

THE PROBLEM OF SIN

Sin is the greatest problem we have in our lives. It is sin which causes pain and suffering, wars and disease. It is sin which causes death.

The Bible story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is a happy one to start with. God generously gave them everything they needed. They did not have to work hard for their food; they did not suffer illness. Above all they were close to God and were able to talk to him through the angels and to listen to his words. He gave Adam and Eve only one law. He told them that they must not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He told them that if they did this they would die.

The Bible tells us that a serpent, or snake, lied to Eve telling her that if she disobeyed God she would not die.

Genesis 3:2-5

'Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, "You must not eat from any tree in the garden?"'

The woman said to the serpent, "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.'

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

"For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'

The serpent could talk. It was 'crafty', that means it was cunning and deceitful. It told Eve that she and Adam would become 'like God knowing good and evil'. These words help us to understand sin. It is disobedience of God's laws. It is a challenge to his authority and position as the only true God. He alone has the right to give us laws to live by. Eve did not want to listen to God and obey him.

The Bible tells us that the serpent deceived Eve.

1 Timothy 2:14

'It was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.'

Although the serpent put the idea in the mind of Eve, she thought about it and it became a temptation to her. Instead of refusing to think about it, the idea grew in her mind. She decided herself that it was all right to break the law of God. The serpent did not make the decision to sin. It did not force Eve to do so. She made the decision herself. This can be seen from the following verse.

Genesis 3:6

'When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and 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.'

We are all like Adam and Eve. We also sin and disobey God. We make the choice to sin ourselves; just as Eve did. No one forces us to disobey God; it is our own choice.

James 1:13-15

'When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.

Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Don't be deceived, my dear brothers.'

When we sin we tell God that our own desires are more important to us than his laws. We behave as if we are more important than he is. We deny that there is a great God who has made us and put us on this earth to obey him.

When Eve ate the fruit and disobeyed God, Adam was there with her. She took the fruit and gave it to him and he ate also. He knew it was wrong to do this. He ate it deliberately. God told him that he was more responsible than Eve. Therefore God punished him.

After they had both eaten, God accused them of their sin. They both began to make excuses.

Eve blamed the serpent
Adam blamed Eve

We are like this. We try to blame others for the things we do which are wrong. Each of us is unwilling to confess to God that we have done wrong. God did not allow Adam and Eve to blame someone else. He condemned and punished both of them for their sin.

God told Eve that she would have pain when she bore children.

God told Adam that he would have to work hard to grow crops for food. No longer would God freely give them all that they needed without work.

They would both begin to grow old and die.

These curses were given to Adam and Eve and to all their descendants. Look at these words written by Paul in the New Testament.

Romans 3:10

'As it is written: "There is no-one righteous, not even one; there is no-one who understands, no-one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no-one who does good, not even one."

Paul tells us that every man and woman is dominated by sin. It is terrible to see ourselves like this and to think that we are worthless in the sight of God. Only one man lived a life which was totally free from sin. He is the Lord Jesus Christ.

After God told Adam and Eve about their punishment, he did something else. He sent them away from him out of the Garden of Eden. This is the saddest result of sin; it takes us away from God in our lives.

The Bible tells us that we cannot find the way back to him by ourselves. We need his help. It also tells us that he wants to help us.

God is upset that men and women are separated from him by their sins. He wants to forgive us and accept us back. He has provided us with a way back to him.

He sent his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to live and die for us that our sins might be forgiven through him. It is Jesus who took away the great problem of sin, when he died upon the cross.

This is the most exciting news we can ever find in our lives and we only find it in the Bible.

Questions

- 1 How did God punish Adam and Eve?
- 2 Why did Eve eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?
- 3 What is sin?
- 4 Where does it come from?
- 5 Who took away the great problem of sin?