

Chapter Six

A Recitation of the Preliminary Phase of Salvation History (*Heilsgeschichte*) in Primeval History

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Guiding Texts

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel (Gen 3:15 NIV).

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put My Words in his mouth, and He Shall Speak to them all that I [have] command[ed] Him (Deuteronomy 18:19 ESV).

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of Us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of Us all (Isa 53:6 NIV).

Preliminary Considerations

In contributing to the festschrift in honour of Rev. Prof. Zamani Kafang, I have been faced with two obvious challenges, which made my heart skip twice. First, is the question of competence to make appropriate contribution in tandem academic works of this erudite scholar and in the light of the mandate that I gave myself. The second challenge is the choice of topic, especially considering the vastness and scope of O/T studies to which the life works of Prof Zamani B. Kafang belong. After much contemplation, my concentration finally settled on an area, which seems to me as the most ideal, and to which he has truly made his mark and valuable contributions, namely, the period, which serves as the threshold of *Salvation History*, the period, which has come to be referred to as *Primeval History* or *Pre-History*.

Introduction

This study seeks to analyse the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis. Biblical scholars have chosen the term *primeval*, *primal* or *pre-history* to refer to this section of the holy writings. The reason for the

choice is that its contents do not represent or carry the credentials of factual history. Using this criterion, the narratives were considered to be more of myths or legends, therefore, going outside and beyond what modern scholarship considers as verifiable factual history. This work is undertaken to discover elements, which may well constitute some of the initial signs of the existence of images relating to *heilsgeschichte*, Salvation History, in the pre-historical epoch. The question which must be asked is: can we truly talk of Salvation History in the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis?

The intention of this study, therefore, is to trace the process of Salvation history from the general or universal history to the definite and specific time chosen by Yahweh to launch the historical project, which was through the choice of an individual patriarch, Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), and eventually metamorphosed and progressed into the election of a race or an ethnic nationality, the Israelite nation.

The Importance of Salvation History to Humanity

The subject of *heilsgeschichte*, Salvation history has been an important issue to humanity through all the periods covered by human history up till now. Its importance emerges as soon as God placed him in the choicest part of the Garden of Eden, which means, ‘*delight*’ or ‘*pleasure*’, presumably for the eyes²⁵⁶ and gave humanity not only the permission to enjoy every part of God’s creation, but to rule it (Gen. 1:26, 28).

It is at this early stage of Biblical history that we are confronted with the picture of the created world, and what happened soon afterwards. It

²⁵⁶ Although the etymology of the word ‘Eden’ may not be easy to trace, it has come to represent the best, the first choice for a location, which God decided for earth’s first inhabitants, Adam and Eve. Cf., George E. M., “Eden”, *Easton’s, Bible Dictionary*, www.biblestudytools.com. Furthermore, despite the fact that the geographical location of Eden is one of the much-debated sites in biblical research, this study is not centred on the location, but what it was meant to represent in the eyes of its first inhabitants, Adam and Eve, that which was pleasant on their sight to behold. For more on the Garden of Eden see, Gideon Y. Tambiyi, “The Tree of Life in Ancient Nok Civilization: Unmasking the Matrix of the Garden of Eden in Africa,” *Jalingo Journal of African Studies* Vol. 10, No. 2 (2020), 22-34.

is to be understood that the intention of the creator of the world was to create a world, which was to serve as the model of the ideal in his craftsmanship. God's image of creation was a reflection of perfection and therefore it was deemed a perfect handwork.

In practical terms, the description of how the world came into being met God's criteria of being a perfect piece. Shortly afterwards, however, this image of God's hitherto excellent and perfect handwork, that is, the completed created world came tumbling down as a result of sin. What was described as *very good* (Gen. 1:31), by the architect and chief engineer started showing elements of crack and imperfection.

What was the creator going to do about this train that has derailed from its original track? Was he going to allow it to sit there without getting it back on its track? If that happened, would God still be seen as the all-knowing one, who had the foreknowledge of everything? Would he at this point be satisfied with his handwork? Would he ensure that it got back on its track, to its original destination? Indeed, subsequent events recorded in the holy writ reveal that Yahweh, the creator, is the supreme, sovereign, all-knowing and above all, loving God, as such he knew what to do, and so he set out to redeem his derailed creation.

The *kernel* and or the object of this work is to demonstrate the fact that several phases in the events of Genesis 1-11 indicate elements of continued show of rebellion, arrogance, pride and disobedience by humanity, but God acting consistently out of his inherent love and compassion for humanity took definitive steps to offer humanity hope, for its present needs. However, although this was of a temporary nature, it prepared the way for a hope for human future and spiritual needs, which he launched with the choice and election of Abraham, the Hebrew patriarch.

Consequently, from the perspective of Biblical history, the first eleven chapters contain several strategies, put into creation by God, in the hope of having the train return to its original path. Since God was dealing with humanity, that has limitations, these efforts were not without some challenges. But God consistently and steadfastly showed how resolute and determined he was to come to humanity's assistance. These persistent efforts of God initially did not seem to have paid off, since mankind kept moving from one act of rebellion to another.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁷ Genesis 1-11 contains a series of events that motivated mankind to rebel against God (Gen. 3:6), and how the consequences of sin continues to taunt

God, upon realizing this, had to look deeply at the approaches he had adopted, and seeing that none had been effective, started the project all over again. The new one was started through the instrument of the patriarchal heritage,²⁵⁸ with the view to guiding it through another historical process, from Genesis 12 through the entire Old Testament, the Intertestamental period and into the New Testament dispensation, culminating in the Salvation work of Jesus, the Christ. This shows that before the inauguration of a formal Salvation History through the Patriarchal narratives, a Salvation history had been started, albeit an ineffective, but prefiguring one. It is the content of this first Salvation history, which takes centre stage in this work.

Justification of the Study Area

We start this investigation with an attempt to justify the choice of the study area.²⁵⁹ The choice of a theme such as Salvation History, *heilsgeschichte*, is deliberate. This is because it strikes at the heart of the content of the Christian life, even as it constitutes the basis for what the Christian faith stands for. The tenacity of Christianity has always been founded on the fact that it is the conscious and deliberate plan instituted by God, by way of his intervention and intrusion, so as to open the floodgates of heaven to fallen (sinful) humanity, and to enable him to share eternity with the Master. This is a stage known as Salvation from damnation, which mankind could never have hoped to attain or achieve on their own.²⁶⁰ This, to my mind, is the end-product of what the entire

mankind (Gen. 4: 1-11:9), yet God, had compassion over mankind. Realizing that fallen humanity needed a better plan of salvation, God introduced Abraham on the scene (Gen. 12:1-3).

²⁵⁸ This is traced from the call of Abraham, the erstwhile patriarch, followed by Isaac, and Jacob, and the consequent emergence of the nation Israel.

²⁵⁹ This endeavour entails ‘unearthing’, which means that we admit that the task of identifying and bringing out the image of Salvation History, *heilsgeschichte*, is not simple and straight forward within the historical space. This is as it should be, particularly when we take account of the literary materials of this study area, Genesis 1-11.

²⁶⁰ Damnation is often related to the movement of a person from freedom under the protection of God to condemnation to eternal punishment, believed to be hell fire. The Christian faith insists that after a person passes through physical death, what follows is judgement and divine punishment, which is by way of

processes, which Christianity entails. This means that Salvation History, *heilsgeschichte*, stands in the foreground of the Christian enterprise.

An Overview of Primeval History from Biblical Perspective

In evaluating Genesis 1-11, it is pertinent to ask whether it is inspired and therefore can be accepted as a valid and trusted communication from God. The answer comes by way of our affirmation that this discussion is being pursued from the perspective of Evangelical theology. In this case, we stand on the authority of the holy writ, which says: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

In terms of reliability, we posit that, despite the presence of several issues relating to its content, such as, accuracy and historicity, which have not been completely resolved by scholarship, for the purpose of this study, we affirm very strongly that its historical contents are reliable on the basis that they bear the insignia of God’s inspiration.²⁶¹ In terms of authorship, this discussion assumes and accepts the uncritical traditional position of Mosaic authorship of the entire Pentateuch, with the portion, Genesis 1-11 inclusive.²⁶²

While much of previous discussions on Salvation history, *heilsgeschichte*, often considers its starting point to be the Patriarchal history (Gen. 12), this presentation thinks otherwise. The author proposes a thinking, which insists that that the proper and legitimate place to commence is from the pre-historic period (Gen. 1-11).

To be sure, previous efforts have tended to avoid this area, and have deliberately over-looked or simply skipped it, on the grounds of the

the damned being tormented in hell fire, on account of the sins and actions, which they committed while still enjoying life on earth.

²⁶¹ Richard L. Pratt, *Primal History: A Perfect World*, <http://thirdmill.org/seminary/lessons>, accessed, 10th/05/20.

²⁶² Although by the nature of this discussion, we cannot be drawn very deeply into issues of authorship, it is legitimate to mention in passing the position of high-critical scholarship, through the general formula of the Graf-Wellhausen (JEDP) theory, which states that Moses may have written or orally communicated substantial portions of the Pentateuch, but not its entirety.

doubtful nature of the historicity of its content.²⁶³ At best, its narrative is often placed along the lines of legends and stories, which by their nature are considered to be mythical, and therefore not strong enough to be admitted for use in discussing and establishing factual history. Many scholars insist that it does not meet the standards set for the evaluation of historical materials for doing modern historiography.²⁶⁴

It is, however, for this same reasons that we are insisting that the proper place to begin the study of such an important concept and subject, (*Heilsgeschichte*) in both Judaism and Christianity is and must be primal history.²⁶⁵ It remains the candid view that not doing so may well be an error, especially, when we know that the Biblical materials by their very nature belong to a different genre and category when compared with materials coming from other sources, especially those from other fields outside of history and theology, especially such literary materials, which are general, or from secular and extra Biblical sources.²⁶⁶

Consequently, it was the same mindset, the mind of faith, which was needed to understand and accept materials and facts of this nature. The mind of faith is based on the fact that the words, so communicated to humanity came through inspirations and revelation from a divine source. Therefore, the Bible writers were not too mindful if its contents would one day be described as non-critical, or legend like or mythical by modern man. To them, God used the prevailing worldview to communicate divine truths through the human agents.

As a matter of fact, the simple-minded Hebraic writer, Moses was writing not for scientists, or philosophers, or psychologists, of this day. In the words of a commentator, since:

²⁶³ Place a reference here, ...

²⁶⁴ See modern historiography ...

²⁶⁵ In the course of this discussion, we would employ the terms primeval history as well as Primal history inter-changeably. This is because the mean one and the same thing, namely the period before the dawn of history in its proper sense, usage and understanding in Modern Historiography.

²⁶⁶ Although extra Biblical sources, especially from the field of archaeology have revealed that Moses probably may not have been the first person to have written about how the world came into being, we cannot dispute the fact or dismiss the fact that God couldn't have inspired him to present an accurate account of how he worked to bring the world into existence. Afterall considering his exposure and experience no body would have been more qualified to write it more than him.

Moses was educated in the royal courts of Egypt, and his writings indicate that he knew the literature of the ancient world. As Moses wrote his own divinely-inspired and true account of the primeval period, he was quite aware of other literary traditions in the ancient Near East.²⁶⁷

They were writing for their fellow Hebrews, who had the undeniable conviction in the God, of their ancestral heritage, which had called or invited Abraham their foremost grandfather into departing from the home and environment of his fore fathers, in far-away Haran.²⁶⁸

If Moses, being a Hebrew, was writing for his people, whose history essentially hinges and is built on faith, it means that he was not focusing on facts based on a Western type of reason. Although his presentation cannot be said to be unreasonable, it generally possesses a kind of rationality or truth, which was of a different type. The rationality behind the Hebraic mind, as it were, did not limit itself to the presentation of facts, which are based and accepted only on the basis of their historical verifiability. Hebraic myths rested rather upon information, which could be deemed as true and therefore acceptable, even though its contents went beyond truths based on rationality and reason. In this sense, myths could be judged as existing on a platform, which is deeper and higher than historical truths. It was probably out of this consideration that S. H. Hooke justified the use of myths as a valid process of preserving reliable information. According to him, "...historical truth important though it is,

²⁶⁷ Richard L. Pratt, "Primal History: A Perfect World," <http://thirdmill.org/seminary/lessons>, accessed 10th/05/20.

²⁶⁸ Biblical and extra Biblical sources agree that while the call of Abraham, came to him in Haran, Terah his father for some reasons, had desired to leave Ur for Haran, taking along with him, Abraham his son and his wife Sarai, Lot his grandson, and departed, hoping to travel to Canaan, but made a stop-over at Haran. (Gen. 11:31). At Haran Terah died. It was after this event that the call to leave Haran for Canaan specifically and definitively came to Abraham. Abraham's decision to abandon Haran for Canaan, was an invitation based on faith in the God, who was behind the invitation. It must be emphasized that it was from Haran, that his journey of faith started and took a definite bearing. This is therefore a history based on faith and not reason.

is not the only kind of truth, and a myth can and often does present a kind of truth, which cannot be expressed in historical categories”²⁶⁹

Further still, the writer, chose to expend his energy, not only on such materials and information, which agreed with rationality or reason, which he was conscious of, the fact that his intention was to serve a slightly different audience, the audience of faith was instrumental in employing faith symbolism rather than reason and rationality.²⁷⁰

It is on the strength of this understanding that, we would insist at this point that the Biblical writers in presenting the history of how the world came into being did not do so within the context of secular reasoning, nor did they utilize the articulate mind of rationality, but that, which utilizes faith, based on inspiration, revelation and other forms of divine disclosure as its starting and finishing points.

This notwithstanding, the content of scripture, rests on its wholeness and unity. It stands on the undisputed fact that, God was the sole unseen force, and mind in his word. The apostle Paul testifies to this saying, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). This being the case, the position of higher critical scholarship concerning the content of Genesis 1-11, as falling short of the criteria of doing modern historiography, which was set by secular historians needs to be reconsidered.

For example, is it not mind bogging, that even from the perspective of logic and rationality it would be absurd to deny the reality, and the genuineness of the first eleven chapters of Genesis only to turn around to accept the historicity of the rest of the document? Applying analogy, we know that the strength of a house rests more on the quality of its foundation. Therefore, if the foundation of a house is not secure, how would the rest of the structure be deemed to be strong? Certainly, if scholarship is willing to treat the rest of the work more favourably, then

²⁶⁹ S. H. Hooke, “Myth in Genesis 1-11,” in: Robert Davidson, ed., *The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible*.

²⁷⁰ As hinted above, the contributor to this discussion takes Mosaic authorship for granted, even, though there may be several features within the Pentateuch, which question a single author to the document in question. He does not accept the flat denial of Mosaic authorship to it, in view of the fact that the position of higher critical scholarship has been largely suspended.

it demands much more that the initial chapters (Gen. 1-11) be given a better consideration.

The same argument could be advanced against those who see the Old Testament as having no relationship with the New Testament, on account of the seeming disparity in the role, which God was said to have played in both. How I can present a simple picture of the argument is that while the God of the Old Testament is judgmental and possesses vindictiveness, and demands immediate punishment for a wrong act or commission, in the form of “eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise” (Exo. 21:24-27; cf. Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21), the God of the New Testament, who fathered Jesus Christ, is loving, caring and forgiving, and demands the offer of love even to the enemy, to the extent that it even commends the believer to feed one’s enemy (Matt. 5:43-44; Rom. 12:20^b) corpus.

If it is on the strength of such seeming contradiction that some people with liberal disposition think that the Old Testament has no place in the life of the Christian, then it does not hold water. We know fully well that historically and theologically to deny the relevance and of the Old Testament in the New is absurd and unrealistic. Doing this, amounts to saying that one can accept the fruits from the branches of a tree, without having to first accept the that the fruits are connected to a good truck and its stem. To accept the fruits as coming out of the branches of a tree, demands the unqualified acceptance of the existence of its trunk or stem. Rational thinking accepts that from a good foundation comes a strong house, and from a good tree trunk, strong branches and good fruits would be found.

Consequently, if the narratives pertaining to the Patriarchs in the Genesis 12-50 and indeed the rest of the entire Old Testament is to be trusted, then the materials and information, which went before it, namely Genesis 1-11 must equally be accepted. It is therefore on the basis of this understanding that we are utilizing the contents of Genesis 1-11 to serve as the proper beginning of Salvation history.

Genesis by divine appointment is a book of beginnings. It is not therefore unexpected that the contents of Genesis 1-11 represent the first phase of the discourse on beginnings, although it does not do so in a systematic, sequential and progressive manner. What comes out more clearly is the fact that the writer selected his materials and weaved them around important topics, which reveal the fact that on the one hand man’s character is portrayed as consistently desiring the quest for independence

and self-actualization as against God's desire that he comes under his control, so that it would go well with him. Unfortunately, man had consistently failed in this bit. The consequence of man's action is his alienation from the presence of his God.²⁷¹ This is against the backdrop of an equally consistent pattern in God's actions, revealing that he remains the ever-present help to man, staying by him and assisting him at every stage of man's desperation. In the several episodes in man's acts of rebelliousness, pride and arrogance, God was present, and on duty to fashion out a means, which would pull man out of his desperation. This shows that as early as the universal history of man could go, (Gen. 1-11), irrespective of man's actions and moves against him, he has demonstrated the fact that he is eternally a loving God.

Concerning its importance, therefore, this period is singled out as the most critical. This can be seen within the overall context of scripture, as the revealed communication, which God wanted to convey to mankind. Genesis being the book containing the record of the beginning of everything in human experience, the section in question, (Gen. 1-11), provides humanity with some glimpse of how things started. This means that it is foundational to all that the faith journey contains, and requires.

The Glimpse of All Events in Human History

Following, which is the foretaste of the faith trip entails seeing in the drama God's will, and intensions through unfolding drama which is revealed and played out in nature and human history. This section contains information on the beginning of several things, which were to later take centre stage in human society. For example, it contains information on how the creation was achieved by God (Gen. 1-2); the beginning of the family institution, and marriage (Gen. 2:18-24); and contains the first blessings pronounced upon man by God, and a directive made by God and pronounced upon humanity (Gen. 1:28). Furthermore, it also contains the first gift to man by way of making the abundance already visible in nature to come under man's control (Gen. 1:29-30). Interestingly, this section contains the first indication of the use of the apodictic legislation: the 'do not's'. For example, although God allowed

²⁷¹ At these specific historic events, God's response to such evil intentions of man was meant to remind man, that he works out a way for his salvation, but that man has to rely on God's proposals and plans for him.

man to eat of the fruits of the garden, he was under strict orders not to eat a particular one. The text reads:

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, '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. 2:15-17).

Note that this prohibition came by way of an injunction, with apodictic implications.

Further still, in it, we find the commencement of hope for humanity, namely, the gospel for the salvation of man, even as he is being prepared for eternal life (Gen. 3:15). Note that this remains the compelling theme throughout the other books of both the Old and New Testaments. We shall say more on this later, especially as we intend to link it with the theology of salvation.

The Origin, Understanding and Estimation of Sin

Another item worthy of mention, and which is related to the importance of Genesis is the understanding of the origin of sin. In the book of Genesis, we have the record of the entrance of sin in within the domain of humanity. It is interesting to note that since its introduction into the world system, sin has never departed from the arena of the physical world.

Note also that it is as a result of man's inability to effectively contain sin or to respond to its ravaging effects among humans, which brought out the truth concerning the import of sin and its full weight upon humanity, which triggered love in the heart of God. Love eventually motivated him to act decisively in the way of working out for humanity a means for his redemption from the eternal damnation as a result of repeated acts of sin.

The importance of this narrative is not necessarily to trace the origin of sin, but to tell of its ever-contagious nature, and to further reveal the undeniable truism of sin. This is to the effect that from the commission of one sin, if it is not remedied, it might produce other side effects, which are in themselves sin. Sin therefore qualifies to be treated as a virus

infection. In relation to sin therefore, its origin, primal history presents the sense that sin is an act, which not only has a beginning, but has consequences. All the same, it does not necessarily have an origin or a clearly identified source.

Secondly, and related to the above is the associated thought that sin did not perpetuate itself in the world through a series of human failures identified with individuals and specific events, but it essentially describes the point of entrance of sin through a single event and by a single individual. Following the fall of man from grace to grass, by this one historical act, (Gen. 3), and from this point commences every human failure. It is also to point that the consequences of sin are traced up to, till today.²⁷²

a. Comparing Sin with COVID-19

The best way to understand sin in contemporary times is to place it to be analogous to the recent outbreak of the *Corona Virus*, which rose from a single infection into becoming a pandemic, spreading its effects on humanity. Even as this work is being written, it is taking humanity sleepless nights to conduct studies to seek identify, not only the source of the *Corona Virus*, but its characteristics, which a view to developing a vaccine and to work out the strategies, of how to contain it. Be that as it may, even as the source is yet to be established, there is no one doubting its mode of operation, and its effects on humanity. The main challenge, which is confronting humanity is not identifying its origin, and to establish whether it is an escaped virus from a laboratory in Wuhang, China, or it is the intentional programming and scheme of some powerful people in society and their collaborators aimed at checkmating world population, but that *Covid-19* is real and people are dying from it, therefore the world cannot deny or cover the reality of *Covid-19*. What humanity needs to do is to work out ways for its containment, because its effects are felt everywhere in the world.

Besides of this understanding, one critical issue in our discussion on sin is a related issue. Sin stands out so boldly and clearly as an embarrassment to humanity. This is what makes sin stand out differently from *Covid-19*. It is amply clear that man has in the preceding centuries

²⁷² Bromley, G. W., *Sin*, International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Biblesoft, 2006,

and generations, strained itself to see if it could understand sin, so as to contain its spread and limit its effects, these efforts have, however, never been met with a single success story, rather what has always confronted man is that human history has repeated stories and experiences of failure. To be sure, human history has revealed that while sin has always defied human wisdom, and human solution, and therefore it is beyond man, man is still working tirelessly to ensure that he gets a cure for *Covid-19*.²⁷³

Furthermore, one thing, which the understanding of original sin brings out is the fact that there exists in it an intrinsic nexus, revealing the undeniable fact that sin embraces all people without exception. This is amply illustrated in the fact that there is no nation or human race or ethnic nationality that is not negatively by sin and its attendant effects. For example, from the story announcing the murder of Abel, (Gen. 4:23), it follows that almost at once, cases of human wickedness started to show increase by leaps and bounds. This increase became so rapid that it soon invited the response of God through his decision to bring judgment upon the world through a universal flood experience (Gen. 6:1-6).

The choice and preservation of Noah and his family, further reflects the place and fact of Grace, being resident in God, causing him to have a change of heart, change the situation, for sin is present there, too. It was God declared the righteousness of Noah and not Noah himself (Gen. 6:8-9). It turned out that the destruction or the elimination of the entire human did not provide a lasting solution to sin. The story of the Tower of Babel stands out as yet another indication of sin continuing to eat through the fabric of human experience without a possible abetting (Gen. 11:20).

Certainly, the intention of the writer was not to explain or account for the original sin, but to simply show that sin had a starting point in human history, and from this starting point, sin became contagious, thereby spreading from man to man, and from generation to generation.

Thus, the contents of the book of Genesis generally, and particularly, chapters 1-11 stand out as a reflection of God's gradual process of dealing with his creation, even as he uses it to unveil his intentions of love for humanity. In it he is seen employing the services of individuals, events and occasions. Later he is to be seen using different human instruments and vessels, such as the Priest, Kings, Prophets and other individual personalities on the side-line.

²⁷³ The history of Covid-19 is too recent, such that we cannot conclude that it has defied any solution by man's efforts.

b. The Beginning of Procreation (Gen. 4:1-2)

After this act of commission, what came as another first was the beginning of offerings and sacrifices. After man was driven out of the garden of Eden, his first activity was to start the first family outside of the garden. This signalled the first indication of procreation. The arrival of Cain and Abel through the first act of a legitimate sexual intercourse by the first couples, Adam and Eve. This produced the first human offsprings - Cain and Abel.

c. The Beginning of Offerings and Thanksgiving Sacrifice (Gen. 4:3-4)

From this came the first move on the part of man to offer sacrifice to his creator. This is the first sign that man was an appreciative being, and without being directed, he chose to take one out of the numerous blessings, which God had showered upon him to give it back to him by way of a thanksgiving offering. This came from Cain, with his offering of first fruits, (Gen. 4:3), while Abel offered God a sacrifice. His was the offer of the firstborn from his flocks (Gen. 4:4).

d. The Onset of Death (Gen. 4:8)

It is in the book of Genesis that humanity became aware of the relationship between sin and death. The former leading to the latter. There is no doubt that it was as a result of the introduction of sin in the universe that triggered the first recorded case of death, the murder of Abel by his brother Cain (Gen. 4:8^b). As a matter of fact, death wouldn't have occurred in the world without the entertainment of sin in the heart of man. For example, it was the sin of hatred in the heart of Cain, which encouraged him to initiate the murder of his brother, and by so doing the act became the first case of death in the world.

The Connection of Genesis 1-11 With Salvation History

We need to reiterate at this point that the importance of the portion of Genesis, (Gen 1-11) can be seen from three different perspectives, representing three main theological developments:

Firstly, it served as the beginning of the universal history of the world. Secondly it marked the record of God's choice of directly

communicating his divine will to man, not through the agency of the priest, prophet, the king, or any human agency in any formal sense, but utilizing ordinary individuals in their own right, whom he had made to be part of his creation. Thirdly, it is for the purpose of achieving redemption for humanity.

It is not coincidence therefore that in Genesis 1-11 we see certain identifiable landmarks. These are the first indicators of the traces of the commencement of God's decision to embark on a visit into human history, with the purpose of laying the foundation for human redemption. It shows that it is not a once in a lifetime activity, but that, which requires further visitations and engagement with humanity in his search for their salvation.

These traces are found reflected in the three main historical periods, prior to the founding of Christianity and the church, namely, the Old Testament, the Intertestamental Period and indeed the New Testament. This was for the sole purpose of man's salvation.²⁷⁴ This is indicated in the opening words of the New Testament, specifically as seen in the Gospel of Mathew, in which the birth of Jesus Christ is announced and was followed immediately with the commencement of the ministry of John the Baptist and other events, up to the close of the New Testament era.

Man was created in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27). This means that man is destined to live in relationship with God, any attempt on his part to live out of this arrangement presents man with unsurmountable hurdles, unless he seeks to return to God's fold. Yet this does not turn man into being a mortal. He remains a creature and in his creatureliness, and never would be become eternal. He lives as a mortal being from the beginning, and would remain in this condition to the end, (Ps 8:4; Job 15:14).

Charles Orr underscores this when he concludes that God usually speaks in a "still small voice," (1 Kgs 19:12). This explains why Charles Orr insists that to be able to hear him clearly, people must necessarily come very near to Him.²⁷⁵ This probably explains why man is capable of saying this with assurance that: the processes, the journey and the

²⁷⁴ 'Man' as used here in the singular depicts the experience of humanity, and the human race as created by the creator

²⁷⁵ Orr Charles, "The Hidden Life: the Secrets things of God," <http://library.timelesstruths.org>. Site was visited on 18/6/20.

identifiable roadmap of Salvation History are they not hidden from the view of humankind, but were they also unknown to God who is its architect? The footsteps of man have remained ever present before God, even before man was created.²⁷⁶

The truth is that humanity by itself may not have had the disposition to clearly see God at work to save him from condemnation, crush, and eventual death, as a result of his repeated acts of rebellion. Yet through God's special relationship with him, he has endowed him and has placed him over and above everything in his creation. At creation, man was given full charge of his creation. The Holy writ says: "So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Gen. 1:27-28).

Several passages of scripture testify to the fact of man's invitation to play a special role in God's creation. For example, both Job and the Psalmist cried out loud concerning this fact. Job says: What is man that you make so much of him, that you give him so much attention, that you examine him every morning and test him every moment? (Job 7:18-19).

The Psalmist on his part has these words, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas (Ps 8:4-8).

Since it is God that had placed him in charge of his creation, even at the point of his failure, (and such occasions were numerous), he does not completely abandon him, rather he stands by him and makes sure that he does not fail in executing his mandate of conveying the saving message to all humanity, so as to bring man to the point of reaching the destination meant for him, i.e., fellowship with him in eternity.

It is this fact of God's readiness to advance with favour in the direction of man, so as to redeem him, which provides us with the motivation to look even, at the primeval history, and see, if there are some spikes, which were meant to spur the process in later Israelite history.

²⁷⁶ Orr Charles, *The Hidden Life: The Secrets things of God*.

The foundation of Salvation History therefore hinges on the special relationship, which exists between the creator and the created from creation (Gen. 1-2). Man shared a special relationship with the creator, because he was created in the image of the creator. This places him over and above every other created being in the universe.

The Implication of Man created in the ‘Imago-Dei’ (Image of God)

What we need to say here is that because sin was associated with man, and God knowing that it would keep recurring in the trail of his history, he must take the lead in the process of saving man. This is on account of the fact that from the point of his creation, man possesses God’s image. He therefore lives and exists within the context of being in the image of God. The truth in God-Man relationship resides in the fact that unlike the other created beings, who had nothing by way of relationship and quality close to God man was created in the image of God.

The indelible testimony on this is found directly in the Genesis account of God’s creation act. In it, it reveals that the decision to posit man was taken within the context of the divine economy, without any outside manipulation. His ability and capacity for the choice of the process of creation was taken independently of any external encouragement or assistance. It shows clearly that it was in God’s sovereign will to initiate, and to plan for man to be created.

Man’s place in the order and economy in creation presents a uniqueness comparable to none. God declares thus, “...let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground” (Gen. 1:26). Consequently, man was created with great potentials and given enormous possibilities. In the rhythmic nature and order of creation, the impression is that all the other creatures in the world came into being through an express pronouncement from God. The repeated wish from Yahweh was consistent: let there be ... and there was (Gen. 1:3) or, let the ... Gen. 1:6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24).

Why then did God posit man? Was man’s place meant to serve as an exhibition of God’s power, and mere capacity, that he is able to fashion out something higher and better? We need not go very far from the

context of God's activity in creation to get a direct response to this question. After God had finished creation, he wanted man to play a critical role in it, knowing that his handwork was perfect. God took a special interest in his creation hence, God blessed them, the man and his partner (wife) declaring and wishing them increase and fruitfulness. He said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Gen. 1:28). It was this fact, *Imago Dei*, man created in the image of God, which dictated and determined the way God chose to relate with man at the initial stage and even at the later stage, even as man continued in his sinfulness.

a. The Image of God in Man

In relation to man being created in the image of God, another element and indication of the unique place of man in creation is seen from the order and design of creation as set out by God, the 'Supreme Cosmic Engineer.'²⁷⁷

The creation account, as reflected in Genesis 1 and 2 reveals that man was the main reason for God in positing creation in the first place.²⁷⁸ Not only was God aware that for his welfare and comfort everything had to be in place before his arrival, but also after the formal declaration of the

²⁷⁷God the creator as revealed in the Genesis account cannot be compared with the SPG Cosmic Engineer, is the Chief Engineer ... "of this complicated construction, (the earth), does not personally take part in the construction, but he knows every nook and corner because everything is done under his direction. He knows everything about the construction, both directly and indirectly. Similarly, the Personality of Godhead, who is the supreme engineer of this cosmic creation, knows every nook and corner, although affairs are being carried out by demigods. Beginning from Brahmā down to the insignificant ant, no one is independent in the material creation." See: https://vaniquotes.org/wiki/The_SPG... Accessed 20/06/20. The Biblical account of creation differs remarkably from this. God the supreme order in the Genesis account does not resign himself from the act of creation. He is actively engaged, moment by moment in his creation to ensure its continuity as he makes provisions for it.

²⁷⁸ It is on the basis of the fact that Man shares a special relationship with God, his creator, hence God, was moved out of passion to plot out a salvation or recovery scheme for him.

finished product of creation, he still presided over it to ensure its survival and continuity. But above all, man was created as a special being intended to maintain an unbroken relationship with God. Man was the only being among God's creation to have the disposition and the ability to relate meaningfully in God's creation, but above all, that he could also relate with his creator. This was because man, above all else was created in God's image. The text reads in part: "Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (Gen. 1:26-28). would eventually need to be saved for Satan's evil schemes.²⁷⁹

b. Humanity in Desperate Need of Salvation

The fact that man was created in God's image does not mean that man as was constituted and existing, even in the present does not possess the ability of eventually rising to the status of God. The fact of his creatureliness, shows pre-eminently that he does not pre-exist along with his creator, but that he shares in being created by a pre-existing power outside of himself. Hence the fact that man was created in the image of God does not nullify his finite nature and his mortality. Only God possesses eternity and therefore immortality.

The first eleven chapters of Genesis reveal Man's recurring acts of sin, which showed him as incapable of saving himself and not able to respond to his future acts of sin. All the acts of man, his commissions and omissions were proceeded consistently with his desperate attempts to flee from God. These acts reveal how man was gradually, but definitely pushing himself further and further away from God.

Interestingly, although sin, was man's embarrassment, it was beyond man to work out the process for his redemption. From this very initial stage it was God who took a keen interest to save man, without which man's end would have terminated in desolation. This fits in with the philosophy and principle behind salvation history (*heilsgeschichte*),

²⁷⁹ It is worth stating at this point that in this discussion, we would be using the terms, Satan, the serpent, the devil interchangeably, as the outside forces, who were challenging the sovereignty of God in creation.

which is the fact that sin is a challenge to man, but it became God's major interest, concern and pre-occupation. Why was this the case? To desire to save is inherent in the being of God. hence man's sin and failure became his concern for action.

Below is the developing storyline of some of the events and acts, which amounted to outright sins of rebellion and pride, of which man had no ready answers, but had to wait upon God to bring in his universal plan for saving him.

c. The Fall of Humanity (Gen. 3. 1-24)

This chapter contains the description of the fall, which indicates the first act of sin by man. It is not only one of the most read passages of scripture, but it also happens to be one of the most controversial passages of the holy writ, in terms of interpretation.²⁸⁰ The narrative of the fall, necessarily came after God's perfect and splendid handwork (Gen. 3). Thus, the story of the fall of man is the first indication of a dark spot appearing on the splendid and sparkling appearance of God's original creation, as captured in Genesis.1:31. This is seen through the negative effects of sin upon man.

This passage has been variously appraised and commented upon by different scholars. For example, in the eyes of H. C. Leupold the incident of the Fall, represents "*one of the saddest anti-climaxes of history: They eat, they expect marvelous results, they wait—and there grows on them the sense of shame*"²⁸¹

²⁸⁰ G. W. Bromley and many others do not associate the earth and humankind as the originators of sin. This is because sin couldn't have been native to creation. Satan being the source of the temptation cannot be associated first with the God's creation, rather, he must be seen as part of the heavenly beings, who had co-existed with God, their source and origin being known to God only. In this case it is God who is the person to be held responsible for the fall of man, and therefore sin need not be seen as an outright failure on the part of man. See, G. W. Bromley, "Sin," in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, BibleSoft, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication, 2004.

²⁸¹ Leupold H. C., Genesis 3:7-15, *Exposition of Genesis*, Baker, p. 154, John Goldingay, "Genesis" In: Bill Arnold, *Baker Commentary on the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-9-where-are-you-genesis-37-15>. Accessed 14th/06/20.

Sin has connectivity with what we may call chain reaction. Sin always leads to and creates the feeling of guilt, while guilt leads to alienation. This affects the relationship between the sinner, man and God on the one hand, and between the sinner and his fellow human beings.

The content of the narrative is descriptive of the fall of Adam and Eve and the accompanying catastrophic consequences on both the first offenders as well as how it affects the fortunes of the entire humanity. It is the account of how the idyllic portrait inherent in man became a disgust and a shattering mirage in what transpired. Eden suddenly became dishonouring and an embarrassment, even to its architect, (Gen 6:6).²⁸²

With a sudden jolt the harmony of original creation is torn with discord resulting in notes and proceedings of anger, jealousy, pride, disobedience, murder, and the accompanying inner agonies of pain and shame and guilt. God's creation of man as a person stands as the source of good in us; now we face the source of evil.²⁸³

d. The Process of Establishing Guilt and Response to Guilt

One of the characteristics of human behaviour is denial.²⁸⁴ It has been said that one of the reasons for not accepting guilt is often the fear of the accompanying implications, taking responsibility for its accompanying consequences. This was the case with the first human beings, (Gen 3). The situation is not different in our own time. Today, therefore, the business of seeking to establish guilt is equally important, particularly in our age and time. This is because in the modern culture, where emphasis is placed on psycho-therapeutic healing, human beings try desperately not only to deny guilt, but also to distance themselves from accepting the effects of guilt.²⁸⁵ This could well be so as not to also be linked to its consequences, namely, the feeling of shame, which accompanies it.

²⁸² Eden represents the picture of that which was meant to be the ideal, and the beautiful, and therefore meant to become the delight of its inhabitants by meeting their approval and standard. The introduction of sin into it made God to rethink the project in its entirety (Gen. 6:6).

²⁸³ *The Teacher's Commentary on Genesis 3:15*, Chariot Victor Pub., 1987.

²⁸⁴ In psychology this attitude is generally referred to as denialism. See <http://en.m.wikipedia.org>

²⁸⁵ Cole, J. Steven, "Lesson 9: Where Are You? (Genesis 3:7-15)," <http://www.bible.org>. Accessed 14th/4/20.

e. God's Order in Establishing Guilt

In the course of pronouncing judgement on the offenders, he did not follow the sequence, and protocols, which he had earlier established during the inquisition. The original order was: Man, Woman and Satan. In deciding to reverse the order God, however, chose to follow from the rear. This is as preserved in the order of the narrative: Satan, the Woman and Adam taking the rear. God told each of the parties his shortcomings and his or her offence. It was in the reverse order that he delivered his judgment.

Note that this order pays little regard to the dialogue, which he had started with the first guilty person, Eve, but with the one who was given custody and charge of the garden, Adam. He called out to him, with the question, *where are you?* It was upon receiving the answer, *"I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so, I hid."*, (v.10) which triggered the next line and level of the question. Turning to the man God went further to demand to know how he came to be aware that he was naked, ... *"Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"* (v 11).

f. The Blame Game

What was to follow was the game of shifting blame. Man shifted blame from himself to the woman, while the women pushed hers to the serpent, (Gen 3. 12-14). This kind of response is the typical response of every human being, whenever he or she is confronted with the question of accepting a guilty verdict following an act of commission or omission, as the case may be. It is to be noticed that what God decided to declare a set of punishments to the different category of offenders were in conformity with the what roles and responsibilities the culture had established for them. They were as follows:

God's Response to Man's Concerns

Man became vulnerable in two main areas: the physical depravity as well as the spiritual longing and emptiness. God's response by way of offering his palliatives were equally in the two areas.

This is perhaps, the most important element in the narrative. However, before God could bring the spiritual redemption, he needed to

ascertain the reasons, for their disobedience. In the ensuing dialogue, God the father is also presented as God the accuser as well as God the Judge. All of these fit appropriately with his personality. God, the creator now wearing his judicial regalia swung into action with a barrage of questions. His intention was not necessarily to seek to establish guilt, but help man to know the depth and consequences of his actions. This was to also help man in knowing the level of God's investment in his life and to also guide him on what to do as a response.

a. Verdict on the Serpent

The first to know his fate was the serpent.²⁸⁶ God knew that the serpent had acted out of pure treachery and deceit, to destroy a hither-to cordial relationship between them. Turning to the serpent, God said, "*Because you have done this*, consequences must follow. God voiced out, a series of consequences, which were to follow: He placed a curse upon the serpent. The earth became cursed on his account. Satan was told that he would eat dust, since he would crawl on his belly, and by so doing he would be inhaling the dust on the ground (Gen 3:14).

Further to this was the placing of enmity between his seeds and the seed of the woman, Eve. In addition, perpetual hostility was placed between his seeds and the seeds of the woman. (Gen 3:15). Following this unending hostility, place between the descendants of the woman and the serpent, what they would be doing to each other was that while the serpent would (only) strike the heels of the seed of the woman, the seeds of the woman would in turn crush or shatter his head completely at the slightest opportunity.²⁸⁷

b. The Pronouncement on the Woman (Gen. 3: 15-16)

There is an apparent spill-over of the punishment of the serpent running into that of the woman. To the woman her set of punishments were in

²⁸⁶ The image of the male gender is used in this transaction.

²⁸⁷ Sometimes I am forced into thinking that the writer of this portion is Ngas. For example, reading out this punishment presents us with an appropriate and ready example. The analogy is comparable to that of the Ngas of Nigeria. Among the Ngas, while it was normal for a snake to strike human from the heels, once man has an opportunity, he crushes his head. As a matter of fact, among the Ngas, a snake is not assumed to be dead until the head is cut from the rest of the body.

three areas. Furthermore, the series of punishments pronounced on the woman were gender sensitive. God decided to declare a set of punishments, which were commensurate with the male/female gender divide and therefore occupationally and culturally appropriate. They were as follows: Great pains in child bearing, (v. 16^a); loss of the role of being at par or equal with the man (Gen. 3:16^b). This means that her sense of independence would be lost, since she would be a product to be manipulated by the man. The third one was that she would be subjected to the authority of the man. In effect man would rule the woman perpetually (Gen. 3:16^c).²⁸⁸The third punishment on the woman meant that she would lose the capacity to assert herself or play any leadership role, within the context of the family and in her marital relationship with the man, and by extension she has no significant role in her immediate and wider community.

Within the culture, of the Bible and I dare say too that in many traditional African societies, there is nothing abnormal in it. In these cultures, the women were destined to play sub-ordinate roles to that of the men.

c. Declaration Concerning the Fate of the Man

Although in the inquisition he was the first in the line of the questioning, when it came to delivering judgment, his became last. This is not however to suggest that God was lighter on him. To the contrary, viewing the content and magnitude of the punishment, it would appear that he had a bigger weight to carry home. God issued out this against him: For choosing to disregard God's instruction in preference of that of the woman, his wife, the following consequences would follow:

First, Man's source of livelihood was cursed. The earth was cursed on his account.²⁸⁹ Since farming was the main source of sustaining his life, and since he was the breadwinner of the family, placing it under a curse means that man was doomed. Whether man use his physical body (his hands), brute force and physical strength, or mind, or even his brain, all

²⁸⁸ It is to be noted that this is one of the things, which the feminist movements and advocates are fighting against in the last two centuries, that is, the right to enjoy equal opportunities with the men.

²⁸⁹ The implication of this was that, apart from farming, any other forms of human labour, physical, mental, intellectual or otherwise, which he would engage in were all placed under a curse.

were placed under a curse. What this amounted to was that the totality of human labour, throughout Man's entire years of life would be painful and tortures. They would be years and a life of harsh and hard labour.

Second and Further still, the very sad commentary of this is in the fact that, in terms of material possessions, all of man's labour, which would consist of hard service would end in futility. This because at the end of it all, he would die, and there would be no remembrance of his former years, and months, and weeks and days of his hard labour. There would be nothing to show for it, because upon his death, he would return to his creator, naked empty handed. The best description of the end of man's life is found in Ecclesiastes, 1: 2-11, which summarizes the entire business of man's life under the sun as emptiness and utterly meaningless, and a vexing experience. Man having come from dust, would ultimately return to dust. In my mind, this level of punishment far outweighs the others, hence my conclusion that sine man was head and the one who possessed the authority to guide the woman, but failed to discharge his responsibility the sledge hammer descended more heavily upon him.

d. Appearance of Hope in Hopelessness

However, within the context of the creation story, the above picture does not reflect the entire intention of the creator in the story of man's fate. If it were so, there would be no point in attempting to understand the place of Salvation History, within the section of the Bible containing elements of Primal history. Man living in the image of God, must be seen enjoying the aspects of the image of God in him, through the eyes of Salvation, which God plotted for him in History.

f. God's Redemptive Act Stems from God's Gracious Heart

What was God's intention of seeking out Adam and Eve? God was aware of the truth that every human being has the propensity to sin, (Rom 3:23; cf., Gen 6:1-6), what was needed as a first remedy was to look for ways of how to deal with it. This can best be achieved if man looks out for how to deal with the problem of guilt. The Bible, and indeed Christianity sees sin as a very serious dislocation in God-man relationship, therefore, it must be dealt with carefully, appropriately and decisively. What is the prescribed biblical solution on how to handle sin?

The answer to this is not too far. Man must in humility run back to God when caught in disobedience. Unfortunately, the first response of man to this challenge, particularly when he saw himself in this mess, he had created for himself was to run for the quick solution. This was not an effective response. Man's chose to go in search of fig leaves to cover his nakedness was an act of desperation and not a lasting solution.

This was a temporary attempt, because the lifespan of leaves is short. As such leaves could not serve as long term solution to human nakedness, (guilt). The fact that even when both Adam and Eve were covered with fig leaves, but upon hearing the movements of God they hid from him is further prove and a good reason to presume that clad in fig leave did not provide them with an effective means and mechanism to deal with the very serious problem they had landed themselves into.

As a matter of fact, one of the most ineffective mechanism, which Satan has often sold to human beings is to attempt to hide from God's presence as soon as man sins. This device is defective and therefore fake and must not be attempted by man.

To be able to fashion out an effective weapon against sin and the guilt feelings, which necessarily accompany any act of sin is to discover the reason why God went after Adam, even in rejection and rebellion. God's solution to guilt is a simple one, yet very difficult to accept, much less to put it to use.

g. Three Necessary Steps for Forgiveness

Sin is a very grievous act on the part of man; therefore, it requires the taking of necessary steps to ensure forgiveness is obtained. I). Accept guilt unconditionally ii). Confess the wrong openly and iii). Unreservedly repent and seek for forgiveness with a genuine heart. It is worth knowing that these were the issues, which did surface in the scope of the text before us (Gen. 3:7-15).

Why did God go out in search for fallen man? The first admissible reason is that it stemmed from God's gracious heart. Man may attempt to hide from God, but God is often relentless in seeking him out.²⁹⁰ To be able to respond to this is important in the case before us. This is in view of the fact that many believers have the notion (which to me is wrong), that God went after Man so as to find him, accuse him, judge

²⁹⁰ Steven J. Cole, "Lesson 9: Where Are You? (Genesis 3:7-15)."

him and after finding him guilty, sentenced him appropriately, i.e. having found him guilty, to toss him out of the garden in shame and regrets. In my mind, this is thoroughly misleading when commenting about the ways of God, especially how he acts in order to deal with human failure - sin and guilt. At every step, God looks not just at what man has done, but the fact that man is a creature existing in God's image.

The picture of God's response to guilt and sin in Genesis 3 is therefore completely different from seeing him as a fault finder. God does not gloat, feast, or rejoice in the predicament of the guilty sinner. As a matter of fact, it grieves him when the righteous fall from grace to grass. In my thinking, since sin is a detestable act before God, it grieves him thoroughly and bitterly when a man commits sin. This is comparable to the situation in which a father grieves over the death of his first-born son (cf., Zech. 12:10^b). The prophet Ezekiel also implies this when re-echoes this truth, insisting that the Lord does not take pleasure in the death of anyone who sins, rather he delights in their repentance, (Ezek. 18: 23, 32).

The idea behind God engaging man in a question and answer session was for him to lead him towards the direction, where on his own, he would discover his mistake and move towards seeking for forgiveness and restoration. This is further supported by the fact that when it came to the turn of the serpent to be questioned, God refrained from doing so, since he has no obligation to Satan. There is no single Biblical statement to indicate that God has a place to be lenient or merciful to Satan because of a previous relationship. Since God was not interested in the restoration of Satan, he did not question him, but let him to taste the bitter pill of his actions.²⁹¹ It can be inferred that once Satan squandered that possibility of sharing heaven with other spiritual beings, in his pride and greed to wrench power from God,²⁹² and had to be sent out of the heavenly realm, he had no intention of working for his reinstatement.

What the narrator hoped to achieve in his presentation of the story of the fall, in Genesis 3 is that:

- First, God is not interested in the excuses given by humans to explain their actions. Rather he is interested in seeing the sinner

²⁹¹ Cole, "Lesson 9: Where Are You? (Genesis 3:7-15)."

²⁹² The prophet Isaiah hinted to the hither-to exalted and bridal position of Satan among the other angelic beings, before being tossed out of heaven (Isa. 14:12-16).

coming to his senses and in humility repents and seeks for forgiveness.

- Second, excuses do not put off sin, nor do they remove guilt and its pains, but simply confirms the certainty of the commission of the act, sin. It certainly does not constitute a remedy for guilt.
- Third, all acts amounting to the commission of sin, be they done wilfully or ignorantly, amount to one's guilt, hence the offender is culpable, and therefore punishment must be apportioned.
- Fourth, furthermore, even when a guilty verdict is pronounced, it is within the purview of God to introduce and apply mercy, even within the context of the confirmation and acceptance of guilt. God still wills and acts out of grace. Out of mercy and compassion God may and does go out of his way to temper justice with mercy. This becomes the choice of taking some unusual steps for the redemption of the guilty.

From the session above, several things come out clearly as his response to guilt: For example, God is indeed very patient, and would not judge someone without giving him an opportunity of fair hearing. God took time to listen to them, but still passed the appropriate sentence after the attempted explanation by all the parties (Gen. 3:12-15.).

h. The Motive and the Guilty Verdict

We can say *up-initio* that deception was clearly behind Satan's moves. From what we have said earlier it is possible to infer that what was a motivating factor in man's propensity to engage in sin was the desire to free himself from the control of God. This is as indicated by the subtle suggestion by Satan, "You will not surely die.... For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:4-5).

Recall that in his encounter with the woman, which we also assume was the first and perhaps the only direct session with the tempter, Satan had suggested to Eve that they (Man and the woman) were capable of not only being on their own, and independent of God's manipulations, but they would be on the same page with God, having the same capabilities like him, had it not been that that they have been treacherously and deliberately denied by him. Satan's suggestions were laden with the insinuation that they could exist and act completely independent of God, their creator.

He painted to them the picture, not of death, but that which seems to suggest that human beings had the possibility of being their own masters, without having to be subjected to the constant scrutiny, harassment and the possibility to live perpetually under his control and guidance, since death was not part of their portion, and more so that “eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:4-5). However, as soon as the first two human beings, (Adam and Eve) consumed the fruit, the reality was different from their expectations. Not only did their dream to become like God become a mirage. The hope of being equal partners in the divine economy could not be realized. They were ashamed to face God, and on their own they had to distance themselves from (Gen. 3:8).

Other Critical Issues for Consideration

These issues are in connection with the person of God in the scheme of things, specially his capabilities. The first important subject of concern is this: was God truly the sovereign and the Omni present personality and force behind the creation act? If he was, why was it that his presence was not felt everywhere and anywhere at once to the extent that he had to call out to Adam and Eve? ‘Where are You?’ (v. 9).

Many commentators have asked why God called out to Adam as if he was not aware of his whereabouts. In response to this, we need to point out that this does not dispute God’s sovereignty and omni presence. Rather, it was meant to confirm and re-established it in the mind of the man. Looking at the narrative in its entirety, it could be seen that in truth, God’s fore knowledge of their movements was not in doubt, but he having bestowed on man the gift of the choice to freely exercise his will, (unlike the animals), he was at liberty to ask questions, which would give man the opportunity to account for his actions.

Linking this episode to what we as humans experience today, we cannot say that the questioning line opened by God outside his area of jurisdiction, but within it. As creator and therefore the sovereign Lord of universe nothing was to stand in his way, to the extent of denying or hindering him from exercising this authority. God was at liberty to question our actions from time to time. The fact that he called out publicly to man was therefore suggestive that he wanted man to also account publicly for his actions. God did not want to suggest an answer

to him. In this account, God's omni presence or his omniscience were therefore not compromised or not placed in jeopardy.

i. God Acted out of Sincere Love for Humanity

Furthermore, the concern for the welfare of the human race at this point of their estrangement was paramount in evaluating why God acted. The fact that God being the all-knowing God, still came looking out for man was not a contradiction, but a demonstration of his inherent love for humanity. With this action, God's eternal love for man was seen erupting and wildly too. It was out of his genuine and continued expression of love for man, which compelled God to move, so as to take man to the next level in their relationship, realizing what their actions had fetched for them. He was aware that the hither-to cordial contact and relationship had been effectively severed, therefore his concern was how to move so as to restore it.

In addition, God was equally aware that man was incapable of responding to the challenges caused by his actions, therefore, full of love and concern he took the necessary first step to reconcile man back to himself. What he did was therefore not a demonstration of lack of capacity of fore-knowledge, but a readiness to do the needful, thereby working to ensure the return to normalcy. The already tampered relationship must be restored, hence he called out to the man – Adam, where are you (v. 9).

j. Adam's Response and Matters Arising

This question naturally attracted a response from Adam. Adam said, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so, I hid." (v. 10). From it we could identify several things, for example, nobody is the same after partaking in a wilful act, such as sinning.²⁹³ Adam and Eve have already been forewarned, (Gen. 2:16-17), they couldn't therefore claim ignorance, and therefore acting out of lack of knowledge. It was an outright act of disobedience and rebellion.

From their first action and eventual response we know that they knew that their action was wrong. Furthermore, Adam's response was a typical

²⁹³ W. John Ritenbaugh, "Genesis 3:7-10," <http://www.theborean.org>. Accessed 12th /6/20.

reaction and characteristic of the response, which was coming not only from a guilty person, but also a first offender. We have shown earlier that sin often has the capacity of creating a sense of estrangement from God.²⁹⁴ The response was laden with guilt feelings and fear.

Being first offenders as against hardened criminals or habitual sinners, it also might have seemed to them that their actions were already known by all the creatures in the garden.²⁹⁵ It needs mentioning that Adam, who was confronting God's inquisitiveness directly for the first time was taken aback by God's line of questioning. He had thought that by his initial actions, he had hidden himself from God, the creator, but this was not to be. God is the all-knowing one, therefore man cannot and may never avoid being spotted and captured by the beam of his searchlight.

k. Was Adam Within or Outside of the Garden?

Furthermore, an often inherent but not frequently asked question is this. Where was Adam when he was being questioned by God? The wording of the sentence seems to suggest that Adam was outside the garden when he was questioned. However, this does not necessarily have to be so, and this could still be addressed adequately.

This notwithstanding, many have reasoned: if he was within the garden, why would he say, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked ..."? It is plausible to assume that what Adam and his wife did was out of fear of the consequences of their actions. They could not possibly gauge the reaction of God when they themselves realized that they had acted for reasons of greed, rebellion and arrogance. Therefore, on their own, they wanted to take a bold step by moving out and away from God's presence, even before God's arrival, and wait to see his reaction. At least outside the garden, they were probably thinking that they could avoid or even avert God's direct wrath upon them.

Another possibility was that as soon as they heard the movements of God in the garden, they sneaked out, supposedly undetected to a safer location, through some other route, before they answered him. This probably justifies Adam's response, 'I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid (so I ran away on account of my nakedness)' v. 10a.

²⁹⁴ Ritenbaugh, "Genesis 3:7-10."

²⁹⁵ Ritenbaugh, "Genesis 3:7-10."

However, when we consider the verse (v. 10), within the overall context of vv 8-15, it may well be that the entire dialogue was staged from within the garden of Eden, (and more likely so). For example, in verse 8, there is the mention that it was when Adam and his wife, Eve heard God's movements, within the trees or bushes in the garden that they decided to take action, moving away. For clarity, the verse reads: Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. It is clearer therefore that from this point, in v. 8, that the place of hiding from being detected by God was definitely within the garden, and not outside of it.

l. Reasons for Man's Reaction

Several reasons could be provided as the clue to why the man acted the way he did. Man became guilty stricken after their act of disobedience. After the commission, the next thing was for them to make do with a temporary measure to cover their embarrassment. Apart from sawing fig leaves to cover their nakedness, they also fled vicinity of the familiar environment, which used to be their usual rendezvous with God. This is supported by the content of the dialogue between God and man, (v.8).

It is obvious that after the man discovered his mistake, he became guilty conscious. Note that it was man, himself who first fled from the presence of God. Their usual meeting point was somewhere inside the Garden of Eden, but as soon as they became conscious and aware of the wrong (sin) they had done, they relocated from their usual place of meeting, presumably, still within and not out of the garden. This was a self-imposed action. On their own, they chose to limit their contact with God. This action was taken before God eventually banished them from having direct access to him.

m. Was Adam Acting alone in the Dialogue or in Representative Capacity?

Another issue worth mentioning is the question of whether Adam was alone when the discussion was going on. In this section therefore, our intention is to seek to establish who was in the company of Adam, during the dialogue session with God? Did the dialogue take place between God and Adam alone without the participation of Eve, the main culprit? The

text reveals that the singular pronoun forms were used in the entire narration of this section. From its face value what transpired seems to suggest that it was Adam alone who appears to be exchanging words with God, but was he alone? If he was alone when God called, where was Eve?

There is no reason, however, to disbelieve the fact that they were together. After all the entire scope (Gen 3) suggests that all along they have been operating together. Furthermore, v. 8 hints specifically that they were together when they went into hiding. It is therefore best to assume that they may well have been standing together and therefore acting together. However, in terms of the social, and other societal and cultural provisions of the environment, it was not normal for the woman to be asked to speak, while the man (husband) was present.

This can be justified furthermore, in terms of exercising authority and accountability in leadership. By Adam talking alone meant that he was taking responsibility, because he was the head of Eve. After all, was her make-up and composition not from one of the ribs removed from Adam's body? It could be said therefore that Eve at this stage was probably taking her rightful place as a backbencher in the family, and while she was aware of the call and the conversation, which eventually ensued, she could say nothing. She allowed Adam to do the talking, after all it was not a pleasant moment, where one could reveal his real identity.

Another sense, which is in agreement with above is the one, which suggests that the scene could be that, which suggests that he could have been talking to them both, but only Adam was responding. Adam was acting in representative capacity, since he was the head of the woman. In a normal situation, even as the conversation was going on with Adam responding, Eve would be there beside him, but listening. In Africa, just as was the case among the ancient Israelites, women were heard more from the background.

The use of the singular nouns or pronouns throughout the duration of the dialogue (Gen 3) could therefore be explained this way, that it was a stylistic device, commonly used by writers. While the singular may be in use, the entire members present were to be involved in the conversation, in the sense that one person could be presented as hearing, but in effect all of the person present were listening and therefore participating in the discussion.

The real encounter could well reflect an encounter in, which God, spoke to them together, with Eve standing within hearing distance, such

that what God was saying to Adam, Eve was hearing the exchanges. It also explains, why God could quickly switch to the woman as soon as he was through with the man.

It was more of an instruction being used out to the hearing of all of them, but since Adam was the man, he was the chief custodian of the instruction. It was therefore up to him to ensure that both his wife and himself adhered to it. No wonder, when God was looking out for them, it was Adam that he called, and it was from him that he demanded for a response. It was to him, the man, *vyai* and not the woman, אִשָּׁה, that he first demanded for answers.²⁹⁶

God the Redeemer took Action (Gen. 3:14-19)

This section, to me is the heart of all our labours. The steps, which, Yahweh took so as to respond to the challenge of humanity was characteristic of who he was in the scheme of things, especially within the context of the created order. He was not the created but the creator, therefore his response was evidence of his continued show of authority within the context of his redemptive love for the man he had posited. His was a (first) step forward in his redemptive drive.

Within the context of this discussion, the main issue worthy for discussion is the redemptive role, which God eventually displayed in the course of the unfolding drama, in which man had taken himself to a point which made a return to the fold and control of God almost an impossibility. By way of this singular activity God had introduced the subject of redemption, which estranged man badly needed at this point. Man needed to be retrieved (saved) from the hands of the serpent.

It is this aspect of the need of man, 'salvation', (redemption), which perhaps occupies the most central place in the discussion of the entire scope of the primeval history and the entire project called Christianity. Several things need to be emphasized here.

a. The Use of Symbolisms

For example, the use of symbolism is observed in the pronouncement from God as it affects both man and Satan. God hinted that the serpent

²⁹⁶ Adam as used here is a reference to the first human being, man – Adam, as a classification of the human race as opposed to woman – Eve, in the feminine ender.

would crawl with his belly and eat dust. To crawl certainly implies humiliation, while Donald Barnhouse thinks that to eat dust is indicative of the taste of defeat from the hands of an enemy.²⁹⁷ He goes further to explain that it also suggests God's prophetic judgment upon the enemy.²⁹⁸ What this means therefore is that Satan has been relegated to the level of a perpetual fighter, whose efforts would always end in defeat. The nature of this kind of life is nothing short of someone whose life has been condemned to a life of frustration in its entirety.²⁹⁹

Furthermore, the enmity placed between the seeds of the two adversaries, man and serpent are equally symbolic. The use of images like, crush your head, and strike his heel (Gen 3:15) are all reminiscent of symbolisms.

Secondly, as part of the consequences of their actions, God established a perpetual hatred and enmity between the generations of the two actors, the seeds of Satan and Man. He indicates that there would be an unending struggle for supremacy between them. While the seeds of the serpent would seek to seduce, cripple and or extinguish those of mankind by striking them by the heel, the Seed of mankind, on the other hand would move decisively to crush the head of the serpent. The implication is that the seed of mankind would deliver a deadly (fatal) blow on the seed of Satan, thereby ending his reign of terror on man. It points to the direction that it is the descendants of Eve would serve as the symbol of those who would champion the course of the downfall of the Evil One. This is further evidence of the life of frustration, which Satan's life would eventually be reduced to.

In theological terms, it was with the experience of Christ's victory on the Cross of calvary, which brought this picture out clearly. At the Cross Satan's dream of ever gaining the upper hand in the struggle with Jesus was finally dealt with. Satan was handed a mortal blow at the resurrection. Satan had thought that the Cross was going to be the final point where he would nail Jesus and hand him his defeat, however, as it turned out, the cross represented God's greatest victory, because in it and in the resurrection of Christ, Satan's final doom was secured.³⁰⁰ We need

²⁹⁷ Grey D. Burnhouse, *Genesis: A Devotional Exposition (Two Vol. in one)*: Zondervan Pub., 1973), 22.

²⁹⁸ Burnhouse, *Genesis: A Devotional Exposition (Two Vol. in one)*.

²⁹⁹ Burnhouse, *Genesis: A Devotional Exposition (Two Vol. in one)*.

³⁰⁰ Burnhouse, *Genesis: A Devotional Exposition (Two Vol. in one)*.

to observe however, that this does not mean that Satan would not register some gains. It simply suggests that in the meantime Satan may periodically gain victories, but within it is yet an indication that it is God's way of preparing the stage for Satan's final defeat. Thus, the seeming upper hand, which Satan is gaining in the present dispensation are purely temporary. Satan will ultimately lose the final battle, and Jesus Christ will reign supreme.³⁰¹

b. The Woman's Seed in Final Stage of Victory (Gen 3:15^b)

With Satan's eventual defeat, a window of a great opportunity for reconciliation was being prepared for humanity. In this verse we have what has come to be seen and taken to indicate the initial promise of a redeemer, and saviour for humanity.³⁰² Why the picture of redemption does not come out clearly and forcefully is because it came within the context of judgment, and therefore unexpected.³⁰³ This according a commentator makes it sweeter, because it makes God's grace to shine all the brighter.³⁰⁴ This is clearly a reference to Jesus Christ. Therefore, in the fullness of time, the drama in this prophecy was staged at the cross of calvary. The Christ, born of the woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons, was bruised by Satan on the heel, while the seed of the woman, the last Adam, having bruised the seed of Satan on the head, (Gal. 4:4-5) stands in the gap to redeem fallen humanity.³⁰⁵

This certainly confirms what Burnhouse said. According to him this is one of the earliest verses in the Bible, which contain the promise of a Redeemer.

This probably explains why Evangelical Scholarship sees in the wordings, "... I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Gen 3:15), the presence of the first indication of the message of the gospel, or *protoeuangelion*. It was God's singular decision to place the interest of man over and above that of the serpent. In the ensuing struggle, which God has placed between serpent and

³⁰¹ Burnhouse, *Genesis: A Devotional Exposition (Two Vol. in one)*.

³⁰² Burnhouse, *Genesis: A Devotional Exposition (Two Vol. in one)*.

³⁰³ Burnhouse, *Genesis: A Devotional Exposition (Two Vol. in one)*.

³⁰⁴ Burnhouse, *Genesis: A Devotional Exposition (Two Vol. in one)*.

³⁰⁵ Burnhouse, *Genesis: A Devotional Exposition (Two Vol. in one)*.

humankind, it is God himself who promised to fight the battle on behalf of man. God would do the battle and allow man to enjoy the benefit. Although the entire battle would be won by God, in Christ Jesus, somehow, he would transfer the glory not to himself. The emerging champion is going to be a human being. The offspring of the woman, would possess the capacity to overwhelm and defeat the enemy, the Devil. It is from this verse that we are convinced that within the contents of primeval history, (Gen. 1-11), the foundation for the future and full discussion of Salvation History (*heilsgeschichte*) have been laid. With it the concept of the Messiah and the accompanying Figure have their initial appearance and starting point.

c. The Limitations of Man's Efforts (Gen 3:7)

Appreciating the giant strides of God towards the redemption of man is further seen within the symbolic language of this verse, (Gen. 3:15). What action did God take so as to alleviate the level of the suffering and embarrassment of the man and his wife? We can respond to this question only when consider what man's efforts and capabilities amounted to in this circumstance. What was he able to accomplish by his efforts, and where did they take him to?

After Man's act of disobedience, it dawned on him that he had committed an abominable offence, therefore his first move was to make efforts to help cover his nakedness. What his quest to become like God, his creator fetched for him was a basket full of embarrassment. The narrator observed that the man, upon realizing that he was both physically and spiritually naked, after they both (the man and the women) had eaten of the fruits, with such appealing properties, and their eyes became open, they became aware that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves (Gen 3:7). This was merely a temporary and an ineffective response to a serious challenge, caused by sin.

It is worth observing that man discovered his nakedness on his own, sine man was created in the image of God, be he is not God. This explains why he could not do anything much about it, until God came to his rescue by providing a more appropriate (durable) covering for the body. By disobeying Yahweh's instructions, Adam and his wife realized that they were naked, and therefore open to be harshly treated by the weather. This notwithstanding, the challenge before them was more than a physical challenge. His nakedness extended to his spiritual bankruptcy. Man had

become both physically and morally naked, and therefore destitute of that piece of conscience, which is an impenetrable shield against the shame of being blamed and the fear of being punished.³⁰⁶

d. God's Gracious Response to Man's Physical Concerns

It is apparent from the text that man's efforts were of limited value, as he could, however, respond only to his immediate physical nakedness. It is worth noting that even his attempt to respond to his physical need was limited and momentary. Man had no means, nor the capabilities to respond to his long-term physical needs, much less finding a remedy for the spiritual challenge before him. At this point, although he knew he needed an outside help to be able to effectively deal with all aspects of the challenges, which his rebellion had exposed him to, it was not within his means to know where such a help could come, until God showed up.

In this section we shall consider the response from God to human need. Upon assessing the situation, God realized that there were two aspects to man's needs, Physical and Spiritual. Within the interim, he quickly and immediately placed himself in the shoes of man, and since he already was aware of his limitations, he took steps to help redeem man from his position of helplessness. He did this by practically demonstrating his desire to give man a more permanent solution to his problem. God sawed for both Adam and his wife garments of skin (Gen 3:21). Note that garments of skin are more durable than the fig leaves, which Adam and Eve had sawn for themselves to cover their nakedness, yet his spiritual needs were still not yet resolved.³⁰⁷ Furthermore, garments of skin also reveal the picture of atonement.³⁰⁸ In Israelite

³⁰⁶Barnes, "Notes on Genesis 3:21," Electronic Database, 2006, BibleSoft.

³⁰⁷ I am aware of the limitations of using leaves as a means of covering human nakedness. In those days, when women in my community and the general locality were using leaves as coverings or as wrappers, they were of short duration. For example, for ordinary leaves, what they took time (hours) to gather in the bushes would only last for a maximum of two days. For specially prepared leaves, these varieties were available only on special days or at weekends, and during festive periods. Women could spend weeks preparing it. Some may be bought in the market and taken to talented women, who would specially prepare such leaves for special occasions. What is worth noting is that even such specially prepared ones were of limited use. They could not last beyond one two weeks or one month.

³⁰⁸ Burnhouse, *Genesis: A Devotional Exposition (Two Vol. in one)*.

system of worship, what often accompanies atonement is forgiveness.³⁰⁹ In this verse God is depicted as moving in the direction of showing mercy to man. This means that he has pardoned man and accepted his confession, and a plea for mercy from Man.³¹⁰

Why did God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them in Genesis 3:21? Within the context of this discussion, garments of skin were more durable when compared to the clothing from leaves and therefore would ordinarily be more preferred than garments made from leaves.

e. Disobedience Fetched Expulsion from the Presence of God

Better and longer lasting as what God's action may have been, considering the circumstance, it was still a measure, which can be described as half-baked, and therefore was still in transition. It is to be observed that, what God was trying to accomplish at this point was still temporary, yet it served as a step, which was pointing to something much better ahead. With Adam's action, (Adam representing the whole of the human race) man permanently lost his right of tenancy in the garden of Eden. For the Lord concluded that since: "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." 23 So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. 24 After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life" (Gen. 3:22).

Further Spikes of God's Redemptive Endeavours within the Primeval History

a. The First Account of Death on Earth – (Gen. 4:8)

Moving from the narrative concerning the commencement of evil in the hither-to gorgeous, spotless and sinless environments such as presented in the image of Eden, the next dark spot in God's creation was the incidence of the first recorded death on earth, the killing of Abel by Cain

³⁰⁹Barnes, "Notes Genesis 3:21," Electronic Database, 2006.

³¹⁰Barnes, "Notes, Genesis 3:21," Electronic Database, 2006.

his brother. I must say that this is one of the most difficult verses to understand in the Bible. This is because of its silence over why Abel's sacrifice was accepted, while that of Cain did not receive God's attention and favour. This means that much of our thinking here is by way of conjectures or inferences.

Let us first look briefly at who Cain was. In giving the account of first act of murder, the narrator did not observe anything strange or out of the ordinary in the character of Cain, other than the fact that his preference for farming made him to take farming as his profession. Since Cain was said to have been a farmer, who was actually in charge of his circumstances, and having committed himself to task of farming, he must have worked hard, hence at the end of the farming season, he had something to give God, by way of a thanksgiving offering, a gift, which God did not take notice of, preferring that of Abel (Gen. 4:4). It was this action, on the part of God, which sparked-off the series of events, which culminated in the death of Abel from the hands of Cain, an action, which further open other chain of activities. Eventually, Cain became depressed and therefore was not in position of much rational thinking, leading him into an act of desperation –murdering his younger brother. Unfortunately, Cain, Abel's elder brother, whom he had thought was going to be an adequate umbrella, under whom he would take shelter and get fully protected became the source of his insecurity.

The text did not tell us clearly why his sacrifice was rejected, and although speculations have trailed the understanding of this verse, what is clear to me is the fact that the rejection of his offering created in Cain a psychological feeling of failure, following which desperation set in. However, after the deep desperation had set in, it drove hm into the direction, which made him susceptible to engaging into further more desperate actions, murder, with its attendant consequences (Gen. 4:11-12).

b. A Cry, Which Attracted God's Mercy: Wages of Man's Desperation

It was however, after God had rolled out the wages, which his action had attracted (Gen. 4: 11-12) that Cain became more restless, and had to cry out to God (vv. 13-14). God immediately introduced what we call elements of moderation, compassion, and forgiveness, v 15.

In the narrative, it is clear that God acted as the righteous Judge, by pronouncing an appropriate sanction. However, following Cain's cry for help, God heard him and was magnanimous in forgiveness, and pardon, in that he mellowed down on Cain's punishment. Thus, even when he acted justly to punish Cain, through the show mercy and compassion and Love he responded to the plight of Cain. This is an example of yet another move on the part of Yahweh as forgiving and lifesaving God. As a compassionate God he does not tempt man without providing him with means to overcome it (1 Cor. 10:13). This means that beyond every and any temptation that has ever overtaken man, God is always seen standing close by to provide man with ability and capacity to overcome such a temptation. This is a testimony of the fact that God is always moved to act for the sake of saving man, and not his destruction.

c. Human Wickedness and Corruption on the Increase (Gen. 6:1-5)

This portion of scripture is not only short but appears as one of the strangest passages in the holy writ. It serves more like a preface to the bigger picture of the resultant effect of human failure, occasioned by his inclination to continue sinning for the sake of it.³¹¹ Its content is also considered as one of the most difficult portions of scripture to comprehend.

The phrase, 'the man' *ādāh* in the Hebrew, presents a collective sense of the human race, and scholars think that the way it is used in this passage is different from anything in the paradise narrative.³¹² It speaks of developments in the mind of human beings as their population continued to increase on the surface of the earth. It speaks directly on the fact that the hearts of men were also increasing with the longing and the propensity to commit more heinous crimes. The matter grieved the Lord intensely and caused God great pains. In the words of the writer, The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

³¹¹ "Genesis 6:1," *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, <http://biblehub.com>

³¹² "Genesis 6:1," *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*.

The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain (Gen. 6:5).³¹³

The outcome of this was seen in the fact that rather than humans seeking emotional and psychological fulfilment in their fellow men, their desire shifted to having sexual relationship with divine beings. Man sought for and craved fulfilment through desiring to relate with angelic beings, and to desire them as partners for his urge of cohabitation (Gen. 6:1-5), resulting in the production of beings, who appeared to be super beings, because of their nature, and capacity, such as the Nephilim, (Gen. 6:4). At this stage, God had to intervene, thereby pegging the age of man to a maximum of 120 years (Gen. 6:3).

Note however that even, when The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. ... And was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. And he even concluded that he was going to ... wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth ..., God still acted within the framework of his mercy, compassion, and love. It was based on his favour that Noah was considered to be righteous by God's standards, Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord. ... Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.

Noah still found favour in the eyes of the Lord (Gen. 6:5-7). What we may wish to establish in this narrative is the fact that consistently, God desires to reveal a pattern and reason for his actions, to the effect that whenever man lands himself in a desperate situation, God does not abandon him. He would always find a means to bring him out of it. This explains why when all of humanity was united in some kind of conspiracy to perpetrate evil, He still found Noah, preserved him and declared him righteous on his side (Gen. 6:8-9).

³¹³ Time and space may not allow us to proceed beyond this limited sense and intension of this brief discussion. Suffice it to say that our intention is to seek to buttress the intension of the writer of this section of scripture, namely, that sin, representing human failure does not need a thorough discussion concerning its origin, but rather a consistent and established pattern, that once sin got a foothold in the mind of humans, it started to multiply by leaps and bounds, and that humans were incapable of arresting this trend by their efforts. They needed God's direct intervention.

d. The Destruction of the World Through the Flood Episode (Gen. 6-9)

The decision by God the creator to visit humanity with a universal or worldwide flood, was the natural outcome of man's acts of intransigence as revealed in the preceding verses, (Gen. 6:5-7). It is also worthy to note, however, that due to the special place, which Man enjoys in God's heart, before God takes any action, which would affect him negatively, he would first issue him not only with an advance notice, but a way of escape.

Through the flood experience, we may well see two levels of man's acts of disobedience. The narrative indicates the reason for the decision of Yahweh to visit humanity with a universal flood. It shows that it was due to man's outright choice to disobey God's instructions (Gen. 6:11-12). The second level of disobedience and the accompanying punishment came when the human beings by their own personal decision chose to disbelieve Noah's warnings concerning impending flood.³¹⁴ It is worth recalling that when God had chosen the means to visit humanity with punishment, using the medium of the flood, he used Noah as an instrument to warn the generation of his day, but they paid no attention to his repeated warnings, (Gen. 6:12). Therefore, by their lack of faith in Noah and his words, they became complacent and unmoved. Since the warning of the impending punishment went unheard, when the flood finally came the people were destroyed.

e. The Tower of Babel Incidence (Gen. 11:1-9)

Another name for 'Tower of Babel' is 'The Incidence of the Dispersion of Nations within the scope of the Primal history (Gen. 1-11). It is another picture of Man's continued engagement in acts of rebellion against God's express orders, which amounted to sin. This serves as an example of how man's desire and quest for independence could push him away from relating meaningfully with God, and fail to actualize what had originally been set out for him. This narrative is the episode, which provides the basis of how the world, which originally had one language and one

³¹⁴ Although there is no clear indication on how the people of the days of Noah refused to hearken to Noah's warnings, the context of both chapters 6-7 seems to betray this understanding.

culture came to have a multiplication of languages, cultures and races. It is a confirmation of the fact that the existence of different ethnic nationalities on the face of the earth, especially as we have them today, is as a result of man's failure, sin.

The incidence of the Tower of Babel has yet another aspect. It also tells and perhaps explains the existence of high-rise structures known as ziggurats within the region of ancient Mesopotamia and the Nile Valley.

Conclusion

As we already observed above, from the first act of rebellion in Genesis 3, man's desire for self-actualization and independence knew no bounds. This episode presents us with another opportunity to pick several lessons from. For example, this narrative reveals the deliberate decision of man to seek out a future for himself. In this joint act of rebellion, men agreed among themselves and said: "...Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth" (Gen 11:4). Man desired to have a future, which was outside of God's original plan for him. Man acting in rebellion decided to disregard God's initial directive, that he should spread his wings and tentacles, to cover and occupy the entire earth. Recall that after blessing Adam and Eve, God said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Gen. 1:28).

God, being the sovereign Lord of the universe, is always able to act to uphold his sovereign will. This is because he has the capability to protect and defend his name and his integrity. In this case he acted immediately, by a direct intervention. By his direct response and intervention, Yahweh was able to not only redirect the mind of Man back to him, but through it he was able to reclaim, and re-establish his will and intention over man and his creation.

It is worthy to observe that there is a connectivity in all these episodes discussed above (Gen. 1-11). Noteworthy is the fact that in all the events, there is an indication that is inherent therein. Contrary to the main reason or motive behind man's decision to act against God, which is the desire for self-actualization and independence, and to be like God, not only was

he unable to be like God, he saw himself appearing helpless and vulnerable without God coming to man's assistance.

Man's sense of pride compelled him into thinking that rather than constantly looking up to God, or referring to him for the way forward, he could chart the course of his future alone, and by himself. The truth, however, was that it was after man had rebelled (sinned), that he sooner rather than later would realize the futility of his action. This realization of his desperation was what eventually would push him back to God's waiting arms.

It is interesting therefore to observe that at every stage in the repeated acts of man's sin, it was the same God who took the initial step of mercy, compassion and love to salvage man from his position of desperation, which he has brought upon himself, by his act of rebellion, which is sin.

It is my candid opinion that even before humanity, through the instrument of the Israelite nation could arrive at the point, which came to be referred to as the Intertestamental Period, Yahweh, the Lord God of the Abrahamic ancestral heritage had made sufficient provisions for it. It was therefore not accidental, but was part of Yahweh's conscious plans and continued engagement in the general human history as well as the specific and definite history of the Israelites.

Between Genesis 1-11, we can see through the content of this portion of scripture that God had adopted a procedure, which was all encompassing, as it involved and included the entire human race. However, there appears to have been a slight change in strategy by Yahweh, even as we interrogate the events, from Genesis 12. The issues became clearer and as we move through the other books of Pentateuch, and the other Old Testament materials, especially in their preservation of the history of the emerging nation Israel, particularly as they took on a definite nomenclature, the Israelites. This was not done in isolation, but was tightly linked to the way and manner they came to understand Yahweh, within the context of the special relationship they shared with him. This was based on a covenant treaty (Exo. 20-23), which brought them together. It was through this covenant relationship, that they were to further understand the role they were expected to play, particularly how Yahweh, their God wanted them to live in relationship with him as their God, and as well as how they were to relate and present themselves to the other nations living and enjoying the environment and the lands round about them.

Consequently, as the Israelites were marching toward attaining to nationhood, there were certain indicators, which were meant to serve as signposts. These were to guide them as an elect nation under God, as they march on the becoming a unique nation, within the community of nations. This is the direction of their history up to the termination of the Old Testament, and the commencement of the New Testament era, there appears to have been a change in style or strategy. We are bound naturally to ask, why the change in approach? What was his motivation to launch a different approach, as his response to the problem of humanity?

From the earlier procedure he had adopted in the universal human history, as revealed in Genesis 1-11 one thing is obvious: the previous attempts did not effectively respond to the problem of man's propensity to sin. Man's inability to confront sin and deal to it not only a deadly blow, but to put an end to it was certainly the major reason for Yahweh's choice of a different process. God chose to reveal himself and to communicate with man through the Hebraic race, and using a personality such as Abraham was not accidental, but a carefully and well thought scheme. Yahweh being the all-knowing (the Omniscient) was able to determine the end of the project even from the beginning with the choice of Abraham the Hebrew and the individuals and instruments, which he would be utilizing in the course of executing the assignment.

As observed elsewhere, it is worthy to note generally that in the narrative, in which the excesses of man were highlighted (Gen. 1-11), the intention of the recorder was to document these acts, not just for the sake of it, but rather to emphasize that in all the relevant points in the acts, man was desperate and became restless, and was in need of an external assistance to bail him out of a messy condition, in which he had placed himself.

The principle behind salvation history rests on the singular truth that God stands out as the one who first initiates the act of getting man out of a tight spot, that is, saving man. While it is in the will of man to act in disobedience to God, and therefore to commit sin continuously, without any ability on his part to get himself out of sin, and had to depend on God to work out for him the process of his salvation. hence the fact of the increase in the propensity to engage in sin on the part of man.