

The Circuit Rider

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THE TEACHER'S TEXT

"The Fall of Man Into Sin"

"The Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16-17). "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die The woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Gen. 3: 4, 6).

The Fall of Man Into Sin means that God originally created man in His own image, free from sin; but, through the temptation of Satan, man transgressed the command of God and fell from his original state of holiness; whereby his posterity inherit a corrupt nature that is totally opposed to God and is under just condemnation. Believing in the Fall of Man into Sin is to believe that man was created in holiness by God and by voluntary transgression he fell from his state of sinlessness, making all mankind sinners, inclined to do evil, and deserving of God's judgment.

The most shameful and terrible thing that can happen to the human race has already taken place. It happened when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate from the forbidden tree (Gen. 3:1-7). This episode occurred thousands of years ago when Adam and Eve yielded to the "serpent" and violated God's command. Acting as the federal head of the human race, Adam led all mankind into SIN. This means that every person, except Jesus Christ, has been born with a sinful nature from that time to this.

The understanding of SIN is crucial to our understanding of salvation. Before a person can see his need of a Savior from SIN, he must recognize the awfulness of his SIN. Until one sees the sickness of his own soul and his utter helplessness, he will not desire the remedy offered by the Great Physician. Man's Fall Into Sin as described in the third chapter of Genesis is not a mythical representation about his DEGENERATION, but a correct historical account. Before looking at the subject of DEGENERATION, we first need to be reminded of his GENERATION (creation). Then, we'll look at his DEGENERATION followed by God's provision of REGENERATION.

THE GENERATION OF MAN

Scripture makes it perfectly clear that man did not evolve, but was “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139:14) in the very “image” and “likeness” (Gen. 1:26) of God. From the “dust of the ground”, God “formed man ... and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (Gen. 2:7). Both “male and female” were “created” by “God” in “his own image” (Gen. 1:27). If “man” was “created” in the “image of God”, then HOW is man like God? “Man” was created with different traits than the animal kingdom. God “created man” with the ability to reason, know good from evil, and with an eternal “soul” (Gen. 2:7).

At the time of creation, God made “man” perfect, but something happened to him called SIN and the result of it was separation from fellowship with God (Gen. 3:8-13). Exactly how long the first couple continued in their original state of sinlessness is unknown, but it’s clear from Scripture that there came a time when they sinned and suffered the consequences. The Bible states very clearly that when Adam and Eve sinned, that they did not go looking for God, but it was God Who went looking for them. When left to himself, sinful man will never choose God. The sinner that comes to God will only come to Him when God has first found him and brings the sinner to the Savior.

THE DEGENERATION OF MAN

The doctrine of ORIGINAL SIN that is found in our text, deals with the temptation of Adam and Eve and the penalty of their fall (Gen. 3:14-19). The effects of their FALL INTO SIN were not only felt by them, but by every person born thereafter. The term, ORIGINAL SIN, means that “all” humans since Adam and Eve have been born into “sin” (Ps. 51:5) and will experience the shame of it. Every individual ever born is a descendent of the first couple and has inherited a “nature” to sin. Scripture declares that, “There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:10-12, 23). Every baby born into the world is not basically good regardless of how innocent they may look, but they are basically bad because of their Adamic “nature” (Rom. 5:12, Eph. 2:3). Little children don’t have to be taught to lie, cheat, steal and be selfish. However, they do have to be taught to share, be honest, tell the truth, and exhibit integrity. The only exception to this is the Christ child Himself Who never sinned (I Pet. 2:22).

As far as the origin of SIN is concerned, it dates back prior to the human race when Satan tried to usurp the authority of God and was expelled from heaven (Lk. 10:18). SIN is so complex that it cannot be adequately defined in a single definition. SIN is personal selfishness, nonconformity to God’s law, a breach in relationship with God, an act that is morally wrong, a perversion of the good, rebellion against God, unbelief. SIN is missing the mark of God’s holiness, unrighteousness, ungodliness, and deliberate disobedience against God. Adam sinned because he ignored God’s warning and desired to have his own way. The first Adam (Rom. 5:19) got us in a whole bunch of trouble, but the “last Adam” (I Cor. 15:22, 45) came to get us out. Man is spiritually diseased with SIN and the sins that he commits are the mere symptoms of his illness. In other words, a person is not a sinner because he sins, but he sins because he is a sinner.

As a result of man’s FALL INTO SIN, he is totally depraved from the top of his head to the soles of his feet and to the very core of his being. Total depravity is a theological term that simply means that everyone is born with a natural tendency to sin. Since “all” men are depraved, “all” men are born under the just condemnation of God and are unable to save themselves. John 3:36 says, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him”. Then we read in John 6:44 where Jesus states that, “No

man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day.” God has given man an ability to choose, but apart from the overpowering of God, depraved man will never choose God. Man in his depravity will do the same thing that Adam did in the garden. He will go and hide from God and not go looking for God. When left to himself, man will never choose God. Unless man’s depraved will is overcome by the grace of God, man will never trust Christ. Jesus told His followers, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you” (Jh. 15:16).

THE REGENERATION OF MAN

As a result of man’s depravity, he needs help that is beyond himself (Gen. 3:20-24). The only solution to man’s SIN problem is provided by the Creator Himself. Sin’s only remedy is found in the shed “blood” of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:23-25, Heb. 9:22). After they sinned, Adam and Eve clothed themselves with man-made fig leaves, but in order to be restored to fellowship with God, they needed something that they could not provide. God made “coats of skins” and clothed them. That means that animal blood had to be shed which typified the coming of Christ as man’s Redeemer. The very first prophecy to appear in Scripture and the earliest prediction of the coming Savior was made when God provided a remedy for man’s sin. Genesis 3:15 paints a picture of the strife between Christ and Satan and the final triumph of Christ. A clear description of Christ’s coming through the “seed” of woman is depicted, but would not be fulfilled until thousands of years later with the birth of Christ. This means, that the saints in the Old Testament were saved by looking toward the cross, whereas we are saved by looking back at the cross. Salvation on both sides of the cross is by “grace ... through faith” (Eph. 2:8). Salvation has always been a Sovereign work of God alone in the calling out of His people unto Himself.

Adam’s choice in the Garden of Eden has been referred to as the Covenant of Works. God put Adam in a state of perfection and promised him and his posterity that continued state of sinlessness, if he would only obey God’s command not to eat from the forbidden tree. The issue was simply if Adam was going to trust God or trust himself in determining what was “good and evil” (Gen. 3:5). Unfortunately, Adam was led by Eve who was led by the serpent, both of which disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit. As a result, this sinful mindset of Adam became part of the moral nature that was passed on to all of his descendants. Although, they were cursed and suffered the consequences of their SIN, God was merciful.

In giving them garments to cover their nakedness, God promised that the woman’s “seed” (Gen. 3:15) would someday crush the serpent’s “head”. This promise, as we have already stated, is the first prophecy given in Scripture foreshadowing the GRACE of God that would someday be found in Jesus Christ. Man’s pardon from sin can only be found in God’s Covenant of Grace that promised a coming Savior. All the covenants throughout the Old Testament that God made with His people were simply a continuation or manifestation of His Covenant of Grace. Through Old Testament types and shadows, God revealed the gracious promises of His Covenant that He made back in the Garden of Eden. God’s Covenant with Israel was preparation for the coming of God in human flesh. Christ would be the Mediator of the New Covenant at which time the Old Testament figures would become obsolete. Just as God made Adam the representative head of the human race, Jesus Christ is the representative of God’s “elect” (Rom. 8:33). Christ has done for a fallen people what we cannot do for ourselves.

Because of ORIGINAL SIN, we are unable to do good and in fact we are all inclined to do evil. Unless our depraved wills are overcome by the power of the Holy Spirit, man will remain eternally lost, helpless, and hopeless. But, even after regeneration, there remains in the human flesh a nature of corruption and it’s only through Christ and growth in His grace that we can overcome those remnants of sin.

The God Who created man the first time has a plan of salvation whereby He can make him over the second time. As Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, He says that, "Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (Jh. 3:7-8). Apart from this Sovereign act of God, no man can be saved. Sinful man has no more control over his salvation than he does the wind that blows. Just as sinful man has nothing to do with his first birth, he has nothing whatsoever to do with his second birth. Only by a supernatural act of God, can sinful man be recreated into a "new creature" (II Cor. 5:17). In "grace" (Eph. 2:8), God has provided a plan so that the sinner may be "born again" by "faith" in the "only begotten Son" (Jh. 3:16) of God. Conviction of SIN and regeneration are works of the "Holy Spirit" (Jh. 16:8) wrought in the hearts of undeserving sinners by God's GRACE. A genuine Christian conversion will always begin with regeneration, conviction of sin, repentance, and the granting of faith.

IN CLOSING

The Psalmist asked an age-old question, "what is man?" (Ps. 8:4). That's a good question and in light of our study we know that man is a sinner; however, in the eyes of people man can be seen in various ways. To the insurance company, man is a policyholder. To the merchant, man is a customer. To the government, man is a taxpayer. To the school, man is a student. To the city, man is a citizen. To the undertaker, man is a body. To the airlines, man is a passenger. To the doctor, man is a patient. To the lawyer, man is a client. To many in the modern day church, man is unfortunately seen as a mere numerical prospect. But, to Almighty God, man is a "living soul" (Gen. 2:7)

Man is a magnificent creature who became the crowning "glory" (Isa. 43:7) of God's creation. He was made a spiritual being (I Thess. 5:23) with the capacity to have fellowship (I Jh. 1:3-7) with God and spend eternity with Him. What SIN destroyed can only be regained through "faith" in the "finished" (Jh. 19:30) work of Calvary's "Lamb" (Jh. 1:29) Who died as our Substitute for the penalty of SIN. Only the "blood" of Jesus Christ can cleanse us from "all unrighteousness" (I Jh. 5:17). His atoning "blood" is the only ingredient powerful enough to wash the stain of our SIN (past, present, and future) from the sight of God and grant us a pardon (Ps. 103:8-18).

A MINISTRY UPDATE

Since our last publication of *"The Circuit Rider"*, we have been working on establishing a web sight for Covenant of Grace Ministries. The primary purpose of using the world wide web is to record our radio broadcasts and make them available to anyone who might not be in listening distance of a radio station over which we plan to broadcast. Besides, we only plan to begin with one station and expand as the Lord provides. By using the Internet, we can broaden our base and extend our coverage with a minimum of expense. That means that anyone with a computer and high speed Internet connections will be able to listen to our Bible studies. We are currently working with Brother Jim Hatley with Leading Edge Web Design in Norwood, NC. We hope to have our web sight up and running sometime within the next few months. I'll keep you posted as to when it will be available and how you can find us on the Internet.

Once again, let me thank you for praying for us and for supporting us financially in this undertaking. I trust that the teaching of God's Word will be a blessing to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. "Grace be with you all" (Heb. 13:25).

Because of His Sovereign Grace,

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