

Powerful Christian Living

Chapter Eight

Sin and Salvation, Part 2

When God made man He formed him from the dust of the ground. He then breathed into man the breath of life and man became a living being. But the Bible also declares that God created mankind, both male and female, in His image.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our¹ image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
(Genesis 1:26, 27)

What is this image of God? There have been many attempts to explain what this image is. Some Bible scholars suggest this image of God in mankind is the ability to reason, to create and communicate. And I think that in a sense this is true. Others suggest that this image is a moral one; God is holy and righteous and good. These virtues were to be seen in the lives of both Adam and Eve. Still other scholars looking at the context in Genesis, chapter 1, suggest that this image of God in man is that of lordship. Right after God said "let us make man in Our image" he said "and let him rule..." This idea is also supported by the theme of Psalm 8.

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,
4 What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him?
5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels,
And You have crowned him with glory and honor.

6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands;
You have put all *things* under his feet,
7 All sheep and oxen—

¹ There are some who suppose that the plural pronouns used in this section of Scripture foreshadow the development of the doctrine of the Trinity. But there are not three persons in one God. There is only one person who is God and this is Yahweh, the Father of the Lord (Isaiah 45:5, 18; John 17:3). The New International version Study Bible states that here in Genesis 1:26, 27 "God speaks as the Creator-King, announcing His crowning work to the members of his heavenly court [i.e. the angels] (see 3:22; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8; see also 1 Kings 22:19-23; Job 15:8; Jer. 23:18)." See also Appendix Four in this book.

Even the beasts of the field,
8 The birds of the air,
And the fish of the sea
That pass through the paths of the seas.
(Psalm 8:3-8)²

Adam and Eve, as they were originally created could reason, create and communicate. They were to have dominion over the world. They were to be righteous, holy and good. And they were to enjoy a loving relationship between themselves and especially with God, their Creator. But then something tragic occurred and the first couple fell from their regal position. That something was sin.

The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. 9 And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life *was* also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”
(Genesis 2:8, 9, 16, 17)

Adam and Eve were free to enjoy the delights of paradise with the exception of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” God warned that “in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” The Hebrew is literally “dying you shall die.” In other words, the day Adam sinned his being would be corrupted and the process of death would begin.

Now this prohibition against eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not an arbitrary commandment. It was a good thing. Why should Adam and Eve know what is evil? The prohibition wasn’t to keep a good thing away from Adam and Eve it was to spare them trouble. This commandment also confronted mankind with the reality that although they were created to rule over creation, there was One who ruled over them—God. Sadly Adam and Eve disobeyed the will of God.

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?’”
2 And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the

² Since the time of Adam’s sin against God “we do not yet see all things put under him [mankind]. ⁹ But we see Jesus.” Hebrews 2:8

garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6 So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

7 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.

(Genesis 3:1-7)

The serpent in this account is Lucifer, the Devil who is a fallen angel.³ The book of Revelation calls this fallen angel "the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan."⁴ The Hebrew word for "serpent" means to hiss. And in the devil's cunning deception and seduction he attacked God's loving care for Adam and Eve and the integrity and truthfulness of His Word. Let's examine the steps that led to the fall.

- **The integrity of God's Word is attacked**

The first thing that the devil does is question God's commandment. He asked, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" The serpent's question makes it seem as if God forbid eating from any of the trees. Questioning the integrity of the Word of God is always the first attack, the first temptation.

- **Part of God's commandment is omitted then changed**

What happened next is that Eve in responding to the serpent's question omits some of what God actually did say. God said, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat."⁵ Eve omitted the word "freely." She then added to God's commandment saying, "nor shall you touch it."⁶ And then she changed the consequence from "you shall surely die"⁷ to "lest you die."⁸ At this point we no longer have the sure and certain Word of God we have an opinion.

³ Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:11-19 are prophecies against human rulers but the spiritual reality behind the prophecies concerns Lucifer, who is also known as the Devil and Satan

⁴ Revelation 20:2

⁵ Genesis 2:16, 17

⁶ Genesis 3:3

⁷ Genesis 2:17

⁸ Genesis 3:3

- **The lie is spoken and believed**

Having successfully attacked the Word and will of God the serpent comes in for the kill and boldly proclaims his lie.

You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.
(Genesis 3:4, 5)

- **Adam and Eve obey their own desires**

Casting doubt upon the integrity of God's Word, defaming His motives and lying about the consequences of sin, Adam and Eve obey their own desires rather than the will of God.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 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.
(Genesis 3:6, 7)

Grasping at equality with God, Adam and Eve fell from a state of pure innocence and human nature was corrupted by sin. This condition of sin and its consequence of death continue to this very day.⁹ Instead of loving God, we run from Him. Instead of believing His Word we reject it. We delight in what we want to do, to our own hurt, rather than obeying God's will for our own good. From the time of Adam's sin to this very day, though often very religious, mankind has an anti-God mindset. Our hearts, as Jeremiah said, are incurably sick. And this world that was to be ruled in righteousness by man is now held in the grip of the Devil.

Fallen, sinful, corrupted humanity now "*lies under the sway of the wicked one.*"¹⁰ Without the salvation that comes by faith in Jesus Christ all of us live our lives "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience."¹¹ But in grace and mercy God offers a promise of redemption. Here is the promise he made to Adam, Eve and the serpent.

So the LORD God said to the serpent:
"Because you have done this,
You *are* cursed more than all cattle,

⁹ Genesis 5:1-5, 8, 11, 14, 17; Romans 5:12

¹⁰ 1 John 5:19

¹¹ Ephesians 3:2. This "prince" is the devil. Scripture calls him "the god of this age" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

And more than every beast of the field;
On your belly you shall go,
And you shall eat dust
All the days of your life.
¹⁵ And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel.”
(Genesis 3:14, 15)

God promised a battle between the serpent and the promised “seed” who would redeem mankind. In this battle the serpent would “bruise” or crush the heel of the promised “seed.” But the “seed” would crush the serpents head. In other words the “seed” would totally destroy both the serpent and his works. This promised seed is none other that the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ whom the Bible calls the “last Adam.”¹² The Lord Jesus Christ redeemed us from sin and death because whereas Adam grasped at equality with God, Jesus did not

he made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point* of death, even the death of the cross
(Philippians 2:7, 8)

The apostle Paul, commenting on the sin and death that Adam brought into our world and the redemption we have in Christ wrote,

For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. 16 And the gift is not like *that which came* through the one who sinned. For the judgment *which came* from *one offense* resulted in condemnation, but the free gift *which came* from many offenses *resulted* in justification.

17 For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)
18 Therefore, as through one man’s offense *judgment came* to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act *the free gift* came to all men, resulting in justification of life. 19 For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s

¹² Luke 1:26-38; 1 Corinthians 15:45

obedience many will be made righteous.
(Romans 5:15-19)

Look at the wonderful truth of verse 17 again. Those who have faith in Christ can reign in life. We no longer need to be a slave to our sin nature. In fact we have received a new nature¹³. The Spirit of God is in us¹⁴ and we are a new creation in Christ.¹⁵ The Word of God says to us,

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

By God's grace through our faith in Jesus Christ we are saved "having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever."¹⁶ Genesis, chapter one, told us that everything reproduces "after its kind." A tomato produces another tomato, and an elephant produces, not a tiger, but another elephant. In the same way sinful mankind reproduces other sinful people. In John 3, Jesus Christ said,

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'
(John 3:6, 7)

Before we place our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, believing that God has raised him from the dead,¹⁷ we are all just flesh—sinful and fallen creatures. We can masquerade and pretend to be religious people or we can wallow in immorality, but either way we are sinners. And the power of sin is at work in our hearts and the penalty for sin, everlasting death, awaits us all. But when we confess that Jesus is our Lord and Savior God implants His Spirit within us. It is incorruptible seed and this makes us saved children of God. The apostle John wrote,

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is
(1 John 3:1-3)

As children of God we are partakers of the divine nature.

¹³ 2 Peter 1:4 says that we have become partakers of the divine nature.

¹⁴ Ezekiel 36:27; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:9

¹⁶ 1 Peter 1:23

¹⁷ Romans 10:9, 10

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.
(1 Peter 1:2-4)

And being now a partaker of the divine nature we have the Spirit of God within us, that has washed us from our sins and regenerated us, giving us the new birth. And we have the sure and certain hope of everlasting life in the coming kingdom of God.

For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
(Titus 3:3-7)

Do you remember the old nursery rhyme about the egg called “Humpty Dumpty”? It goes like this:

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
And all the king’s horses and all the king’s men,
Couldn’t put Humpty Dumpty together again.

All of humanity, like Humpty Dumpty, suffered a great fall in Adam. And politicians, educators, engineers and psychologists will never be able to put us back together again. We need God’s grace and the salvation that He offers to us through faith in Christ. Jesus Christ is “the way, the truth, and the life.”¹⁸ No one goes to the Father but by him. By Christ the full image of God is restored to us, as John wrote, one day “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

¹⁸ John 14:6

