

“GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT”

SESSION #3

2. Origin of Sin (Gen. 3)

Sin originated with a particular personality, called Satan, the *Liar*. That's what Jesus called him in John 8:44 – “*a liar and the father of lies*”. You can read more about his origin in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28.

Genesis 3:1 reads, “*Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’*”

Satan, in whom sin originates, begins to poison mankind with sin, by questioning first of all God's Word. Notice how God describes what happens to our forefathers, the originators of the human race. Note the contrast between the word and hearing the word, versus the eye and seeing, because Adam and Eve get carried away in the wrong direction by ignoring the word and focusing on sight.

The Bible from here on will make a strong point about the necessity for people who want to walk with God to walk not by sight but by the word, to walk by hearing, to walk by faith. And one of the early problems that we see in the Bible is a turning away from this extremely important aspect of spiritual life.

What were the key elements in this temptation? The first is to doubt God: “*did God say?*” Satan's tactic will always be to get people to question God's Word. But then Satan moves on to what has become a familiar 3-part formula for temptation:

The lust of the flesh – vs 6: “*the woman saw that the tree was good for food*”.

The lust of the eyes – vs. 6 again: “*it was pleasant to the eyes*”.

And the pride of life – “*a tree desirable to make one wise*”. Original sin involved those elements of temptation.

Right away we see that Satan is dangerous and he is subtle. But one thing he is *not*: he is NOT creative. He uses exactly the same temptation pattern in Genesis 3 as he does with Jesus in Matthew chapter 4. John the Apostle used these same three elements to identify “the world”, all that is against God. 1 John 2:16 says,

“For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world.” The ancient formula is still the one Satan uses against us.

The Satanic lie in the Garden of Eden could be expressed this way: *“you will only know it – this particular fruit – by trying it, by experiencing it”*. That is a Satanic lie. God never intended man to know about sin by experience. Man was to know about sin by believing the word that God says about it but not to experiment and experience it personally himself. It’s a Satanic lie that pops up in our own day and age and perhaps is especially dangerous for young people. Ah, *“you can only know it by trying it, by experiencing it, by testing it.”* There are some things we are not meant to experience, or to test out or to dabble in.

But God had given man the freedom of choice. Some people wonder if this was an unfair trap. No, this is essential to man being truly human – you cannot have love where there is no true freedom. And in that freedom, the first man made the choice to disobey God. Adam “ate” the fruit of the forbidden tree.

What was the immediate result? A deep sense of shame. Verses 7 & 8 tell us what happened. *“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.”* Naked perhaps from the glory which had covered them in the original creation. And now that they have moved away from that relationship with God and listened to Satan and obeyed his lie, there is a sense of nakedness. So then in an attempt to cover up, they make fig leaves to cover themselves. It’s an attempt that was totally inadequate. Making and wearing fig leaves is a totally unacceptable way of dealing with the problem they now find themselves in.

And so God later in chapter 3 has to come along with the real solution to their problem. Verse 21 says, *“for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.”* So what does that imply? Oh, it’s pretty obvious, I think. God made them some clothings out of skins. Where did He get the skins? An animal had to die to provide those skins. Fig leaves would not suffice for the sin of mankind; it took the death of an innocent sacrifice. Because what had happened to them was not something incidental.

It is a radical condition which requires a radical cure. You don’t cure cancer with aspirin! And you don’t cure the problem of sin by covering up with some kind of leaves or other attempts of our own making. It calls for a radical solution. And there can hardly be anything more radical than death. An animal had to die to provide its blood and its skin for this covering for Adam and Eve. And right away from chapter 3 of Genesis we begin to see already the appearance of what becomes throughout the rest of Scripture, God’s battle emblem.

His battle emblem, the flag under which God will ride out to conquer, is *“a lamb as it had been slain”*. It isn’t a mighty lion or tiger or some other majestic beast. God works under this banner on which there is a lamb, a helpless innocent little lamb, as if it had been slain. There isn’t a more helpless kind of symbol anywhere than that one.

And yet God chooses to use that symbol to show His own powerful solution for man’s deepest problem. Watch for the reappearance of this, God’s “battle emblem” (a slain lamb), at key points throughout biblical history.

Sin now becomes a permanent part of all human beings. Gen. 5:3 - *“Adam...begat a son in his own likeness, after his image”*. So Adam and Eve had children who were “in their image”. Not just that they had ears like Adam or eyes like Eve. They were their spitting image in every way, especially in this deepest way: they had a sin nature.

In Rom. 5:12 Paul writes, *“through one man sin entered the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men...”* Sin is now a permanent part of our DNA structure, if you will. There are two lines of humanity from here on:

There is a godly line, spiritual descendants from Seth, who followed and obeyed God; those who choose to accept God’s provision for sin, a slain sacrifice taking our

place, paying the penalty for our sin. Those who will accept that provision are in the line of the godly.

On the other hand, those who do *not* accept that provision come under the spiritual line of the wicked descendants of Cain. We'll take a look at Cain and Abel again shortly. But as you begin to see the way that humanity develops in these early chapters in Genesis you will quickly see some godly people and some wicked people. And it's rather fascinating that when you follow the line of humanity down to the #7 personality in both cases, you come to a tremendous contrast.

Enoch, the 7th person from Adam, a righteous man, is in direct contrast to the 7th man on the other side of the spectrum, a man by the name of Lamech. Lamech isn't very well known. Perhaps he should be, at least for this. Chapter 4:23-24 contains the very first poem recorded in the Bible. It was written by this man Lamech. *"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech! For I have killed a man for wounding me, Even a young man for hurting me. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold."*

What is the theme of mankind's first poem? Horrible! Revenge and murder is the theme of man's very first poem. And this man Lamech is in tremendous contrast to Enoch, #7 on the other side. We'll see why a little later.

The results then of sin produce tremendous divisions.

There is a division first of all between man and God as we see the relationship broken between Adam and Eve, and God.

Then there is a division within man himself, a sense of tremendous guilt and shame for what he has done. And you see that right away. It's a result of sin. It always is.

And then a third division or result: a division between man & man. Within the very first human family there is a murderer. Cain kills his brother Abel. In chapter 4:6 & 7 in the Living Bible, we have God's word to Cain: *"Why are you angry?" the Lord asked him. "Why is your face so dark with rage? It can be bright with joy if you will do what you should! But if you refuse to obey, watch out. Sin is waiting to attack you, longing to destroy you. But you can conquer it!"* That was God's word to Cain, when Cain was so

disappointed that God would not accept his offering of the fruits of his harvest. And God said, *Watch out! You're in danger of sin. You can conquer this if you want to!*

The possibility was there but Cain didn't take it. And the result was murder. So then that division was made between man and man, between brother and brother.

The fourth division is between man and nature: the ground is affected. And agriculture becomes a difficult occupation because of the curse put on the ground by man's sin.

There is a fifth division, one between nature and nature as animals now become carnivorous.

And then a division between nation and nation based on language differences, in a story we'll see shortly.

The results of sin: they're all rooted here; we see the beginnings of them here, but of course the ramifications and the outworking of these divisions we see far too often in our own world.

3. Beginnings in Genesis

J. Sidlow Baxter wrote: "*the roots of all subsequent revelation are planted deep in Genesis, and whoever would truly comprehend that revelation must begin here.*" [J.S. Baxter, p. 23] ... because the roots are all here.

In your own study of the early chapters of Genesis, I would suggest that you take note of "beginnings" or the first appearance of things. Theologians refer to this as the "*Principle of First Mention*". When you see something mentioned for the first time in the Bible, notice it. Notice the context and what God is telling us in this 'first mention' because this will be a very important mention. Genesis 3:15 – here is one such extremely important verse. It is the beginning of what is called a *progression of revelation* in the Bible.

"And I [that is God] will put enmity between you [the serpent] and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed (capital "S"); He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

Christ's death as the capital "S" Seed – the One who is promised here already, and will show up only in the New Testament – His death, His victory over Satan, is first of all promised here. Then this promise, seen here in very faint terms, becomes more clear and more detailed as the Bible story unfolds.

The promise of a special Successor is given to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and reiterated to David.

Then His mission and His death and resurrection are spoken of in detailed terms by the Psalmist.

And then as you move further along in Scripture, the details of His birth, ministry, death and resurrection are prophesied by prophets, men like Isaiah, Ezekiel, Micah, and others.

And then as you move into the New Testament, John the Baptist shows up on the stage of history to announce the public ministry of this One who has been promised since Genesis chapter 3. John's first statement is, "*Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.*" So what this Promised One – Jesus – will do becomes increasingly clear the further you go in Scripture.

Then as you get into the letters of the New Testament, the apostles look back at the ministry of Jesus to explain and describe the fuller meaning of what Jesus did. For example, Heb. 2:14 tells us, "*since the children have flesh and blood he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*" That's what He came to do. And we saw the hint of it here in Genesis.

And then finally, as you get into the last book of the Bible, Rev. 20 shows us Satan, the serpent, being cast into the lake of fire forever. And in chapter 21, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, the One promised here in Genesis chapter 3, is seated on His throne and reigning forever and ever.

In our next session we will look at the Flood, the Tower of Babel and the structure of the book of Genesis.
