

GENESIS

Lesson 11

The Fall of Man Part 2

This lesson will further examine temptation and sin, the first incident of which occurred in the Garden of Eden, as was observed in the previous lesson. We can learn and apply much to our daily living by examining at the story of mankind's fall. Later, as we move through the book of Genesis, we will discover a pattern of behavior that is repeated time and again, as reflected in the story of Cain and Able, for example. In this lesson we will focus on several aspects of Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden. In doing so, we will be mindful of two things: (a) the environment that they were living in, and (b) the perception that Satan has the power to make us do things that we do not want to do.

The Environment in the Garden

Read the following verses and note what each one reveals to us about Adam and Eve and their environment at the time of Satan's temptation and their sin:

1. Genesis 1:26-30
2. Genesis 2:15-17
3. Genesis 2:18-20 and Genesis 9:1-2
4. Genesis 2:21-24
5. Proverbs 31:10-31
6. Genesis 2:25

In summary, Adam and Eve were created by a perfect being and placed in a perfect environment. They had no bad genes or damaged DNA, no illnesses nor diseases, no disabilities, and they experienced no stress. The weather was perfect, and they weren't poor, as they did not lack for any material thing. In addition, they lived in a beautiful garden and walked daily with God. Talk about the perfect people living in the perfect situation. So I wonder why we think today that our bad environment, upbringing, and the world around us is the reason for our lack of faith in following God's commands. If Adam and Eve, two perfectly-created people, living in a perfect environment, couldn't live without sinning; then we begin to see one important principle emerge: sin, the desire to sin, and the act of sin itself, all come from within.

"The Devil Made Me Do It"

Flip Wilson, a famous comedian, used this as a favorite tag line in one of his bits: "The Devil made me do it!" But is this an accurate reflection of reality? Can the devil, i.e., Satan, make you do sinful things?

Consider the following verses and note what they tell us about sin:

7. Psalm 51:5

8. 1 John 2:16

As we look at the temptation of Eve, several things become immediately evident:

- As previously mentioned, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life were both located in the center of the garden that Adam and Eve were tasked to care for, so they would have been around both trees a lot as they worked and ate in the garden. Except for the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, all the other trees were provided for food, so it was allowable to eat from them.
- Also previously mentioned was the fact that all the animals God created were made as companions to Adam and Eve, and were friendly. There was no fear between man and the animals. It would therefore have not been that uncommon to be speaking to a serpent, or at least to have one approach you without fear.
- Genesis 3:6 tells us that Eve and the Devil were not the only ones present during their mutual encounter. Her husband Adam was standing right beside her. He heard every word of the conversation that Eve and Satan were having. He knew what she was thinking and what she did when she took the forbidden fruit, and he accepted all of it without question.

Given all of this, consider and respond to the following questions:

9. Specifically, to whom did God give his instruction about the forbidden fruit? See Genesis 2:15-17.

10. Did Satan interact with Adam?

11. Using 1 John 2:16 as a reference, match Satan's temptation of Eve recorded in Genesis 3:1-6 to the components of this verse?

Satan appealed to Adam and Eve's weaknesses—his primary strategy with all of us—and he lied. Satan, "a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44), uses lies to tell us what we want to hear. He distorts God's Holy Word for his own purposes, and he did so with Eve ("you will not surely die." In doing so, he told her exactly what she wanted to hear. Following the example of Jesus during his temptation in the wilderness, we can only fight Satan by knowing and using God's Holy Word. (Ephesians 6:10-17)

Considering everything that we have read, can you find anywhere in this encounter with Satan where he did anything to make Eve sin, or did Eve make her own choice to sin? Did she allow Satan to talk her into doing something evil because he had this great power over her, or did she use his lies as an excuse to succumb to her own sinful desires? Or rather, did she exercise her own free will and choose to do what she had been desiring as she stood looking at the tree and lusting after its fruit? Clearly the decision to sin and to go against God's Holy Word and his instructions about the tree was hers. She alone was responsible. Satan just took advantage of her own lusts and desires, and in doing so provided her an excuse to sin.

Conclusion

In the end, we know that Adam and Eve sinned, but what did they say was the cause of their sin when God judged them?

Let's look at the interaction between God and Adam and Eve after they have sinned. Note what we can learn from each of these verses:

12. Genesis 3:11

13. Genesis 3:12-13

14. Genesis 3:14

15. Genesis 3:16-24

As is evident from our study of Genesis Chapter 3, Satan is a liar, but he has no power to make us do anything against our own free will. We also see that our physical environment isn't to blame for our sin either, and neither is any other external factor. We must learn to do right, even though we do wrong naturally. We must realize that sin is the result of surrendering to our own lusts and desires, which run counter to God's instruction.

"But each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death." James 1:14-15

The next lesson in this study is titled "Ruling Over Sin" and entails an examination of the story of Cain and Abel.

As we conclude this lesson, let's pray for God's forgiveness, since as we have all sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

In Christ,

Wes