

Lesson 16

The Origin and Fact of the First Human Sin

Genesis 3:1-6

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The third chapter of Genesis is one of the most important chapters in the Bible. It tells how sin entered the human family. It offers an explanation for tragedy, suffering, war and general evil in the world. Take Genesis 3 out of the Bible and you have no explanation for the presence of sin. NOTE. Of all the documents that have come down from antiquity, including the Babylonian record, Genesis 3 is the only one that explains how the world became sinful and evil. Ancient documents may speak of good and evil but there is no mention of the origin of sin.

B. This chapter tells us some definite facts about sin: (1) that God is not the author of sin; and (2) that sin came to man from without and not from man's original nature.

II. SATAN'S ATTACK ON THE WISDOM OF GOD 3:1-3

A. Vs. 1

1. The serpent was a beautiful snake. Yet Satan himself is behind the serpent, who is the instrument, channel, or tool to express his subtle (clever) will. Working through the serpent, Satan uses various avenues of infiltration to get at the woman and the man to entice them into sin against God. He who is later called "that old serpent" (Rev. 12:9; 20:2) can disguise himself as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14) now shows his cunning.

2. Eve should have been alerted to the uniqueness of this serpent for it was speaking to her, which none of the other animals had ever done. NOTE: The Devil, tempted Eve rather than Adam. Why? Perhaps she, being formed for man and being the weaker vessel, was more susceptible to temptation in her

psychological make-up (1 Tim. 2:13-14; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Pet. 3:7).

3. The words "hath God said" are essential, for the Devil always tries to get people to deny God's word. All sin has as its beginning a failure to believe what God has revealed to us in the Bible.

4. Satan is questioning the wisdom of God. He subtly does this by raising a question; it is not a frontal attack on truth. It is as though Satan said, "Is it wise for your God to make a limitation on this one tree while allowing you to eat of all the others? Would a good, wise and loving God really do that?" Satan implants within the mind the idea that God is unduly strict in, not permitting Adam and Eve to eat from all the trees.

5. This verse also gives us the first step in temptation (cf. James 1:14-15). There are three steps: (1) to arouse the desire to do wrong; (2) to permit intent to form and an act to occur; and (3) to reap the results, which is death. The Tempter put a question in Eve's mind and she felt a wrong desire being awakened in her heart. Satan had managed to implant distrust of God's wisdom and goodness in her heart. He is seeking to alter the image of God in her thinking. NOTE. He is saying, "Either you misunderstood him and he did not really say that, or if he did say it, then obviously he is not quite the kind of a God that you have imagined him to be."

B. Vs. 2-3

1. The woman, instead of rebuking the serpent, enters into dialogue with him. She knew animals do not speak or that any creature has the right to call God's wisdom into question.
2. Eve understood God's command perfectly and knew that she was not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She also understood the consequences of eating which would be death. The words "neither shall ye touch it" which was not part of the original prohibition is an exaggeration and shows that perhaps secretly even Eve felt the original prohibition was too stringent. NOTE. God put this limitation upon man so man would remember that he is a creature and not God. God left this prohibition to test His creatures as to their willful obedience to Him. This limitation was put there for man's good and God knew the consequences even if man did not. NOTE. God puts limitations on men for their own good and when men violate God's moral law, the result is always sorrow, heartache and misery.

III. SATAN'S ATTACK ON THE WORD OF GOD (3:4). Now Satan openly substitutes a lie for the truth, but he does it in the realm of the future where you cannot check the results until they happen. God said they would die but Satan says they will not die. Having implanted a doubt, Satan now is bold to advance a direct denial of God's truth. He is now in a position to deliver a knockout blow. NOTE. Eve could still resist this temptation but it would be difficult, for she is being lured more and more to distrust and reject God in her life. Either she must come out vigorously on the side of God or she must align herself with the serpent. Eve is being pushed to deny the authority of God in her life and to accept her independence of God. NOTE. Satan is telling Eve that to be really free she is to have no restrictions over her, not even from God. If she is to obtain objectivity, wholesomeness and well roundedness that would characterize a fruitful life, she must not be bound by law. This is a lie of God, for freedom is being bound by the moral laws of God.

IV. SATAN'S ATTACK ON THE WILL OF GOD (3:5): This is calling God's will into question for it was not His will to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Notice that this is a distorted half-truth set forth by Satan. For God said they would know good and evil but he never said that that was a good thing as Satan implies that it would be. The Devil forgot to tell Eve that this would be the worst thing that could happen to man. Eve thought this would be something wonderful, exciting and glorious but the result would be disastrous.

V. THE FALL OF MAN (3:6)

A. Satan had aroused Eve's desire to go beyond God's limitations. She sensed a tinge of unfairness in God and wanted to be like Him, so as to make Him her equal. NOTE. When the human mind is tempted with the fairness of God, this is a work of the Devil.

B. Eve's emotions aroused, now brings her mind into action, so as to pass judgment on the logic of the situation. Her mind will act according to her desire. Even before her mind comes into play she wants the fruit and secretly has determined to have it. She no longer acts on the facts the way they are but as they appear to her. Since the mind no longer acts rationally because it is controlled by emotion, it must rationalize.

C. Her first rationalization is that the fruit would be good for food. It would satisfy her immediate need of hunger and the long-range effects would have to take care of themselves. This is the "lust of the flesh" (1 John 2:16) that lives for the immediate present. /

D. Her second rationalization is that the fruit was "a delight to the eyes," which indicates that it was pleasurable and titillated the senses. This is the lust of the eyes (1 John 2:16). NOTE. The pleasurable is always present in temptation. Sin is fun; at least for a while. It is the pleasure of sin, which makes it

so enticing and alluring to us. There is the element of the unknown, and this is one reason men sin even when the mind tells them it may be harmful. Sin ultimately destroys.

E. Her third rationalization is that the fruit would make her wise. This bolstered her pride or ego. The snare of the Devil is pride of heart, the ego of man. This is the pride of life (1 John 2:16). Knowledge without God produces clever devils.

F. Eve ate the fruit. When Eve had rationalized the whole situation, she finally gave in. She let her emotions rule her mind and the result was yielding to temptation, which is sin. NOTE. God made man to first use his mind then to have the facts stir the emotions. Finally mind and emotion moves the will towards God. However, fallen man usually gets emotion before mind and there is a problem.

G. Eve was tempted but Adam ate willfully. Adam could have refused but he did not, so apparently Adam felt God's limitations were too stringent as well. Adam knew what he was doing and walked into sin with his eyes wide open. (1Tim. 2:12-14). NOTE. Adam was the head of the human race. Had Adam sinned first Eve may have blamed Adam. But Adam sinned willfully and was not deceived and the whole human race was plunged into sin. NOTE: When our first parents sinned, they became like God, knowing good and evil. However, evil made them have a distorted view of God and of man. Now man became little gods, declaring independence from God and made their own rules in violation to the rules or laws of God.