

Discovering our "post-Eden" world ...

DISPLACED: Forcefully driven from their home and banned from reentry, Adam and Eve began a new life.

HIDING: By default every person begins his or her life on this planet hiding from God. Adam and Eve hid behind the trees and we hide behind our careers, families, hobbies, perversities, entertainment, wealth, religions, philosophies. We even hide in our enjoyment of what God has created. But one day there will be no more hiding.

LOST: We are lost. Hiding behind the trees, lost and don't know it, still hiding. Still stupid. In Genesis three we read how God came looking for Adam and Eve as they hid behind the trees after rebelling against him. In Luke nineteen we see Jesus continuing the search, but now on a much larger scale. He came to seek and to save the lost among all humanity. He is looking behind all the trees. "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10 ESV).

DAMNED: We all begin at the same place—every generation, every person born on Earth starts out a sinner, "damned if we do, damned if we don't" as they say, maybe a bitter pill to swallow but theologically accurate. Were you born in the U.S.A. in A.D. 1979? You're damned. Born in Europe in A.D. 1423? Damned. Born in Persia in 584 B.C.? Damned. Get the point? We are all damned, condemned before we get out of the gate, until or unless we come to believe in Jesus Christ and receive his gift of eternal life. "He who believes in Him is not condemned [damned]; but he who does not believe is condemned [damned] already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18 NKJV).

DEPRAVED: In the beginning we were created in God's image. The presence of God's image in humanity did not disappear when we rebelled but it was tarnished and corrupted. Within limitations people can still love, be merciful and practice grace and goodness, even good works. People still perform acts of heroism and sacrifice even to the point of death. Our ability to love, seek meaning and significance, be creative, invent, build, show mercy and kindness flows from God. The "image of God" has lingered in all the generations of humankind, but we lost our intimate connection in the rebellion, when we deviated from God and his goodness. Our relationship with God was damaged beyond human repair.

But none of this can make us right with God. Depravity means that religion can never save us. With the rebellion came death, a severed connection with God, no efficacious remedies on our part to bridge the gap between God and us. This is why a religion of good works, stated or practiced, cannot bring you to God, but can bring you great confusion as you may see extraordinary examples of his image within that religion. Depravity means total vertical disconnect. However, even though we could do nothing to fix our problem, God could and did through Jesus Christ.

God intervened with his plan. We were helpless and hopeless, sinful, perverted, rebellious creatures. And at just the right time God demonstrated his love for us.

Christ arrives right on time to make this happen. He didn't, and doesn't, wait for us to get ready. He presented himself for this sacrificial death when we were far too weak and rebellious to do anything to get ourselves ready. And even if we hadn't been so weak, we wouldn't have known what to do anyway (Romans 5:6 MSG).

SAVED: Are you saved, brother? Saved. Old-fashioned, out-dated, ridiculed, but a word that you really do want to become acquainted with. This is a forever word, a golden oldie, which when we clean away the cultural milieu, we find that God has spoken to his people for centuries, even millennia.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him (John 3:16-17 ESV).

Let that sink in. A father and son cared enough for you to come up with a plan. The Father would send the Son, and the Son would agree to come to our world and die for us so that we might have eternal life, that we might be saved.

