

## **Th224 Sin and Atonement: The Restoration of Relationship**

### ***Lesson Th224-2 God is Holy***

Every country has established a rule of law that governs the behavior of the country's people. There are all kinds of laws. Some grant permission to do certain things, but most laws describe things one is not allowed to do. No government has ever created a perfect set of laws. We know this because from time to time the laws are changed or added to. There are many standards from which laws are derived. Some countries began their code of law based upon a book such as the Bible or the Quran. At times, laws are created by a congress or parliament to respond to either a need in the society or a need of the government. All laws are written to control the citizens' behavior and to define values of the country itself.

But God is different. There are no written laws that define him or his behavior. Rather, it is God's nature of holiness and perfect justice that defines him and, in a sense, is a law unto him. God's nature defines law. What does this mean? The Old Testament teaches that "God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?" (Num 23:19). So we see that God keeps his word. The New Testament also confirms, "It is impossible for God to lie" (Heb 6:35). God is holy and just; what he says comes to pass.

Throughout the Bible we read about God's holiness. This perfect holiness defines him. God's holiness dictates his behavior. God says to David, "I will not alter what my lips have uttered. Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness—and I will not lie" (Ps 89:34). It is impossible for God to be anything except holy and just. Thus, we know that the law or standard by which man is judged is not a list of rules saying, "do this," or "don't do that." Instead, it is based upon the perfect sinless nature of God himself. God is the standard.

Now whenever a person breaks the law of a land, they are ruled guilty as a lawbreaker. That person incurs great shame upon themselves, their family, and their community. Shame is always the end result of breaking a law. It has always been this way since the Garden of Eden.

God created Adam as a son with whom he could have relationship. Every day God would walk and talk with Adam in the Garden of Eden. Adam was given authority over all of the animals and plants in the Garden. He gave each of the animals and its mate names. There were no rules or laws, as Adam was in perfect relationship with God. The only limit to Adam's authority in the Garden was one tree called the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam could eat of the fruit of any tree, except for this tree.

Over time Adam grew in relationship with God and it came time for God to create a suitable partner for Adam. God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep and then removed one of his ribs. From the rib God created a perfect life-partner for Adam. While Adam had been created for the purpose of having relationship with God, Eve was created to have relationship first with Adam, and together with him, to have relationship with God. This is not to say in any way that women cannot have direct relationship with God. Women are equal with men in God's

sight. God created both the man and woman in his image, to have a loving relationship with him.

Adam and Eve spent all of their time together. Adam shared with Eve all he knew about God. He also told her about the tree in the middle of the Garden, from which they were not to eat. Their relationship grew closer and closer. Each evening they would walk together in the Garden with God. Now, although God was the first relationship Adam had, he spent all of his time with Eve. We may assume that it did not take long for his relationship with Eve to be as strong as his relationship with God. This would soon lead to the most tragic event in human history.

One day Adam and Eve were in the middle of the Garden near the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Satan was there too, disguised as a snake. He said to the Eve, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

Eve replied, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” Now this was not exactly what God had told Adam. But this is what she now believed. Whether Adam had added to the command, or Eve herself, we do not know. But God is the standard. He is holy. And when we attribute something inaccurate to God we set ourselves up for failure.

“You will not certainly die,” the serpent lied to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen 3:1-5).

Now Eve’s first relationship was with her husband Adam. It can easily be understood how she came to decide that something that would make her husband like God would be a good thing. The Bible, however, says Satan deceived her (1Tim 2:14). Eve saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye. Since it was also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it—though he knew God had forbidden it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked. Although being naked together did not bring guilt, they suddenly felt exposed. Soon it would be evening and God himself would be walking through the Garden. Never before had they felt guilty about anything. Now the guilt of disobeying God weighed heavily upon them. Realizing they were naked, they felt shame. So, they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

This is the typical response when someone realizes that they have broken a law. They first feel guilt, and then shame, and then they try to cover their shame. When God came into the Garden, Adam and Eve were confronted with their sin. Neither of them wanted to accept responsibility for their behavior. God, however, pronounced judgment upon both of them. Breaking God’s law had consequences, as he had promised. From that moment, they began to die.

God then killed animals, shedding their blood, so that he could prepare clothing made of animal skins to cover their nakedness. This was the first shedding of blood recorded in the Bible. And we will find that over and over again it would be the shedding of blood that is required to cover the guilt and shame of mankind.

The lesson is **important** because it reveals that God's holy and just nature defines what law is. Since God cannot change, his laws or commands never change.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that breaking the law results in guilt, and guilt leads to shame. It is the shedding of blood that is required to cover the guilt and shame of mankind.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. What is one indication from the Bible, that God is holy? [Pause 5 seconds.]  
A. If you said, "The Bible says that it is impossible for God to lie, he always keeps his word," you are correct.
2. What caused Adam and Eve to first feel guilt, then shame? [Pause 5 seconds.]  
A. If you said that Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating the fruit from the tree he had forbidden, you answered correctly.
3. Adam and Eve tried to cover their guilt and shame by sewing fig leaves together. What was God's solution to create a covering for them? [Pause 5 seconds.]  
A. If you said that God shed the blood of animals and took their skins to create clothing for Adam and Eve, you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to meditate upon the perfect character of God. Ask yourself these questions: Do you experience feelings of guilt when you sin? Are you ashamed of your sin? What do you do when you sin? Do you repent and ask God to forgive you? Or, do you try to cover your sins to hide your shame?