

Lesson 18

The Way Back To God

Genesis 3:7-15

I. INTRODUCTION

A. God told Adam and Eve that when they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they would die (Gen. 2:16-17). But Satan, disguised as a serpent, said that they would not die (Gen. 3:4) and that they would have their eyes opened to be like God and to know good and evil.

B. In this section, immediately after eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve do not die. At first, the Devil seems to be right. Was the Devil right? No, for the moment they sinned they began to die physically (Rom. 5:12) which would be completed hundreds of years later. They also died spiritually, for they were separated from God and had no fellowship with Him. The moment they sinned the signs of spiritual death began to show up in their lives.

II. AWAKENING TO SIN 3:7

A. **“The eyes of them were opened”** Disobedience in our first parents brought an understanding of evil as well as good. Now their eyes were opened to the fact that they were corrupt and polluted in their beings because they had sinned against God. This was an arousing of conscience and an awakening of understanding to the realities of sin. They recognized their lost condition and realized from what a high estate they had fallen,

B. **“They knew that they were naked”** Before the Fall, the first man and women saw things as they actually were. They beheld the world about them as good, for they knew only good. Nakedness is good but a knowledge of evil, because of the Fall, brings a perversion to all that is good. Now everything is judged from a false standpoint and nakedness becomes a matter of shame. NOTE. The Fall brought a state of self-consciousness and they were embarrassed about themselves. The world is now viewed from the focal point of self rather than God. God did not originally make man to be self-conscious. His interests were to lie outside of himself; he was to be selfless.

C. **“Made themselves aprons.”** Aware of sin, Adam and Eve, being human, now try to clothe themselves with fig leaves. So perverted was their reasoning that they make the first attempt at salvation by works. Man cannot do the impossible, and it is impossible that a fallen creature by his own efforts should clothe his nakedness and present himself before God. Salvation must come from God who can clothe men in His righteousness (cf. 3:21). NOTE: Clothing somehow helped their self-consciousness. This explains why the whole human race psychologically finds it necessary to clothe itself. Clothing makes us more secure. It helps us to project an image to cover up self-consciousness. We do not want people to see us as we really are on the outside or on the inside.

III. AWARENESS OF GUILT 3:6

A. **“Voice of the Lord God walking in the garden.”** God is spirit (John 4) but Adam and Eve heard him and saw him walking in the garden. Who then is this one? This was a theophany (God revealing Himself in human form) and probably was the preincarnate Christ, the second person of the Trinity, for Christ is the only visible representation of God in human form in the Bible.

B. **“Hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God.”** Adam and Eve discovered they were sinful but now comes the guilt that accompanies a polluted heart. Their human consciences begin to

function and they experience the inner torment of guilt. Man hides himself in his first attempt to interpret life and reality apart from the Creator. It is foolish for them to hide from God for He knows all and is their Creator. Yet, this is no more foolish than modern man who makes every effort to escape Him, making every attempt to deny the realities of life, and creating a philosophy of life that excludes God. NOTE. Psychologists agree that guilt is a universal reaction to life, that without apparent reason or explanation all of us suffer from guilt. Why? It goes back to the Fall.

IV. WOOING OF God 3:9

A. **“The Lord God called unto Adam.”** Man broke away from God, but God will not leave him to his lost condition. God had every right to strike Adam and Eve with physical and eternal death and no cry could have been raised against Him. There is nothing that compels God to save man; He does so out of His own good pleasure, and His approach to man is in love. It is God who takes the initiative to bring man back into fellowship with Himself. NOTE: All religions, apart from Christianity, begin on the note of man seeking after God. Only the Bible starts with the view of God seeking after man. This is one of the essential differences between the Christian faith and the other great ethnic religions of the world.

B. **“Where art thou?”** God did not need to know where Adam and Eve were, for He is omniscient. This question was designed to bring Adam to a realization of his sinfulness so he would confess his sin before his God. God is moving to bring Adam and Eve to repentance (to change their minds). NOTE. This question was spiritually designed also to alert man to his tremendous lost condition. When a man is lost the most important question he can ask is, “Where am I?” Only when man sees his lost condition in relation to God will he be saved. NOTE. Here is the first act of saving grace in the Bible. In all justice, God might have cast man then and there into everlasting punishment; instead He approached man in tender love to announce His determination to save him.

V. REPENTANCE 3:10-13

A. **“I was afraid.”** Sin and guilt bring fear. When man sinned, he thought he would be free of God and independent of Him. But he found no freedom at all from God, rather, His call reached unto them and they heard His voice. Even in their sinful condition they cannot escape from Him. NOTE. Great fear comes when one realizes that he is guilty before God, for God alone has the right to judge men.

B. **“Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commended thee that thou shouldest not eat?”** God is now showing Adam and Eve that sin is more serious than just the consequences. He wants Adam and Eve to see that they have a polluted heart and have rebelled against the Holy God of heaven and earth. God gives a straightforward question and it deserves a straightforward answer. A simple “yes”, an admission of guilt would suffice for an answer. A simple honest confession, that was all that God sought.

C. **“The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree.”** Instead of confession of the sin, Adam begins to make excuses, for human nature hates to admit it is wrong. Adam passes the buck and blames his eating on Eve. NOTE: He is saying what men have said for ages--we are victims of circumstances. This is what lies behind man's urge to blame each other and pin the blame for our actions or attitudes upon some outward circumstances Adam blamed his environment and associations, not himself. NOTE: Adam ultimately does not blame Eve, but God, for it was God who gave her to him. He is saying that God made a mistake but this is just human rationalization, which fails to face up to one's own responsibility for sin.

D. **“I ate.”** He does indirectly admit that it was he who ate of the tree. He sees that the reason he is where he is is because of what he is. He is a sinner, separated from God and at the mercy of God if forgiveness is to take place. God led him gently, graciously and firmly to the place where he admitted, Yes, Lord, I have sinned; I ate.”

E. **“What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, ‘The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.’”** Notice God’s question was put much more softly to Eve than His blunt question to Adam. God understands the tender nature of women. NOTE. Eve admits that she ate but not before she tries to blame the serpent for her act. Repentance is often a slow and tedious process for man hates to admit that he is wrong. NOTE. As soon as Adam and Eve say these magic words, “And I ate,” there are no more questions from God. There is no more prodding or probing on His part. God begins now to speak to the serpent, to the woman and to the man.

VI. THE PROMISE OF A REDEEMER 3:14-15

A. Introduction: These two verses may have a double meaning. It certainly refers to the literal Serpent who will be at enmity with the seed of woman (the human race). However the context implies more and refers to the enmity between unbelieving and believing seed in all humanity, and most certainly implies that this “seed” is Messianic. Genesis 3:15 is called the “Protevangelium” (first preaching of the gospel) by the early church fathers. It is the first promise of the coming of the Redeemer.

B. **“Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.”** These are words of scorn, a degradation that applies to the serpent and also to the devil, who used the serpent as an instrument for his evil purposes. NOTE: Satan is overcome and is cursed by God. While Satan has more power than man, he is not omnipotent and is a creature subject to the control of God. Satan, a creature, is no match for the Almighty God, the Creator.

C. **“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.”** God pronounces continual enmity between the seed of woman and the seed of Satan. God says there will be two classes of humanity that will be at enmity. The “seed of woman” refers to true believers of all time and the “seed of the devil” refers to unbelievers who align themselves with Satan against the true God (John 8:44). Satan will continually harass God’s people until he is finally judged at the Second Advent (Rev. 20).

D. **“It (he) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”**

1. This statement would lead us to think that there is even a deeper meaning in the words “her seed.” This is a reference to Jesus Christ and His virgin birth. The masculine pronoun “he” definitely indicates that the fulfillment of this promise, the seed of the woman, would be a man, born of a woman. Everywhere else in the Bible descent is reckoned through the male line. POINT: This is a prophecy of Messiah who would come as Redeemer for those who trust Him and Judge for those who reject Him and follow the lie of Satan.

2. “He shall bruise thy head” refers to the fact that Messiah will deliver capital blow to the Devil, which will be fatal. “You shall bruise his heel” indicates that Satan will deliver some lesser blow to the Messiah. NOTE. From our vantage point of twenty centuries away, we understand what this means. The bruising of the heel refers to the temptation in the wilderness, the darkness of Gethsemane, the opposition of Jerusalem, the betrayal of Judas, the suffering before Pilate, Caiaphas and Annas and the blood and death of the cross. The crushing of the serpent’s head came when Christ rose victorious over sin and death at the Resurrection and now the Devil is waiting for his final judgment at the Second Advent. POINT: Now the Devil’s burden is the fact that the victories, which he achieves become also his defeats. There is a strange twist by which the victories that the Devil accomplishes are turned by God’s power and wisdom into the place of his utmost defeat. Satan will be defeated.