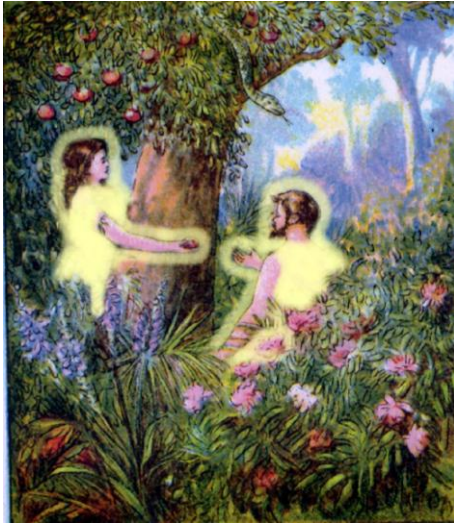


SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 7



THE BEGINNING OF SIN

Scripture Text: Genesis 3:1-7

Genesis is the book of beginnings. We have studied the beginnings of the earth, plant, animal, and human life. We learned something of their purpose, the reason for each being created.

Our lesson today deals with the beginning of sin and its dreadful effects upon the human race. We have been studying about God and man. In this week's lesson, a new character appears upon the stage. Who is he? Let us see what the Bible tells of his purpose.

MEMORY VERSE: *And be sure your sin will find you out.*

—Numbers 32:23b

Unbelief Opened the Door

Genesis 3:1-6 While the serpent was the agent or tool used to tempt Eve, we know that the source of temptation was the devil. Satan wanted to spoil God's creation. He knew what God's command was and he went to work, and he has never slacked off. **Ye shall not surely die.** This was a direct contradiction of God. He brought a doubt to Eve's mind as to whether God's Word is true. **Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.** He mixed some truth into the lie which made it more dangerous. Eve was tempted to (1) disbelieve God's Word; (2) disobey God's command; (3) doubt God's goodness in thinking He selfishly withheld good from man; (4) jealousy or envy of God, in wanting an ability God had; and (5) pride in thinking she could judge better than God. These were sins of enormous proportion.

Verse 6 brings the awfulness of the entrance of sin into the world. Eve's downfall was in listening, looking, considering, and acting upon the temptation. Don't say we would not have done so. Look rather at man's easy yielding to sin from then until now. We must be on our guard at all times. The devil shows the sweet and beautiful side first – **good for food ... pleasant to the eyes ... to make one wise.** The bitter follows after.

Sin seems, at first, to be pleasant and to promise joy and reward. But always, always, death is joined inseparably with sin. Death leads finally to the flames of hell. **Did eat, and gave also unto her husband** – Sin spreads and sin grows. Sinners lead others to sin. As one succumbs to the tempter's voice, disobedience follows in quick succession. **And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food** – God had not said that it was not good for food. Here we see temptation through the lust of the flesh. **That it was pleasant to the eyes** – temptation through the lust of the eyes. **To make one wise** – temptation through the pride of life. These are the three realms where man is most vulnerable to the attack of the evil one. The passions and appetites are always being attacked by the Tempter. We are easily tempted to covet, because of its beauty or usefulness, that which is not ours.

Their Eyes Opened

Genesis 3:7 Eyes ... were opened – They knew good and evil. The knowledge immediately brought problems, as it ever does. **Knew that they were naked** – innocence had fled. **Made ... aprons** – Now they tried to remedy matters. Man has been trying ever since to remedy sin's damage. There is but one remedy.

In these verses we find a perfect description of the way sin works in the lives of people. First, there comes the voice of doubt. If the devil can get us to doubt the Word of God as found in the Bible or as spoken to us by God's Spirit, or through our consciences, he has successfully started us on the downward path of sin. After doubting the Word of God, it is an easy thing to deny it and to live as if it had never been spoken.

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The opening of their eyes gave them more knowledge than that they were naked. They also knew they had sinned. Now knowing right from wrong, they knew they were guilty. They knew good and evil. We have this knowledge now. A child is not many years old when within him awakens this knowledge, and he knows when he does right or wrong, good or evil. We call this the age of accountability. We each have a conscience. We call it that still, small voice within us. If we will not override it and keep it tender, it will steer us away from those things which lead us to be tempted to do wrong. Many temptations would never be presented to us if we did not stand and look at the thing that we are not to have a part of. If Eve would have stayed away from the tree, the fruit would not have tempted her.

Human Nature Then and Now

Adam and Eve believed a lie rather than the truth. Many believe a false doctrine with no Biblical proof, yet question and doubt the truth. People will follow the downward way with no encouragement from anyone. If we wish them to walk the way of God, we must put forth effort to encourage them constantly. Since this is the need, let us lead and teach them to climb the way of God. How clearly here we see the frailty and weakness of human nature. The strongest of us is so prone to fall when we lean to our own understanding.

When God lets us know that there are some things He wants us to let alone, do not try to figure out the reason why. No matter how many good things we may think we see about them, when God says they are forbidden, they will destroy your soul when you overstep God's command. Constantly we must look to Jesus, trusting His wisdom and never ourselves, obeying His warnings to **watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.**

The truth that is being taught here is that the first man was tempted, and that he fell before the onslaughts of the Tempter. Although life has become much more complicated since this story in Genesis was written, the essentials remain the same.

JUST A THOUGHT

Jesus did not come that we may live better but that we may live forever.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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