

Lesson # 1 -- The Nature and Meaning of the Fall of Man.

I. The Background to the Fall -- The Creation of Man.

A. Man was created by God, not by an evolutionary force, Gen. 1:26,27; John 1:1-4.

B. Man was created in God's image, Gen. 1:26,27; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10.

1. The natural image: Personality.

a. By personality is meant at least self-consciousness and self-determination.

b. By his creation man possesses intellectual ability, natural affection, and freedom to make decisions.

2. The moral image: Righteousness, Holiness, and Knowledge.

a. By creation man was given the ability to know truth, to love, to express himself in righteousness and holiness, and to make meaningful decisions.

b. In his creation man was thereby able to express himself in this way in his relationship to God, to the other members of the race, and to himself.

3. Because of his creation in the image of God man is primarily a spiritual person. All of our evaluation must be on this basis.

C. Man by creation was given dominion over the earth and commanded to subdue it, Gen. 1:28. By this man was to develop the potentiality of God's creation and to do this for God's glory.

D. Man by creation was given the ability for and held responsible for perfect obedience to God, Gen. 2:16,17.

E. Man by creation was brought into an inescapable relationship to God, Gen. 2:16,17; Rom. 1:18-20; 2:14,15.

F. Man by creation was so constructed that he could find ultimate fulfillment only in God through the relationship of loving obedience, Deut. 4:20; 7:6,7; 14:2; 26:18,19; 28:9; 29:13; 32:9; Ps. 33:12; Is. 43:1,7,21; Eph. 1:18; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11.

G. Man by creation was well-pleasing to God; he did not need to serve God to be the object of divine love, Gen. 1:31. Love can only be received.

H. Observation: it is important that we recognize that God created us by deliberate choice; He created us for a purpose; He created us for Himself.

II. The Representative Position of Adam in the Fall.

- A. In his creation Adam was made the representative of all mankind.
- B. Because of this representative position all men are judged by God as having sinned in Adam's transgression, Rom. 5:12-21; I Cor. 15:22. Man is now born as a fallen creature, Psalm 51:5; 58:3; Eph. 2:3; Gen. 8:21; John 3:6; Job 15:14.

III. The Biblical Description of the Fall.

- A. In the temptation Satan led Eve to doubt --
 - 1. Whether God had spoken, Gen. 3:1.
 - 2. The truthfulness of God's Word, Gen. 3:4.
 - 3. The goodness of God, Gen. 3:5.
 - 4. The wisdom of man in listening to God, Gen. 3:5.
- B. Adam yielded to the temptation to become like God and deliberately chose to disobey the known will of God, Gen. 3:6,7; Rom. 5:19.

IV. Observations about the Fall.

- A. The basic issue in the temptation and the Fall revolved around the issues of the truth and the goodness of God.
 - 1. Today we are facing something almost more serious than the original Fall. It is the issue of relativity in the area of knowledge. How can man turn to God if there is no truth?
 - 2. The believer must seriously believe, practice and protect the Biblical emphasis upon the truth and the goodness of God.
- B. God was not against Adam and Eve growing in knowledge. It was the how they obtained the knowledge of good and evil (from a Satanic source) and the purpose for which it was obtained (personal gain) that was evil.
- C. Man can only be led away from God by deception, II Cor. 4:4; I Tim. 2:14; Rev. 12:9.
- D. Satan, then and now, is seeking to get men to follow his example and rebel against God. His constant attack is clothed in the pious appeal to human interest. "Be independent." "Be your own boss." "Make up your own mind." "Enjoy yourself - you've earned it." "No one is perfect." "You're not responsible for what you don't understand." "How do we know there is truth?" "Play the hunch -- your reason and feelings are the final authority."

E. The event of the Fall has been written out as an illustration -- for our instruction and warning.

1. Step # 1 -- Eve listened to the enemy and argued with him.
2. Step # 2 -- The consideration of error: "Has He spoken and is He good?"
3. Step # 3 -- The reinterpretation: "We can't even touch it!" God appears under suspicion. "Let's think this through."
4. Step # 4 -- The presentation and acceptance of a half-truth: "You'll not die." Eve does not distinguish truth from error.
5. Step # 5 -- The appeal to sophistication: "You're missing something -- you need this experience."
6. Step # 6 -- The evaluation on the basis of human judgment: "That fruit is good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and desired to make one wise."
7. Step # 7 -- The temptation accepted now gives birth to action.
8. Step # 8 -- The sharing of the sin. The seeking for comfort.
9. Step # 9 -- The need for pretense -- now openness cannot be endured.
10. Step # 10 -- The motivation of fear -- "It's not my fault."

(Addison H. Leitch, Interpreting Basic Theology, pp. 62-70)