

Di223 We Believe

Lesson Di223-9 The Fall

Have you ever wondered how sin came into the world? Adam and Eve lived in the perfect Garden of Eden. They were free to eat delicious fruit from every tree except one, and yet they chose to disobey God's command. Have you thought about how their disobedience still affects us today? If you have asked any of these questions, this lesson will help to explain the answers from the Bible.

Mankind—male and female—was created in the image and likeness of God. They were good and loved God. They had been given intelligence, conscience, and free will—or the power to choose—so they could hold dominion over all living things on earth. The writer of the Psalms said, “You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea” (Ps 8:4-8).

These rich gifts of intelligence, conscience, and free will lifted human beings far above the animal creation, and brought them into fellowship with God. Mankind's power to choose included the possibility of disobeying God, instead of obeying him. His power of choice—free will—made him fully responsible for all his actions. God gave the man just one rule when he put him in the Garden to take care of it. He commanded, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will certainly die” (Gen 2:16-17).

Now the man had named all the animals. Each of them had a mate, but the man had none. So God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone.” So God created a woman from part of the man's side. He greeted her with joy; at last he had someone like himself! She would be his loving partner to produce children and govern the earth. She was to share the man's task of subduing the earth and ruling it. Together they would love God and fulfill his joyful purpose for their lives.

It wasn't long before Satan, in the form of a serpent, came to talk to the man and woman. He raised doubt in the mind of the woman about what God had said and whether it was true. In fact, he lied to her. Satan set the pattern for temptation, and has continued it with hardly any change since the beginning. He is the great deceiver.

Here are the steps that the devil deceives people into taking: 1) Listening to lies about God; 2) Doubting God's Word and his love; 3) Looking at what God has forbidden; 4) Desiring what God has forbidden; and 5) Disobeying God's command. These are the same steps that the devil used with the first man and woman in the garden. The woman saw that the fruit on the forbidden tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye. She wanted it because Satan had told her that she and her husband would become as wise as God. She took some of the fruit and ate it. She also gave some of it to the man, who was right beside her, and he ate it too. Both of them knew God's command not to eat it, but they chose to eat it anyway (Gen 3:1-6).

Their disobedience opened the floodgates of sin, sorrow, sickness, and death upon the human family. Adam and Eve became aware of their guilt and shame. They made aprons from leaves to hide their nakedness. They hid from God. God had said, “When you eat of it you will

surely die” (Gen 2:17). Thus spiritual death happened immediately when they sinned. This spiritual or moral death meant their nature became sinful. Their former close relationship with God and their innocence were destroyed, resulting in guilt and condemnation.

The Lord killed animals and made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. This was the first shedding of blood to make a covering for the guilt of sin. Then God put the man and the woman out of the beautiful Garden and placed cherubim with a flaming sword to guard the way to the tree of life (Gen 3:21-24).

Since the sin of Adam and Eve, every person born comes into the world with an inclination to sin. Paul taught the Romans that, “Just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned” (Rom 5:12). This corruption of human nature involves the inborn desire to choose one’s own selfish way without concern for God or others. It is passed on to all human beings. The apostle Paul went on to say that, “Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires” (Rom 8:5). Mankind’s selfishness can be overcome only by a restoring of their relationship with the Spirit of God.

Physical death was not in God’s original plan for mankind. It was set in motion by sin. From the moment they disobeyed, Adam and Eve began to die physically, just as God had said. The second form of death, spiritual death, is far worse. Spiritual death means eternal separation from God. The apostle John calls it the ‘second death’ (Rev 20:14-15). This is the ultimate death. If a person dies without receiving Christ as Savior, he dies physically and spiritually. Eternal suffering in hell’s torment is the destiny of those who have sinned and not believed in Jesus.

The good news is that God made a way through the “offspring of the woman” (Gen 3:15), to crush Satan. This promise from Genesis was fulfilled in Christ’s victory over Satan on the Cross—a victory in which all believers will share.

Our fourth *Statement of Faith* is: “We believe that human beings were created in the image of God for a loving relationship with him. They chose to disobey God, however, and thus experienced physical death and separation from God.” Our memory verse is: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

This lesson is **important** because it explains how sin and evil entered the world through Satan’s temptation and mankind’s disobedience. It also reminds us that God already knew that mankind would sin. He had planned to come in the flesh and die on the Cross for our sins, thereby defeating Satan once and for all. He made a way for mankind’s relationship with himself to be restored.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that the first man and woman on earth, and every person since, has had the choice to obey or disobey God.

Let’s **review** this lesson—

1. Which of God’s gifts made man fully responsible for his actions? [Pause.]
 - A. If you said, “Free will, the power to choose,” you are correct.
2. What had God forbidden Adam and Eve to do? [Pause.]

A. If you answered that God forbade Adam and Eve to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you are right.

3. What was the result of Adam and Eve's sin? [Pause.]

A. If you said, "Spiritual and physical death," you are correct.

Your **assignment** is to practice and make sure you can say from memory the first four *Statements of Faith*:

1. "We believe the Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God. They are the revelation of God to man, the unchanging rule of faith and conduct."

2. "We believe the one true God has revealed himself as the eternal Creator of heaven and earth and the Savior of mankind. He further revealed himself as one being in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

3. "We believe the Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, as revealed in the Scriptures by his virgin birth, his sinless life, his miracles, his death on the Cross, his bodily resurrection from the dead, and his position at the right hand of God."

4. "We believe that human beings were created in the image of God for a loving relationship with him. They chose to disobey God, however, and thus experienced physical death and separation from God."

Also commit to memory this verse: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Speak to at least two young people. Ask them if they know who Adam and Eve were and what they did in the Garden of Eden. Tell them the story in your own words. Explain to them what this means to us and our children today.