

What the Bible Teaches about Man and Sin

The purpose of this booklet is to study what the Bible teaches about man and sin. We are going to be studying passages from chapters 1-5 of Genesis. In these chapters much that we need to know about man and sin is found. As we shall see, some of the lessons are like seeds that we plant in the ground which later grow into plants and bear fruit. Some of the lessons in these chapters in Genesis are in seed form, and we shall see how later they developed.

Please use this booklet as a study guide to these chapters in Genesis. Make sure when you study this booklet that you have your Bible open. Each lesson will be based on a passage from these chapters. Make sure that you read the verses through very carefully before studying the lesson. At times, you will be asked to turn to other passages in the Bible. Make sure you turn to them and read them carefully before proceeding with the study of this book.

Lesson One, Please read Genesis 1:26-31.

In these verses we learn two very important truths about man:

- I. God created man.
- II. God created man in His own image.

In this lesson we shall look at these two matters.

I. God created man.

When our children go to school they are frequently told in their science classes that man was not created by God but that he evolved from other life forms such as a monkey. This, of course, is not true. It is not the case that we were at one time like animals and then evolved into human beings. We were created by God. Now this truth, that God created man, has two very important implications for us.

1. In the first place, it means that **all human beings are special**. Adam was a special creation of God and we as the children of Adam are therefore special. This is seen very clearly when we read Genesis chapters 1 and 2.

(i) Notice firstly that God first created an environment for man to live in and then created man. It is not the case that man was created first and then, almost as an afterthought, God prepared a place for him to live. God first created everything perfectly and then finally created man showing that man is a special creation. The Garden of Eden was his dwelling place and the plants were his food. It is a little like a family in a village that spends many months preparing a house for a relative who is coming to live there. We can tell by the

amount of effort they spend on the house that the man who is coming is important to them. God first created a perfect place for man to live, and then created man.

(ii) Notice secondly what Gen. 1:26 says. It says, "Then God said, 'Let us make man.'" In other words, the three Persons of the Trinity had a consultation before they created man. There was no such consultation when the rest of creation was made.

(iii) Notice thirdly that man was created in the image of God. This is an important matter and we shall look at it in detail later in this lesson.

(iv) Notice fourthly that God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Gen. 2:7). God did not do this to any other part of His creation, it was only in man that He breathed the breath of life.

(v) Notice fifthly that man was created to rule over all the earth (Gen. 1:26).

All this evidence shows quite clearly that man is a special creation of God. Notice particularly that when the Bible uses the word "man" in this passage it means men and women. This is quite clear in v. 27 where it says, "Male and female he created them."

We need to remember this truth constantly that man is special because of what sin has done to our thinking. Once man fell into sin, his whole thinking was spoiled. And so today we behave as if some people are special and others are not. We judge people by their wealth and education and status in society and the clothes they wear and the car they drive and the school their children attend and so on. If a person dresses well and has a big car and an "important" job then we automatically give him respect. But if we meet a maid who is from a very poor background and has no education then we would see no reason to show her any respect or to be polite to her. It would not occur to us that in God's eyes the maid is as important as the wealthy man in whose house she is working and that she should be treated with dignity and consideration and respect because God created her.

This is the effect sin has had on us. We need to remind ourselves that we are all created by God and therefore we are all special. No one is more special than another, no one is more important in the eyes of God than another person; in God's eyes each one is equally important because He has made each one of us. To treat a person with disrespect is therefore displeasing in the eyes of God because we are showing disrespect to a person who has been made in the image of God.

This, of course, applies to unborn babies. The Bible says that the unborn baby in the womb is a living being. It is not the case that life begins when we are born, it begins while we are still in the womb. To kill an unborn baby is to kill a human being that has been created by God; it is the sin of murder.

It also applies to wives. A man may think that his wife is not a very important person and that he as the man and the head of the house is more important than his wife. But the Bible says, "Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat

them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers” (1 Pet. 3:7). Notice very carefully what the Bible is saying here. It is commanding husbands to be considerate of their wives and to treat them with respect. The reason is that the wife is an heir together with the husband of the gracious gift of life meaning the wife is as important as the husband in the eyes of God. If a man is leaving all his property to his two sons equally then it shows that to him the two sons are equally important, they are heirs together of his property. The husband and the wife are heirs together of the gracious gift of life meaning in the eyes of God they are equal. If the husband does not treat his wife with consideration and respect then God will be displeased with him and his prayers will be hindered.

2. In the second place, the fact that God created us means **we are accountable to Him for how we live our lives here on earth**. When parents bring a child into the world, that child is accountable to the parents for how he lives his life here on earth. He cannot do whatever he wants, he must do what pleases his parents. So a child cannot say to the parents, “I don't want to go to school.” If the parents tell the child, “It is our wish that you go to such and such a school,” then the child has to do it. If the child does not go to school the parents have the right to punish him because he has disobeyed their word. In the same way we have all been created by God and so we are accountable to Him for how we live our lives here on earth. We cannot say to God, “I don't like your laws so I have decided not to obey them.” God has created us and so He holds us accountable for how we live our lives here. At the end of our lives we will stand before Him and He will judge us for how we lived here on earth. When the Lord Jesus Christ returns, we will all stand before Him and all our works will be made known (Rev. 20:11-15).

II. God created man in His own image.

The Bible says, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him” (Gen. 1:27). This means that in some ways we are like God. It does not mean that we are God or that we are like God in every way, but it does mean that in some ways we are like God.

1. It means in the first place, that we are intelligent, rational beings. We know from the Bible and from creation that God is highly intelligent and very rational. He has created the whole universe very carefully so that the whole of the universe works well. In the same way, we human beings are intelligent people. Like God, we have the ability to think in an orderly, rational manner.

2. It means in the second place, that we are social beings. God exists eternally as the triune God. He exists as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and the three Persons of the Godhead are in eternal fellowship with each other. They fellowship with each other and they work together. In the same way, we have been created to live in societies rather than alone. This is why it is important for a family to make sure that they live together as a family. It is not a good thing for a man to spend most the year in the city and the wife and children are back

in the village and only see him once a year. Nor is it right for a man to spend all his spare time with his friends and only see his family when he comes home late in the evening. Similarly, the person who is saved must belong to a local church and be committed to it. It is not good for a Christian to attend this church one Sunday and another church the next Sunday so that he is just going from church to church. We were created by God to live as a community of people committed to one another.

3. It means in the third place that we are created spiritual beings. We read in Gen. 2:7 that God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life so that man became a living being. This verse tells us that man was given a body and a soul. Notice carefully how the Bible describes the creation of man. It says, “The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being” (Gen. 2:7). God first made man's body from the dust of the ground and then God put a soul in him. Notice that man is the only one of all of God's creatures who was given a soul. We are not told that any of the animals was given a soul. All animals have a body but only man has a body and a soul. This means that only man is capable of a relationship with God. When man was created with a soul, he immediately began a relationship with God. This is why it says, “Man became a living being” (Gen.2:7). When God made man from the dust of the ground he was a living being in the sense that his heart was beating and blood was flowing through his veins. But he did not have spiritual life. He was just like an animal. But then God gave him a soul and so he immediately became spiritually alive and began to be in a relationship with God.

The implications of this are important for us today. We as human beings will never be happy and fulfilled until we are in a living relationship with God. This is how we were made. When Adam Eve fell into sin, their fellowship with God was broken and man has been seeking satisfaction and fulfilment here on earth ever since. Most people think that this satisfaction will be found in the material things of this world, which is why people pursue pleasure and wealth so much. But actually we will never be satisfied until we are back in fellowship with God. That is why salvation is called life (Jn. 10:10).

4. It means in the fourth place, that we were created moral beings. This means we have a sense of right and wrong. We know that certain things are right and other things are wrong. We are the only creatures of God who have this sense of right and wrong. If a lion kills a man it does not feel guilty about it and it does not feel that it has done anything wrong. But if a man kills another man he is immediately aware in his heart and mind that he has done something wrong even though he may not admit it to anyone. Even if no one ever finds out about his sin, he knows deep within himself that he has done wrong when he killed someone. We are born with a sense of moral right and wrong because we are made in the image of God

Lesson Two, Please read Genesis 2:15-25

In this passage we learn two very important truths about man.

We learn in the first place, that **when God made man, He gave him certain directions on how to live life here on earth.**

We are told in v.15 that God put Adam in the Garden of Eden and gave him certain directions and guidelines on how he was to live his life here on earth. There are four specific directions he is given.

1. Adam was to work. We are told that “God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it” (v.15). This was God's plan for Adam and this plan has not changed. We are not to be idle or lazy here on earth, we are to work. Work did not come upon earth as a result of sin and work is not an evil thing or a bad thing. It is something that God instructed man to do before sin came. This is why the Bible is so insistent that we should work. To refuse to work and to depend upon others is a great wrong in the sight of God. Think about these instructions in the Bible:

“In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, labouring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: if a man does not work, he shall not eat” (2 Thess. 3:6-10).

“If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim. 5:8).

These verses from the New Testament make it very clear that if we do not work and are idle then we are in sin against God. They also make it clear that if we do not provide for our own families but depend upon others and beg from others then we have denied the faith and we are worse than unbelievers. Now perhaps a person will say, “I am doing my very best but I can't find a job or the job I have does not pay me enough to support my family. What do I do?” There are three things he should do:

(i) He should pray to God for a job and be patient. If God has commanded us to work then God will find a job for us. If we are sincere in wanting a job then we will find one.

(ii) He should not be too choosy with regard to what work he is going to do. There are people who have been provided with work by the Lord but they are too proud to take certain jobs and so they do not have work. Some people do not want to work hard but want an easy life and so cannot find a job. They need to remember that they are required to work

and it is a sin to refuse to work.

(iii) He should not have the kind of lifestyle that he cannot maintain. It is the way of life that each one of us is able to maintain a certain type of lifestyle according to the gifts we have, the education we have received and the kind of work we are able to get. If a person has had primary school education and is gifted as a manual worker then he needs to realise that it is the way of things in the world that he probably will not have a big house, a big car and his children attending an expensive school. So he needs to be wise with regard to where he lives, how many children he has and where he sends them to school. The Bible instructs us to be content with what we have (Heb. 13:5).

2. Adam was to work six days a week and rest on the seventh. We are told in v.3, “God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating he had done.” Later in the Ten Commandments, God refers to this and says that man is to rest from his labours one day a week because this is what He Himself did when He created the heavens and the earth: He blessed the seventh day and made it holy. The Lord's Day (which in the New Testament is Sunday) is there for us to rest and to worship God. It is not a day that is to be used for normal work.

This whole matter of the Sabbath is something that Christians are not always clear about. There is a great deal of confusion with regard to what the Bible teaches about the Sabbath. We shall look at this matter by asking certain questions.

(i) Is the Sabbath still relevant today? Is it not the case that the Lord Jesus Christ abolished the Sabbath? This is a belief that is very common today. We know that there are various things in the Law of Moses that the Lord Jesus abolished when He established a new covenant between God and His people. And so, for example, we read that the whole system of offering sacrifices to God has now been abolished because He, the Lamb of God, has offered Himself for the sins of His people (Heb. 9:26-28). We also know that the Lord Jesus Christ abolished the food laws found in the Law of Moses (Mark 7:1-19). These things are taught clearly in the New Testament. However, the New Testament does not teach anywhere that the Sabbath was abolished. In fact, it gives every indication that Christians in the New Testament observed it.

(ii) Does the passage in Mark 2:23-27 not show that the Lord Jesus abolished the Sabbath? This is a passage that has caused a lot of confusion and many people think that here Jesus was abolishing the Sabbath. However, a careful study of the passage shows that this was not the case. In fact Jesus' conclusion in this passage is this: “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27). Now if the Lord Jesus was abolishing the Sabbath He would hardly say such a thing. He might say something like, “The Sabbath was for the Old Testament only.” But He did not say this, He said the Sabbath was something that God created specifically for the benefit of man. Now if this is the case, why should Christ abolish it?

When we look carefully at this passage in Mark 2:23-27 we see that what the Lord is actually doing here is correcting the way the Jews were abusing the Sabbath. They had formed all sorts of rules about the Sabbath, and one of the rules was that a man must never go to the farm and collect food. Now it is certainly true that in normal circumstances one should not work. But Jesus is saying here that if a man is hungry then there is nothing to prevent him going to the farm to collect food. The Jews had made the Sabbath rule so strict that according to them it was better for a man to die of hunger than collect food! Jesus corrects this abuse by showing that human life is more important than man's rules about the Sabbath. It is the same thing as in the Old Testament. David and his people were allowed to eat the consecrated bread when they were hungry. Man's life is sacred. The Jews had abused the Sabbath by making their own rules, and so Christ corrected them in this passage.

(iii) Is the Sabbath on Saturday or Sunday? This is a question that troubles many people and there are people today who insist that the Sabbath must be on Saturday and that if we do not observe the Sabbath on Saturday then we are sinning. Now in the Old Testament the Sabbath was on Saturday and to this day those who are strict Jews observe the Sabbath on Saturday. However, it is quite clear that in the New Testament the believers met not on the last day of the week but the first and they called it the Lord's Day (see Acts 20:9; 2 Cor. 16:2). Therefore it has been the practice of Christians ever since to follow the example of the early church and to meet on the first day of the week, Sunday.

(iv) What exactly should Christians do on the Lord's Day? In Deut. 5:12-15 we are given instructions about the Sabbath. There are two things primarily we are to do on this day. Firstly we are to rest from our normal labours (Deut. 5:13-14). We are to make sure that we ourselves as well as those who work for us, whether servants or animals, get a rest on this day. Secondly, we are to remember that the Lord has rescued us from sin and brought us into His kingdom just as the people of Israel were to remember that they had been rescued from slavery in Egypt (Deut. 5:15). This is why we meet together to worship the Lord on the Sabbath. It is a means of remembering our salvation and praising God for it.

3. Adam was to take care of creation. We read in v. 15 that Adam was commanded to work in the garden and "to take care of it." God gave him rule over the whole of creation and gave him the command to take care of creation. This command is still with us. The world that we live in is God's world and we are to take care of it. We cannot simply exploit the environment for our own selfish ends. We are to make sure that we are not destroying the environment. This, of course, is for our own good. If we cut down all the trees in an area then the area will quickly become a desert and we will not be able to plant and harvest in that area.

4. Adam was to marry. In v. 18 we read that God said, "It is not good for man to be alone" and found a wife for Adam. It is a very interesting fact that when the Lord Jesus was asked a question about marriage and divorce, this is the passage that he referred to in His teaching (see Matt. 19:4-6). In other words the Lord Jesus is saying to us that the model marriage is

that of Adam and Eve. If we want to know what the perfect marriage is like, we must look to Adam and Eve and not to other characters in the Bible. This, of course, is not at all surprising. Adam and Eve's marriage took place before they fell into sin. Therefore, we would expect it to be the perfect marriage, it happened while they were still sinless. Now when we look at Adam and Eve's marriage, we see some very important teaching for us about marriage.

(i) Notice, in the first place, that there is very little emphasis on the wedding ceremony itself. We are told that God created Eve as a wife for Adam and brought her to him and they became a married couple. In God's eyes a couple's married life is more important than their wedding day. After all, the wedding day is only one day, the married life is to continue until one of the couple dies. It is interesting to note that today we frequently do things the wrong way round. A couple getting married will spend a lot of time, money and effort planning their wedding day but will have spent very little time thinking through how they are going to live as a married couple and how they will face the challenges of married life.

(ii) Notice in the second place, that the main purpose of marriage is companionship. Adam was alone and God saw that it was not good for him to be alone, and so he created a companion for him. Again, we see how far we have gone away from this. It is not unusual to find today that in a marriage there is very little actual companionship. Many times a man will live and work in the city and his wife will be looking after the land back home. Or, if the couple is living in the same house the man does not see his wife as a close friend. Instead, he has friends that he meets with after work with whom he spends the whole evening. He then comes home expecting food but rarely talks to his wife. This is not what God intended for us and such a marriage will not have the blessing of God. God intended the wife to be her husband's friend and companion.

(iii) Notice in the third place, that marriage is to be between a man and a woman. In many parts of the world today there are what is called same-sex unions. Such unions are sinful in the sight of God and He will judge them.

(iv) Notice in the fourth place, that marriage is between one man and one woman. It is only later, after sin came into the world, that the practice of polygamy began. It was not, however, the will of God that a man should have more than one wife. He provided one wife for Adam because that was His will for us. Today when a man takes more than one wife he says men like David and Solomon had many wives and that it is therefore acceptable for him to take several wives. Now it is certainly true that men like David and Solomon had many wives, but it is not their marriages that are held up as examples for us by the Lord Jesus, it is Adam and Eve who are our examples.

(v) Notice in the fifth place that marriage is a life-long commitment to one person. God says that the two shall become one flesh. This is an indication that marriage is not some loose arrangement between a man and a woman, what we in Kenya call "come we stay."

There is no commitment in such a relationship, it is very informal and no marriage vows have been made. If, after some years, the couple decides to end the relationship then they just part. But marriage according to the Bible is not such an arrangement. In a marriage there is a life-long commitment from each partner and that commitment only ends at the death of the husband or the wife.

(vi) Notice in the sixth place, that marriage is ONLY between a man and a woman. The man is commanded to leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. This means that the parents of a married couple should not interfere with the marriage. In some cultures, the family behaves as if the wife has been joined to the whole family. In other cultures it is normal for the mother-in-law to interfere with a married couple's life. This is going against what the Bible teaches. The couple are under a command to respect their parents and can seek help and advice from the parents but the parents do not have the right to interfere with their marriage.

(vii) Notice in the seventh place, that there was no payment made for Eve. God saw that Adam was lonely and in need of a wife and so He brought Eve to him and provided her as a wife. He did not expect any sort of payment for her. There are parents today who expect payment for their daughters. They need to be aware that such a thing is not right in the sight of God. It prevents a young man from marrying a girl in his early 20s because he is unable to raise the money. But that young man in his early 20s has strong sexual desires and the Bible says if a man has such desires then he must marry otherwise he will fall into sin (1 Cor. 7:9). When a person demands payment for his daughter he is putting a barrier in the way of what God has commanded.

(viii) Notice in the eighth place that there is an order in marriage that God has ordained. God created man first and then the woman as a companion or a helper for the man. This does not mean that the woman is inferior to man and can be treated badly by him. But it does mean that the man is the head of the house and the woman is to submit to him. The apostle Paul wrote, "The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man...the woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man" (1 Cor. 11:3, 7-8). This is why wives are commanded to submit to their husbands (Eph. 5:22). The man is wrong when he begins to abuse his position and behaves as if he is more important than the woman, and the woman is wrong when she refuses to submit to the man or to be under him. Both these things are against the will of God. Man must not abuse the woman and the woman must not refuse to submit to man.

These, then, are the four commands man was given with regard to how he is to live here on earth: he is to work, he is to observe the Sabbath, he is to care for the environment and he is to marry, though there are times when God gives the gift of singleness to certain people. These are people who have "renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:12).

Lesson Three, Please read Genesis 3:1-6

In this passage, we learn **how Adam and Eve fell into sin**. There are several very important lessons for us here.

I. How Eve failed.

1. We learn in the first place, that **Eve fell into sin because she listened to the devil's lies**. At the beginning of the chapter we are told about the serpent who "was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made." It is quite clear as we read the passage that Satan is the one behind the serpent using it. It is not the serpent that tempted Eve, it was Satan. He spoke to her and engaged her in a conversation by cleverly asking questions of her. If a stranger comes up to us and starts talking we do not find it too difficult to walk away if we do not want to talk to him. But if he starts asking questions, we usually find ourselves drawn into a discussion. So the devil was very clever, he used questions to induce Eve into a discussion and then started speaking to her. Eventually, he told her a straight lie: "You will not surely die" (v. 4). We fall into sin when we listen to the lies of Satan

2. We learn in the second place, that **Eve fell into sin because she did not have a clear understanding of the word of God**. When the serpent asked her a question, she said, "We may eat fruit from the trees of the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die'" (v. 3). Now when we look at the actual command that God gave in Gen. 2:17, we notice that God did not say they must not touch it, He said that they must not eat it. Eve did not have a proper knowledge of the word of God. In the same way today there are many Christians whose knowledge of the word of God is very vague. Very often you will hear a Christian say something like this: "Does it not say somewhere in the Bible something like this or that?" He does not have a clear knowledge of what the Bible says exactly; it is only a vague sort of knowledge. This will not help us in our fight against sin. When the Lord Jesus was tempted in the wilderness He could quote Scripture accurately and it was this that enabled Him to resist Satan.

3. We learn in the third place, that **Eve fell into sin because she did not trust God but suspected that He was withholding blessings from her**. Satan said to her, "God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (v.5). In other words, Satan is saying to her, "God wants to keep you in your present condition, He does not want you to go any higher. There is a higher position you can attain but He is deliberately keeping that one from you. If you eat the fruit then you will attain that blessing that He is denying you." This is how so many of us fall into sin. Satan convinces us that there is some great material blessing available for us and God is denying it to us. This is why people are willing to tell lies and deceive others; they are sure that there are great pleasures to be found in the things of this world but God, by His law which He has imposed upon us, is seeking to deny us these blessings.

4. We learn in the fourth place, that **Eve fell into sin because of her fleshly desires.** We read in v.6, “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it.” There are three things that appealed to her about this fruit: it was pleasing to the eye, it was good for food and it was desirable to make her wise. All these things are to do with the flesh and the pleasures of the flesh rather than to do with spiritual things and with her relationship to God. This is a very common way in which Satan leads us into sin. He emphasises all the fleshly and worldly pleasure we will get from the thing, but he does not tell us of the effect it will have on our spiritual condition and on our walk with the Lord. Think of a man who is being tempted to tell a lie so that he can get some money. He will think about all the benefits he will have when he gets that money: he can buy a nice phone for himself, he can go to a hotel with his friends for an evening and enjoy himself, and so on. He never thinks, “But lying is such a serious sin in the sight of God. The Bible makes it clear that liars will be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 21:8). So, although I could get financial benefit if I lie, the implications for me spiritually are very serious because I am displeasing God. I had better not do it.” When Joseph was being tempted with the pleasures of this world by Potiphar's wife he said, “How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” (Gen. 39:9). He remembered that he was a child of God and could not therefore run after the pleasures of the world. Eve thought only about the pleasures the fruit would bring to her, she did not think about the impact it would have upon her relationship with God.

5. We learn in the fifth place, that **Eve went through certain stages when she fell into sin.** The Bible says, “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it” (v.6). Notice that in this verse there is a progression: the fall into sin starts in a small way and then develops.

(i) The first thing that happened was that Eve saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye. The emphasis here is on the eye: she saw that the tree was good and pleasing to the eye. Sin so often begins with a look. A person goes to a friend's house for a visit and sees a phone that his friend has bought. He picks it up and looks at it carefully, taking note that it is a really nice phone. While he is doing this, sin is beginning to be born in his heart. In the time of Joshua, a man called Achan committed a great sin that brought judgement on the whole nation of Israel. Later when Achan confessed his sin, he said, “When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them” (Josh. 7:21). In the same way when king David fell into sin with Bathsheba, it started when “he saw a woman bathing” (2 Sam. 11:2). Both these men fell into sin because they did not guard their eyes. Jesus said, “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good then your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness” (Matt. 6:22-23). What Jesus means is that the eyes are like a torch that a man uses on a dark night. If he uses the torch to look at bad things then his heart will be full of sin, but if he uses the torch to look at good things then his heart will take in good things. We can either look at sinful things or good things with our eyes.

(ii) The next thing that happened to Eve is that she desired the fruit: “it was desirable for gaining wisdom.” This is always the next stage when we see something: we desire it. Achan confessed, “When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them” (Josh. 7:21). He first saw the things and then had a great desire in his heart for them. The same thing happened with David, he saw Bathsheba bathing and fell into sin with her. This is why we need to be so careful with our eyes. Job says, “I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl” (Job 31:1).

(iii) The third and final stage was that Eve took the fruit and ate it. James describes exactly what happens in such cases: “Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death” (James 1:14-15). Eve was dragged away by her desire and enticed, the desire conceived in her the act and then she gave birth to the act: she actually took the fruit and ate it.

This is how each one of us is enticed and led into sin. These three steps are repeated time and again in our lives.

II. How Adam failed.

It is quite clear when we read the Bible that Adam was with his wife Eve when she was tempted by Satan and fell into sin. We read in Gen. 3:6, “She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.” Adam was with his wife when she fell into sin.

1. In the first place, **Adam failed in his role as the head of the home.**

(i) As the head of the home, Adam should have made sure that his wife knew the word of God precisely. As we have seen, one of the reasons Eve fell into sin is because she did not have a clear knowledge of the word of God. It is the duty of the husband to teach his wife the word of God and to make sure she knows the word of God clearly.

(ii) Adam should have corrected Eve when she did not quote the word of God correctly to the snake. He must have known that when she answered Satan, her knowledge of the word of God was not correct, so he should have spoken and corrected her.

(iii) Adam should have prevented his wife from eating the fruit. He knew it was against the will of God for her to eat it and he should have stopped her from eating it.

2. In the second place, **Adam was weak in resisting sin.** We are told that his wife gave him the fruit and he ate it. We do not read anywhere that he tried to resist. This is something that happens so often in life: one sinner leads another sinner into sin.

Lesson Four, Please read Genesis 3:7-19

In this passage we find out **the immediate consequences of man's sin**. Notice that v.7 begins with the word "then." There is a logical structure to this passage. Vs. 1-6 describe the events and then from v.7 we have the consequences of those events, meaning that we are now going to look at what happened as a result of the events of vs. 1-6. The moment man fell into sin certain things happened at once.

1. In the first place, **Adam and Eve felt guilty after they had sinned (v.7)**. We read in v.7, "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realised that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves and made coverings for themselves." The moment they sinned, they knew they had done something wrong. They felt uneasy about themselves and they felt exposed. They were no longer comfortable about themselves. This is the effect of guilt. To be guilty means to have broken the law of God. We all have a conscience and the moment we break the law of God, our conscience speaks to us because conscience is the voice of God in the heart of man. The conscience makes us uneasy and uncomfortable. It tells us that something has gone wrong and that it needs to be put right. Like Adam and Eve we try to put things right by ourselves but we cannot. They sewed some leaves together to hide their sense of shame but failed and so had to run behind a tree. This was the first consequence of their sin, a sense of guilt.

2. In the second place, **Adam and Eve were no longer in fellowship with God, they were now spiritually dead (vs. 8-11)**. We read in v.8, "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." Before man fell into sin, he was spiritually alive. God had breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and he became a living being, meaning he had entered into spiritual fellowship with God. But the moment he disobeyed the word of God that fellowship was broken off and man now felt ashamed of what he had done. He hid himself behind a tree and hoped to escape meeting with God. This is why God had said to man in Gen. 2:17 about the forbidden fruit: "The day you eat of it you will surely die." Adam and Eve did not die physically the moment they sinned but they died spiritually in that they were no longer in fellowship with God.

3. In the third place, **Adam and Eve began to blame others for their sin (vs. 12-13)**. When God challenged Adam with his sin, Adam immediately said, "The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate" (v. 12). Then when God challenged Eve, she said, "The serpent deceived me and I ate" (v. 13). This is one of the great effects of sin upon man, he is not willing to take responsibility for his actions. As we shall see later in this booklet, sin has had such an effect on man that he is not able to repent of his sin until God works in his heart. We see that here. It is not the case that Adam and Eve are able to repent of their sin but are unwilling to do so; it is the case that they are now slaves of sin and are unable to repent.

4. In the fourth place, **Adam and Eve's sin brought curses from God (vs. 14-19)**. God

pronounces four curses here.

(i) The serpent is cursed for being Satan's instrument in the temptation of Adam and Eve (v.14). It is an important reminder to us that even those who are used by Satan without being aware of it will be judged by God. The serpent's curse is that it will crawl on its belly and eat dust.

(ii) Satan himself is cursed (v.15). He is told that there will be an ongoing enmity between him and the people of God and that eventually he will be utterly defeated.

(iii) The woman is cursed (v.16). She is told that it is in pain she will bear and give birth to children. Also, she is told that her desire will be for her husband and he will rule over her.

(iv) Finally, the ground is cursed for Adam's sake (vs. 17-19). It will no longer co-operate with him but will instead cause him frustration and hard work. He is also told that as a result of sin, death has now come into the world and affects all of creation; he will not live forever in his present sinful condition, but will die

These then are the immediate consequences of Adam and Eve's sin.

Lesson Five, Please read Gen. 3:20-24

In this passage we see **how God behaved towards sinful man.** After pronouncing curses, God then did certain things with Adam and Eve. There are two things in particular that He did.

1. God showed grace and kindness to Adam and Eve. This is seen in three things:

(i) We are told in v. 20 that Eve would become “the mother of all the living.” It would seem that God made a promise to Adam and Eve that the human race would not die in sin and face judgement, but that He has a plan of salvation whereby countless billions of Eve's descendants would be rescued from the power of sin and be saved. This is why Adam was able to call her the mother of all the living.

(ii) God provided Adam and Eve with the means to cover themselves since they now felt guilty and ashamed (v.21). This is a remarkable act of grace and kindness on God's part. Adam and Eve sinned against Him and rebelled and fell out of fellowship with Him. Having done all that, they felt the shame of it and so God helped them by making coverings for them. This, of course, points us to the greater work of God when His own Son the Lord Jesus would die in the place of sinners and provide a covering for their sins so that their guilt and shame is removed.

(iii) God made sure that they did not eat the fruit of the tree of life. We do not understand fully what these trees are about and there is a lot of speculation about them. However, it seems from this passage that if Adam and Eve did eat the fruit of the tree of life then they would not have died a physical death but would have lived for ever in a condition of sin. And so God, in His grace and mercy made sure that they did not do that as that would be such a hopeless state.

2. God separated Himself from Adam and Eve.

God, as we have seen, is a God of grace. But He is also holy and pure and He cannot live in the presence of sin. And so He banished Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden and drove them out from His presence. This is because Adam was now a sinner. The fact that God banished Adam and drove him out shows to us just how serious Adam's sin was. The Bible teaches us that as a result of the fall, **Adam became a sinner.** This does not merely mean that Adam was a man who committed a sin, it means that Adam now became a man whose heart was inclined towards sin, he was now a slave of sin and his heart desired sin. He was from now on a sinner by nature, it was his natural inclination to sin.

We sometimes speak like this of certain people. If there is a man in our village who is always doing bad things and is well known for it, we say, “He is a bad man, he is not a good man, he is bad by nature.” As we shall see later, the interesting thing is that these words should actually be used of everyone, not just of certain “bad people.” Adam became

“a bad man.” We can look at this more specifically to understand what this means.

(i) It means that Adam's thinking was now influenced by sin. Before the fall, his thoughts were towards God and the things of God. His mind was filled with thoughts about God and these thoughts brought him great pleasure. But now after the fall, his thoughts were towards sin. He no longer wanted to think about God, he now wanted to think about sin and the pleasures that sin could bring him.

(ii) It means that his feelings were now influenced by sin. Before the fall, Adam loved God and things of God. His heart was filled with a love for God and he loved to have fellowship with God and to do the will of God. But after the fall, his feelings were changed. He loved sin and wanted to commit sin. He desired sin with all his heart. The things of God were a trial to him, he no longer desired them.

(iii) It means that his will was influenced by sin. We hear much about free will in today's preaching. You will frequently hear a preacher say that when God made man, he made him with a free will so that man was free to do anything he wanted without any outside influence. The interesting thing about this is that nowhere in the Bible do we find this teaching. Nowhere in Genesis chapters 1 and 2 do we read that Adam was created with a free will. It may surprise you to learn that this teaching is in fact not true. Strictly speaking, Adam was not created with a free will. When God made man, there was a very clear order within man, and the order was this: his mind would receive information which would influence his heart or feelings. The mind and the heart would then influence his will, and his will would then move him to do certain actions. The order within man therefore is mind, heart and will, resulting in actions. The will was never free to do whatever it wanted to do without reference to the mind and the heart, it was always subject to the mind and the heart, it would only do that which the mind and the heart directed it to do. This is why we say that strictly speaking man's free will is never free.

In some ways, therefore, man was created like a well-ordered army. In a well run army, the General is at the top and he receives information as to what is going on in the battlefield, and makes the decisions. These decisions are passed down a chain of command to the ordinary soldier who follows the orders. The soldier has been trained to obey orders without question. That is the greatest qualification of a good soldier. Now we can see that the easiest way for an enemy to fight such an army is to capture the General who issues all the commands and then get that General to issue commands which are to the advantage of the enemy. Once the enemy has done this there is no need to touch the ordinary soldier – the soldier will just follow the orders he is given.

This, in effect, is what the devil has done. He has captured man's mind and heart so that the desires that are given to the will are sinful desires. Man's will, therefore, is now under the influence of sin because his thinking and his feelings are under the influence of sin. This is why Jesus said, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him” (Jn. 6:44). Notice carefully the words of the Lord Jesus here. He does not say, “No one wants

to come to me,” He says, “No one can come to me.” It is no longer within the powers of man to come to God by himself: his mind and his heart have been taken over by sin and so his will is to follow sin and not God.

(iv) It means that his actions were now influenced by sin. Whereas before the fall Adam's actions were perfect and holy, after the fall they became sinful since both his thinking and his feelings became sinful. This is why God would not allow him to eat from the tree of life. Adam was now a sinner before God with a sinful heart. His thinking, his feelings and his actions were all full of sin. He could not eat from the tree of life and live forever in that condition. God in His mercy would not allow Adam to live in such a terrible state.

Lesson Six, Please read Gen. 4:1-16

In this passage, we read of **the consequences of Adam's sin upon his descendants**. In lesson four we looked at the immediate consequences of Adam's sin upon himself. In this chapter the focus moves away from Adam and onto his descendants. The chapter is designed to teach us that Adam's sin had consequences not just upon himself but upon his children. This is because Adam was the representative of the human race. The actions that he took has consequences upon the whole human race. It is a little like the president of a country negotiating a loan from the World Bank. When he enters into those negotiations, he does not do so as an individual but as the head of a country and the country's representative. Even if another man becomes the president, the country still owes that loan to the World Bank. Adam was the representative of the human race and the decisions that he made have an effect upon all his children, right up to the present day. In Genesis chapters 4 and 5 we see two major consequences of Adam's sin upon his descendants.

1. Adam's sin was inherited by his children.
2. As a result of Adam's sin, the whole human race is now divided into two groups.

In this lesson we are going to look at the first major consequence of Adam's sin upon his descendants and in the next lesson we will look at the second one.

Adam's descendants have inherited his sin nature.

This is very clear to us when we read this chapter because here we see the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. There are three things in particular that the Bible teaches on this matter.

1. Because of Adam's sin all of us are by nature sinners. We naturally incline towards sin and are naturally positive towards sin and negative towards God. The Bible teaches this very clearly in these verses:

“Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies” (Ps. 58:3).

In this country most people believe that children are innocent little angels who are sinless until they are taught by others how to sin. But the Bible does not teach this, it says very clearly that it is from the womb that we are sinful.

“Your whole head is injured, your whole heart is afflicted, from the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness – only wounds and bruises and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged or soothed in oil” (Isaiah 1:5-6).

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure” (Jer. 17:9).

“For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander” (Matt. 15:19).

This truth is seen very clearly in the behaviour of Cain. He and his brother Abel bring offerings to God. God is pleased with Abel and his offering but not with Cain and his offering. Cain is angry at this and so kills his brother. Notice that Cain's sin is not like Eve's sin in chapter three. With Eve, the devil comes and speaks to her and craftily persuades her to sin. But with Cain, sin was already in his heart, he was born with a heart that was naturally inclined towards sin and away from God, a nature that had a positive attitude towards sin and a negative attitude towards God. And so it was a natural thing for him to rise up against his brother and kill him.

2. Adam's descendants have inherited the consequences of Adam's sin. In the last lesson we saw that when Adam sinned, there were certain consequences that came upon him, namely that his sin had an influence upon his thinking, his feelings, his will and his actions. Because we have inherited Adam's sin nature, we too have the consequences of his sin. Sin has had an influence upon our thinking so that we too think of sin and fill our minds with thoughts of sin until we are saved by Christ. Sin has had an influence upon our feelings. Until we are saved by Christ, we love sin and follow the ways of sin whole-heartedly. Sin has an influence upon our will. The will takes its directions from the mind and the heart and so it wills to do sin and not righteousness. And so like Adam we do sinful actions. The apostle Paul describes the whole human race like this:

*“There is no-one righteous, not even one;
there is no-one who understands, no-one who seeks God.
All have turned away, they have together become worthless;
There is no-one who does good, not even one.
Their throats are open graves;
their tongues practice deceit.
The poison of vipers is on their lips.
Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.
Their feet are swift to shed blood;
ruin and misery mark their ways,
and the way of peace they do not know.
There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Rom. 3:10-18).*

This passage makes quite clear the effect Adam's sin has had upon us all. We are people who are born in sin and love sin. Left to ourselves we will never seek Christ and salvation. It is not true that man's will is free and that he can come to Christ and be saved all by himself. Man's will is directed by his mind and his heart and his mind and heart both love sin and want sin, they will never direct his will to seek salvation.

3. We are all guilty because of Adam's sin. In Rom. 5:12 Paul writes about Adam's sin and says, “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.” Paul says in this last phrase that we are actually guilty of Adam's sin because we are his descendants. In other words the Bible

says that not only are we rebellious sinners in the sight of God, but we actually had a share in the original rebellion that Adam committed. At first sight this may seem rather strange, but if we think about it we can see that it makes sense. If Adam was our representative then we must share in his guilt when he fell. Equally, if Adam's sin made us sinners then it must be because we were involved in his fall, why else would his sin make us sinners? So Adam's sin is our sin, we are guilty of it just as he was.

Two important things to keep in mind about the effect of Adam's sin.

Before we finish this lesson we need to take careful note of two matters with regard to Adam's sin.

1. It is important for us to understand that all of Adam's descendants inherit his sinful nature, not just some. We need to remember this in particular when we are reading Genesis chapter 4 because it is easy to think that Cain was a sinner but Abel was righteous and that somehow Adam's sin did not effect Abel. This is particularly so because the Bible says, “The Lord looked with favour on Abel and his offering” (Gen. 4:4). This, however, does not mean that Abel was naturally good and that Adam's sin did not effect him. Abel was a sinner just as Cain was. We know this because later in the Bible we are told why it was that God looked with favour on Abel and his offering. It says, “By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man when God spoke well of his offering” (Heb. 11:4). Those who are sinners cannot bring their offering to God by their own works because they are sinners. They can only come by faith. Abel came by faith and was commended on account of his faith, he could not come by his own works for he had inherited Adam's sin and was a sinner just like his brother Cain.

2. Secondly, it is important for us to remember that while we are all sinners, we are not as bad as we could be. It is true that sin has influenced man's mind and heart and will and actions, but that does not mean that man is totally and completely and utterly sinful through and through. This is because of the grace of God that is at work upon all human beings. Although we are all sinners, we are capable of great acts of love, kindness and self sacrifice. There are people in the world who spend much of their lives serving others not because they are good and righteous but because this is how the common grace of God operates. This is why Jesus said, “Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!” (Matt. 7:9-11).

Lesson Seven, Please read Genesis 4:17-5:32

This passage is full of names of people and we may wonder what we can learn from these

names of any great importance. However, the passage does have a very important lesson for us and it is this: **as a consequence of Adam's sin, the whole human race is now divided into two groups.** This actually happened because of what God said to the devil in Gen. 3:15, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring." In Gen. 3:15 God was announcing the plan of salvation that He had drawn up from eternity. We must remember that the fall of Adam and Eve was not a surprise to God; He knows the end from the beginning and He knew that Adam and Eve would fall into sin. The Bible tells us that before the foundation of the world, God worked out the whole plan of salvation (Eph. 1:4). He chose for Himself a large number from the world's population and decided that these people are the ones who will get saved. We do not get saved because we decide to, it is because God decided we would get saved, the choice was God's not man's.

Having made that choice, God then planned that throughout the history of the world there would be two groups of people living side by side: His elect people and those who are not His elect people. This is seen in Genesis chapters 4 and 5. We have seen that Abel when he brought his offering to God came by faith because he belonged to God. Cain, on the other hand, "belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother" (1 John 3:12). We see this also in the two lists of names that are found in the passage we are studying.

1. The line of Cain.

In Gen. 4:17-24 we have the descendants of Cain. This is the ungodly line, the line who have not been chosen for salvation. There are certain things we can see about the way they live:

(i) They are worldly people. Notice that Cain built a city and named it after his son, Enoch (Gen. 4:17). This is an indication that to this line of people the world was their home, they felt comfortable here.

(ii) Notice also that the people in the line of Cain begin to multiply their sins quickly. We read of Lamech who had two wives (Gen. 4:19) and then committed murder (Gen. 4:23).

(iii) Notice thirdly, that this is a line where the people are proud and arrogant of their sins. Lamech does not feel guilt at having killed a man. Instead he boasts, "If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times" (Gen. 4:24).

2. The Line of Seth.

In Gen. 4:25-5:32, we have the line of those who have been chosen by God for salvation. After the death of Abel, the Lord provided another son to Adam and Eve, Seth who became the head of this line. Once again there are certain things we can see about the way they lived:

(i) In the first place it is quite evident that they did not see this world as their home. This is why no details are given of where they lived or what job they did. It is simply a list of names. No doubt the people in this line had cities where they lived and no doubt they worked. But these material things of this world were not important to them and so they are not mentioned in their list.

(ii) Secondly, the people in this line "call on the name of the Lord" (Gen 4:26). They came to God by faith and loved Him and worshipped Him. They sought to live their lives in such a way as to bring glory to Him.

(iii) Thirdly, the people in this line walked with God. This is an expression used of Enoch (Gen. 5:24) since he seems to have had a particularly close walk with God. But this is the line of God's children and so each one of them walked with God.

(iv) Fourthly, the people in this line lived in the hope of an eternal salvation from the trials of this world. This is seen in the fact that when one of their descendants, Noah, is born, they say, "He will comfort us in the labour and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the Lord has cursed" (Gen. 5:29). They were conscious of the fall of Adam and its effects and waited in faith and hope for the day when they would be delivered from the curse God had pronounced upon the earth.

(v) Finally, the people in this line knew the grace of God. We are told, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6:8). This, of course, was true of every one of them. They were born sinners but by the grace of God had been brought into the kingdom of God and were made the beloved children of God who walked with God. They did not belong to this world but looked forward to the day when creation would be restored and they would be freed from the effect of the curse upon creation.

These five things are the marks of all believers. To this day, all believers bear these five marks: they do not belong to this world, they call upon the Lord to save them and keep them, they walk with God, they look forward to the day when they will be redeemed eternally from this world of sin and they know the grace of God in their salvation and in their daily lives.