

Lesson 3 – 14 February 2010

The Fall of Man

Lesson Scope: [Genesis 3](#)

Lesson Focus

The paradise of God's creation was the home of Adam and Eve. God had given them one prohibition in all the garden, and that was to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Soon enough, the tempter came and cast this sin in a positive light. The serpent contradicted God's law, portrayed evil as good, and indicated that a better life was well within the grasp of humans. The first family ate the fruit, thus committing the sin that became the Fall of Man.

The result of their sin was, first of all, a loss of innocence. They became guilty before God. They experienced guilt, shame, and fear. Indeed, they had died spiritually, just as God had said they would. Man was condemned to a life of hardship, pain, and finally, physical death. As our theme verse states, these conditions have passed to all of Adam's children, including us today. All this because, in Eve's words, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."

Man, whom God had created to bear His image, listened to Satan's slander and yielded to his enticements. This choice to disobey God brought God's curse upon man and the whole creation.

In this important lesson, we see the truth that "Man can fall at many different angles, but there is only one angle at which he may stand upright." Man fell. Sin is exceedingly wicked, and we must not water down this truth. But as Christians, we are uniquely situated to proclaim the salvation of the world through Jesus Christ. Meditating on the final question in this lesson is one way to do this.

Romans discusses the effects of the Fall thoroughly, especially chapters 1-7. Doctrines of the Bible, (Daniel Kauffman) emphasizes the pervasive influence of sin, what constitutes sin, and so forth. Christian theology makes a distinction between the fallen state of man and his actual sins. Both are called sin in the Bible, one is wrapped up in our nature as children of Adam; the other is evident in what we do. Both merit the condemnation of God, and both require the saving power of Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:19; 8:1-3).

Lesson Aim: To see the involvements of the Fall of Man.

Theme Verse: [Romans 5:12](#).

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Lesson Text

The Snare

[Genesis 3:1-5](#)

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

²And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: ³But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. ⁴And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: ⁵For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

The Sin

[Genesis 3:6-13](#)

And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. ⁷And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. ⁸And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. ⁹And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou? ¹⁰And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself. ¹¹And he said, Who told thee that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? ¹²And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. ¹³And the LORD God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

The Sentence

Genesis 3:14-17

And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: ¹⁵And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. ¹⁶Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. ¹⁷And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat *of* it all the days of thy life;

Genesis 3:19

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Genesis 3:21

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

Genesis 3:24

So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Questions for Study

The Snare

1. What was the appeal of the serpent's temptation?
2. Is temptation itself a sin? Explain.
3. How does modern technology affect our exposure to temptation?

The Sin

4. What proved truthful about the serpent's words?
5. How can sin be identified?
6. Explain why sinful man experiences shame.

The Sentence

7. How does the curse go beyond the law of sowing and reaping'?

- S. How thorough is the condemnation of mankind`?
9. Is the hope of Christians reliable? Explain your answer.

Analyzing the Passage

Subtil (Gen.3:1) is an alternate spelling of subtle. The word in the original is set against the word naked ('al-oum) from the verse just prior, it highlighted to the Hebrew reader the great contrast between the innocence of the humans and the craftiness of the serpent.

The forbidden fruit appealed to Eve in three ways. It is interesting to compare this with Jesus' threefold temptation and with 1 John 2:16.

The seed of the woman that would bruise the head of the serpent (Gen.3:15) is mankind's Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

In the curse (Gen.3:16-17), both man and woman are given "sorrow" to bear, the woman, in bringing forth children, and the man, in coaxing food from the ground.

Principles and Applications

The Snare

1. Man's fall was Satan's deliberate design (Gen.3:1). Whereas all of God's designs are for some good end, Satan's designs aim at nothing but death and destruction. In no way does the Fall of Man exalt Satan in any real sense-, it merely ruins man. In Job 1, we see a glimpse into Satan's intentions. and in Revelation 12 the dragon hunts the woman and child. These passages indicate that Satan wills the Fall of Man and nothing else.

2. Satan uses falsehood in the temptation of man (Gen.3:4-5). Subtil is the one word used to describe the serpent. He rooted the temptation in outright falsehood. ("Ye shall not surely die.") As the father of lies (John 8:44). Satan regularly uses deception to tempt mankind into choosing sin instead of righteousness. Coupled with man's propensity to follow fleshly inclinations and clever reasoning, this devilish tool of attractive falsehood is often successful.

The Sin

3. Man fell when he gave ear to Satan and his appeal to the flesh (Gen.3:5-6). The place of temptation is a dangerous one. The first step in yielding to temptation is to consider anew the sin in question. Had Eve never done that, she would likely never have fallen. The Bible speaks of being "drawn away" by evil desire, which no doubt originates in curiosity (James 1:14,

15). The flesh also wants to indulge its natural functions. Satan makes sin appear attractive and tempts men to contemplate it, thereby lowering any resistance to the temptation.

4. Sin brings guilt, fear; and shame to once innocent people (Gen.3:7-10). Guilt is the knowledge of a defective posture before God. Shame is the embarrassing result of exposure, whether to society, to God, or even to ourselves. Fears take on many forms, but all indicate a lack of trust or confidence. In each of these aspects, sin is best perceived as a privation, a subtraction of an original goodness rather than as an addition of evil. Evil exists where good is taken away.

5. Fallen man tries to justify himself rather than acknowledge guilt (Gen.3:12-13). Man can never be at peace with his guilt. But rather than confess guilt, and thus incur just punishment, man will fabricate reasons why he is not truly guilty. At other times man justifies himself by shifting the blame or focusing on the sins of others. This is a shallow justification that cannot alter the perfect judgment of God.

The Sentence

6. Adam's Fall brought a curse upon the race, the earth, and all of creation (Gen.3:14-17, 19). Contrasted with the description of the paradise of Eden (Genesis 2:8-10), the world under the curse is a shadow of its former glory. Human life was cursed with sorrow and pain. Man would have to labor to bring forth food from the ground, even amid the thorns and thistles. Of woman, God said the pains of motherhood would "greatly multiply." We attribute to the curse all droughts, famines, floods, storms, and pestilences. Because of this curse, "the whole creation groaneth" (Romans 8:20-22).

7. Man's sin brought death to all his seed (Gen.3:19). "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men." The entrance of sin led to the reality of mortality. The first death was a homicide (Genesis 4:8), but even though a man avoids violent conflict with another, death cannot be avoided. "It is appointed unto men once to die." says the Bible. Man is given the gift of life only for a season, and no one knows when that season will end.

8. Sin separated man from God (Gen.3:23). In the Garden, man had daily communion with God. Because of his sin, man tried to hide from God. God expelled man from His presence because He is holy and will not dwell with sin. So long as man carries the weight of sin, he will remain separated from God. After death, hell will be the place of all unredeemed souls where

they will be eternally separated from fellowship with their Maker. 9. God promised the remedy for fallen man (Gen.3:15, 21). "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings" Jesus Christ, the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45), is the answer to the sin question. Salvation belongs to our God, and He graciously gives new life to repentant sinners. "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17).

Important Teachings

1. Man's Fall was by Satan's deliberate design (Gen.3:1).
2. Satan uses falsehood in the temptation of man (Gen.3:4-5)
3. Man fell when he gave ear to Satan and his appeal to the flesh (Gen.3:5-6).
4. Sin brings guilt, fear, and shame to once innocent people (Gen.3:7-10).
5. Fallen man tries to justify himself rather than acknowledge guilt (Gen.3:12-13).
6. Adam's Fall brought a curse upon the race, the earth, and all of creation (Gen.3:14-17, 19).
7. Man's sin brought death to all his seed (Gen.3:19).
8. Sin separated man from God (Gen.3:22-23).
9. God promised the remedy for fallen man (Gen.3:15-21).

Answers to Questions

1. What was the appeal of the serpent's temptation?

The serpent declared that sin did not really carry the sting of death. He portrayed God as a weak rival to man and suggested that man's potential was far greater than his actual experience. Upon hearing this, the fruit became attractive to man, both in his mind and to his physical senses.

2. Is temptation itself a sin? Explain.

Temptation is not a sin, but yielding to temptation is. Jesus Himself was tempted, yet He remained sinless. We must take measures to avoid temptation. When given a choice, we should "pitch our tents" in the direction away from Sodom.

3. How does modern technology affect our exposure to temptation?

It increases our exposure to temptation. Simple face-to-face communication with the serpent persuaded Eve to sin. Easy communication with a network of tempters can only strengthen the power of temptation.

Newspapers, televisions, telephones, motor vehicles, air travel, the internet, the camera, and the printed page increase the number of avenues for temptation to reach us.

4. What proved truthful about the serpent's words?

Man's eyes were opened, and he did know good and evil-, God Himself states as much (3:22). Man did not die physically immediately. But the process was begun, and he did die spiritually.

5. How can sin be identified?

God's law teaches us what sin is. Our conscience informs us of sin. We have the obligation to teach our conscience what is right and wrong, although it is equipped with fairly accurate knowledge by the time each of us begins to use it. The feeling of guilt, shame, or fear may indicate sin, but such feelings should be examined in the light of God's Word.

6. Explain why sinful man experiences shame.

Shame is essentially a feeling that comes from exposure that is embarrassing, either because of wrongdoing or of weakness. Adam and Eve were exposed to each other and wanted to avoid being exposed to God. Sometimes we become ashamed of our own deeds once we understand the true magnitude of them. In this sense, we are embarrassingly exposed to ourselves.

7. How does the curse go beyond yond the law of sowing and reaping?

The curse affects every human and all of creation. Each of us suffers both for our sins and for the effects of the sins of others. The Fall of Man is the real defect behind birth defects, mental disorders, and aging. Natural phenomena such as tornadoes and drought wreak destruction on humans who in no way caused those events. The curse is a blanket of woe over all of creation.

8. How thorough is the condemnation of mankind?

Man's condemnation is absolute apart from the promised Redeemer. The fact that God placed cherubim and a flaming sword at the gate of Eden indicated that there could be no return to that condition.

9. Is the hope of Christians reliable? Explain your answer.

It is completely reliable. "O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has provided man with the way to escape eternal condemnation and to enter into life again with God. "For I am not ashamed

of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

Summarizing the Lesson

This lesson shows the absolute nature of God's laws. The righteous judgment of God is very clear, in that all sin will be condemned. Man will be Subject to the power of sin and the effects of the curse throughout his life. Creation too has been reduced by the curse. The only hope offered is for a child of Eve to suffer and to redeem all of creation. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. - Jesus Christ, the Son of God. came in the flesh and wrought salvation on the cross. He is man's only true hope.

Research Guide

1. In Doctrines of the Bible, read pages 98-108 on the Fall and redemption of man.
2. Study Romans 1-3-5 to understand better the nature of sin and God's response to it.