomplishment.

Pages 381-382 – On the Probable Time and Occasion of the Institution of Sacrifice: The event [the Fall of Adam] which gave birth to the establishment of the rite seems obviously to determine the *time* of its institution. The commission of sin and the promise of a Redeemer being the grand objects of its reference, no period seems more fit for its appointment than that at which sin first entered and the promise was first delivered: that is, the period immediately succeeding the fall. And indeed, the *manner* in which the first sacrifice recorded in scripture [Gen 4:3-4] is introduced in the narrative, strongly indicates **the pre-existence of the rite**: ... a stated time for the performance of this duty, and the whole turn of phrase marking a previous and familiar observance.

If then, sacrifice be admitted to have been coeval with the fall, every argument which has been adduced to prove that Abel offered sacrifices in obedience to the divine injunction, will apply with increased force to show that Adam must have done the same. Scripture also supplies additional confirmation by the fact which it relates of the first pair having been by the express command of God, clothed with the skins of beasts. Much as some have endeavoured to depreciate the value of this fact, it will be found, when more closely examined, to supply a strong evidence on this head. That the beasts, whose skins were allotted for covering to our first parents had been slain, is natural to suppose, as it is not reasonable to think that any animals had died of themselves so soon after the creation, and without having yet experienced any severities of climate or situation. Now there were no purposes for which they could have been slain, unless

those of food, sacrifice, or covering. That they were not slain for food has been sufficiently established. Neither can it be admitted that they were slain merely for covering, since it cannot be supposed that Adam would immediately after the sentence of the divine displeasure have dared to kill God's creatures without his permission. Nor is it likely that God should order them to be slain solely for their skins, when man could have been supplied with sufficient covering from the hair and wool – and when the flesh of the animal not being permitted for food, there must have been an unnecessary waste of the creatures. It follows then, that they had been slain with a view to sacrifice. This alone supplies an adequate reason.

The *whole* of the animal (if the offering be supposed an *holocaust*, as there is good reason to conclude all to have been until the Mosaic institution) would here be devoted to the uses of religion, except the skin which would be employed for the purpose of clothing. And even *this* might not be without its moral and religious end, as it might serve to our first parents for a constant memorial of their transgressions – of the death which it merited – and of the divine mercy by which that death was withheld. It seems also not unlikely that from this institution was derived the appointment in Lev. 7:8 that the priest should have the *skin* of the burnt-offering [seven references are provided to support this].

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, two other writers have suggested similar ideas: John Rucker and Darwin Chandler. And Adam Clarke made some very suggestive comments which move in this same direction. Here is what Rucker said in the *Scripture Research* magazine:

...The obvious question should be, did Adam and Eve actually die a physical death the day they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as God had said? ...God Himself settled the issue for them in Genesis 3:21 (*AV*), where we read: "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them." We might ask, where did God procure the skins with which he clothed Adam and Eve? Did He just find them lying about, ready to hand out for His purpose? The answer is, He took the skins from animals which He obviously *slew* for the specific purpose of clothing Adam and Eve, to cover or atone for their sin. And so the *animals died that day*, INSTEAD or *in place* of Adam and Eve, who were *reckoned to have died physically* in THAT VERY DAY in the death of the sacrificial animals. The animals represented a type of Christ. Just so we too who are alive in this age have been *reckoned* to have died with Christ when he died upon the cross. We are alive now, even as Adam and Eve, who continued to live then in the flesh. This is the first sacrifice revealed in the Bible. The death Adam and Eve were *reckoned to have died that day* was truly a physical death, not a spiritual death, just as the death of the animals was a physical death, not spiritual. And so we find that God is true, and the pundits are in error again. Adam was not created with a spiritual body, but with a soulish or fleshly body, and he will never have or enjoy a spiritual body until subsequent to resurrection. [John Rucker, article entitled, "The Truth of Discipline" found in the *Scripture Research* magazine, Volume 4, Number 10, pages 4-6. Riverside, California USA: Scripture Research Inc. Italics and ALL CAPS were original to Rucker. Downloaded from the *Scripture Research* website on 6/9/2011: <http://www.scriptureresearch.org/SRV4,%20N10.pdf>]

Darwin Chandler affirms the same idea in a lot less words. Notice his emphasis on the idea of a "sacrificial substitute," or "substitute victim," which "represented the death owed by the man":

In harmony with God's preplanned arrangement for atonement, physical death was **required** "in the day" of the sin, and was just as surely **given!** An animal was slain from which clothes were taken in the form of skins. It must be so that the slain animal was the substitute victim for Adam and Eve. Physical death came into Eden "in that day," but it came upon man's sacrificial substitute. When the animal was slain, it **represented** the death owed by the man. [Darwin Chandler. "The Fate of Innocence" (article title) found in the *Expository Review* (vol. 1, no. 10, Oct. 1982) found at the Expository Review website on 6/25/11 -- <http://www.expositoryreview.com/old-ter/backissues/vol01-10-fateof.htm>]

Adam Clarke notes the extreme typological, soteriological and redemptive significance of this occasion for the institution of the sacrificial system. Although he does not affirm that Adam and Eve "died with" the sacrificial substitute "on that day," he does indicate that the animal death was "an emblem and type of that death which should conquer Satan":

God made coats of skins. It is very likely that the skins out of which their clothing was made were taken off animals whose blood had been poured out as a sin-offering to God; for as we find Cain and Hebel offering sacrifices to God, we may fairly presume that God had given them instructions on this head; nor is it likely that the notion of a sacrifice could have ever occurred to the mind of man without an express revelation from God. Hence we may safely infer, that as Adam and Eve needed this clothing as soon as they fell, and death had not as yet made any ravages in the animal world, it is most likely that the skins were taken off victims offered under the direction of God himself, and in faith of HIM who, in the fullness of time, was to make an atonement by his death. And it seems reasonable also that this matter should be brought about in such a way that Satan and death should have no triumph, when the very first death that took place in the world was an emblem and type of that death which should conquer Satan, destroy his empire, reconcile God to man, convert man to God, sanctify human nature, and prepare it for heaven. [*Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, comments on Gen. 3:21]

The substitutionary death of that sacrificial animal offers a realistic solution to the problem of physical death on the very day that they sinned in the garden. Using this approach, it is easy to see how God was working in all of this to accomplish His marvelous plan of redemption. It presents a perfect typological picture of Christ at the very beginning of human history.

It is also worth pointing out that the Protoevangelium (Gen. 3:15), God's promise to bring forth a kinsman-redeemer from the seed of Eve who would crush the serpent's head, is **further acted out in the substitutionary sacrifice that God performed in front of Adam and Eve.** This certainly had to be the beginning of the sacrificial system, and the origin of the sacrificial lamb motif that recurs constantly throughout both old and new testaments. For instance, we see the ram (lamb) caught in a thicket on Mount Moriah, the Passover lamb in Egypt, the statement of John the Baptist about Jesus being the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, and

preeminent of all, that marvelous text in Revelation (5:6) where John saw “a Lamb standing, as if slain.” I am sure that Adam and Eve will recognize that Lamb as the one who was typified to them in the garden on the day that they died with him and put on his skin.

PHYSICAL DEATH BY SUBSTITUTE –

When God killed a sacrificial animal to provide skins for Adam and Eve to cover their nakedness, that sacrificial Lamb *died in their place*. They “**died with**” the lamb on that day, and “**put on**” the skin of that lamb to cover their guilt and shame. And when the lamb *died physically on that day*, they “died with” it, just like we “**die with**” **Christ** on the day of our conversion (Rom 6:8; Col 2:20; 2Tim 2:11; cf. Rom 6:4-5; Gal 2:19-20; 1Pet 2:24). They “put on” the skins of the sacrificial lamb in the same way we “**put on**” **Christ** in our conversion (Rom 13:14; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10-12; Rev 3:5; 3:18; 19:8; 2Cor 5:21; Rom 5:19; Phlp 3:9), which covers our sin and enables us to stand uncondemned and righteous in God’s presence.

We can only imagine the horror that gripped the emotions of Adam and Eve as they watched God slay the sacrificial lamb in front of them “on that day.” They saw its death tremors, as the last drops of blood spurted out of its veins, and it died. *Adam and Eve “died with” that lamb on that very day*. They knew that the death which the lamb suffered was what they themselves deserved. The innocent lamb died in their place. They were now fully mortal (subject to death, and destined to die physically). Their souls would go to Sheol or Hades, and their bodies would return to dust permanently.

Then at the time of the End when the Son of Adam came to crush the serpent’s head, God raised their disembodied souls out of Sheol and give them new immortal bodies with which to live in heaven with Him. The skin of the lamb not only covered their guilt and shame, but also pointed to their new immortal bodies which God would provide through the death of His Son, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29, 36). The prophet Isaiah (53:7-8) points to this very thing (“*like a lamb...cut off...for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due*”). And Revelation 5:6 pictures Christ before the heavenly throne as “**a lamb standing as if slain.**” God provided the sacrificial Lamb for Himself (Gen. 22:8). When we “die with” Him and “put on” the garments of Christ, we are given hope of life in heaven with a new immortal body.

God promised a redeemer, and the sacrificial system was instituted on that very day to bear witness to the coming Son of Adam who would be the Lamb of God to take away the power of sin and death. He **died for us** (Rom 5:8; 1Thess 5:10). They “died with” that lamb “on that day,” and thus began the redemptive drama through the substitutionary sacrificial system. Adam and Eve still had to die physically because they no longer had access to the Tree of Life, but a human substitute, the God-man Christ Jesus, came to die in their place and give them real covering for their spiritual nakedness and the very kind of immortal body that they needed to live in heaven with God. Christ not only provided a covering for our guilt and shame here in this life, but also eternal clothing (new immortal bodies like His) to cover our sins forever in heaven. Those skins proved that a substitutionary sacrificial death had taken place to cover their sin.

So, the solution to the “death on that very day” dilemma is now very clear. The substitutionary death of that sacrificial animal was the physical death that was required.

Adam was created “mortal” in the sense that he was “able to die”. But as long as he continued to be faithful he would have had access to the Tree of Life which would have extended his physical life until he reached the end of the test. Then his body would have been changed without experiencing physical death and “taken” to heaven.

Even though Adam failed the test, God still ordained a way to save his people and ultimately get them into heaven. The reason God removed them from having access to the Tree of Life, was so that they would not live physically forever on earth in the hardship of maintaining their existence. They would now have to die. But this enabled God to accomplish his ultimate goal for his redeemed people, which was to get them into heaven.

Execution of their penal death sentence was covered by the substitutionary physical death of that animal. At their natural death later they would be sent to Sheol, the place of waiting until the appointed day of judgment. Eventually a Kinsman-Redeemer (the Son of Adam, Son of David, Son of God, and “seed of woman” Gen. 3:15) would come to atone for their sin, resurrect them out of Sheol, and take them to heaven.

Christ paid the penalty for spiritual death, so that we could escape eternal death. Christ made it possible to escape the spiritual and eternal aspects of death by the Cross of Christ. Death no longer reigns over us. We no longer have to fear physical death. Death is now the doorway to Eternal life.

Appendix

Biblical Cross References for Gen 3:21 “garments of skins” –

Gen. 3:7, 27:15; Lev. 1:6, 7:8; 2Sam. 1:24; Is. 61:10; Dan. 5:29; Matt. 3:4; Mark 12:38; Acts 9:39; Rom. 3:22; 2Cor. 5:2-3, 21; James 2:3

Extra-Biblical Cross References for Gen 3:21

Pseudepigrapha, *Jubilees* 3:26; Philo, *Questions And Answers On Genesis I* (53); Ambrose, *Concerning Repentance* - Book 2.99; Gregory of Nyssa, *Funeral Oration on Miletus*; Jerome, *Letter 051 - From Epiphanius Bishop of Salamis to John Bishop of Jerusalem.5, Letter 128 - To Gaudentius.3*; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* Book 3.14; Methodius, *Discourse on the Resurrection* 1.2; Tertullian, *On the Apparel of Women* Book 1.1

BDB (Hebrew Lexicon) Entry for “SKIN” (Gen 3:21)

5785 **רֵיב** (pronounced “OR”) ⁹⁹ **nom. masc.** ^{Job 7:5} **skin** (NewHeb. *idiom*; Phenician

Lzb³⁴⁶); absolute. **Gn 3:21** +, construct Ex 34:29 +; suffix Ex 29:14 Jer 13:23, Nu 19:5, etc.; pl. construct. Gen 27:16 +, Ex 39:34 sf. Lev 16:27; – **skin**:

- skin of men** (55 times), Ex 22:26 (E), 34:29, 34:30 cf. v:35; (dark) skin of Cushite Jer 13:23; see also Ezek 37:6, 37:8, Lam 3:8, Job 7:5, 10:11, +; in hyperb. Mic 3:2, 3:3; Job 19:20b *the skin of my teeth*, i.e. gums (si vera l.); also Lev 13:2 + 33 t. Lev 13 (P), in tests for leprosy (v. esp. v:2, v:2, v:3, v:4, v:11, cf. v:3, v:38, v:39, v:43); Job 2:4 *skin in behalf of, for, skin*, apparently proverbial phrase of barter = everything has its price (on varieties of interpretation see various commentaries).
- hide of animals** (44 times), always – except Job 40:31 (41:7) – after skinning: Gen 27:16; of **sacrificial victims** Ex 29:14, Lev 4:11 + 5 times; prepared for use (by some process of tanning, cf. Nowack^{Arch. i. 242}), sometimes = *leather*: material of garments **Gen 3:21**, girdle 2Kin 1:8, any article Lev 11:32, 13:48ff, Num 31:20; **covering of tabernacle** Ex 25:5 + 10 times. Ex 26, 35, 36, 39, covering of the ark, sacred utensils, etc., Num 4:6 + 5 times. Num 4.

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