



## Bible teaching about Life and Death - Part 1

READINGS FOR THIS LESSON:– Psalm 49; Genesis 2.

As we get older we cannot move as fast or think as quickly as we did when we were young.

We spend our lives growing old, and we know for a certainty - if we stop to think about it - that one day we shall die. The words of Moses are true when he says,

*"The length of our days is seventy years — or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away." (Psalm 90:10).*

We all die. It has been truly said that the only certain thing in life is that one day we shall die.



### The first man on the earth

Why is it that we all grow old and die? To find the answer we must turn to the first book of the Bible, and read about the very first man and woman.

God made the world as a very lovely place for men and women to live in. He created the plants and animals first, and then, when all was ready, He made a man.

We read in Genesis 2:7 that,

*"...the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground."*

With wonderful skill a human body was formed.

We can picture that lifeless body lying on the ground. What happened next? God

*"breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (Genesis 2:7).*

The man began to breathe. He was alive! He could see, and hear, and think and feel – surely he was the most wonderful of all which God had made.

### Adam is alone

We read in Genesis 2:8,

*"Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed."*

Adam – for that was the name, which God gave to this man – looked after the garden. God told him that he could eat any of the fruit trees he liked – except for one tree, which is called *"the tree of the knowledge of good and evil"*. God warned him,

*"...but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." (Genesis 2:17).*



Adam had only the animals for company, and they couldn't think in the same way as he could. He was alone and God said,

*"It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him"* (Genesis 2:18).

In verses 21-23 we read that God put Adam into a deep sleep, took one of his ribs, and shaped it into a woman – someone to be with Adam and share his life.

*"So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man."*

## Adam and Eve break God's law

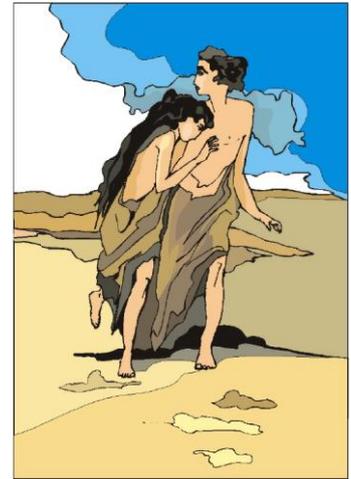
Now read Genesis 3:1-13 and you will see how the first woman, called Eve, broke God's law by listening to the serpent (snake) and how Adam also disobeyed God.

By breaking God's law they both had sinned; and as we have already seen in Romans 6:23,

*"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Adam and Eve also knew that because God had said to them,

*"...but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die"* (Genesis 2:17).



## The punishment

The serpent was punished for its part in telling a lie and causing the trouble; Adam and Eve were now going to die and were driven out of the Garden of Eden.

Although they lived a long time after this, Adam and his wife became dying creatures. Just like us, they would get tired and sick and at last grow old and die. The words of God were true,

*"By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return"* (Genesis 3:19).

You may remember that when God made Adam,

*"He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being"* (Genesis 2:7).

All human beings are "living beings", but when they stop breathing, their life has gone – they become "dead beings." The Bible does not teach that there is such a thing as an immortal soul.



As we read in the Book of Ecclesiastes,

*"For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten. Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun"* (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6).

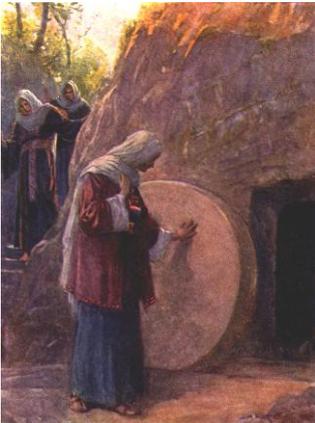
Also as in Psalm 49:18 - 20

*"Though while he lived he counted himself blessed—and men praise you when you prosper – he will join the generation of his fathers, who will never see the light of life. A man who has riches without understanding is like the beasts that perish."*

## **Sin and death in the world**

In Genesis 3:15 God makes a promise of eternal life through the woman's "offspring."

*"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."*



This offspring is Jesus Christ, who will destroy the power of sin (as shown by the serpent) within believers. In doing this, Jesus would be "struck in the heel" – that is, he would die on the cross, but would be raised from the dead by God.

To be struck on the heel is only a temporary injury and a person would soon recover. But by crushing the serpent "in the head", Jesus Christ destroyed the power of sin and death (shown by the serpent) because he never sinned and God raised him from the dead.

Those who follow Jesus Christ, have their sins forgiven and are promised a resurrection from the dead when Christ comes back to this earth.

The apostle Paul helps us to understand how this affects us. In Romans 5:12, he says,

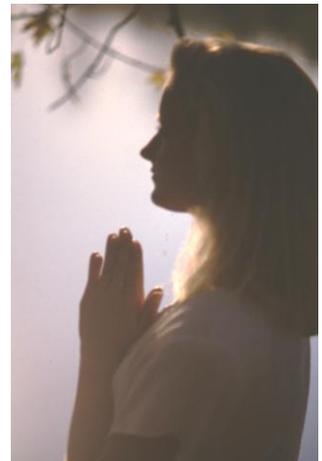
*"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned."*

Adam and Eve continued to sin until they died. We are their offspring and so we sin also until we die.

Like our father Adam we sin and like him, we will die. It is much easier for us to sin and do wrong, than it is to be obedient and do what is right before God.

We are being very foolish if we blame God for our sins. We should thank Him because He has given us life, which we have no right to because we so often sin against Him.

We should especially thank Him for giving us a way of escape from eternal death. We are not blamed for being born with a sinful nature, but we are very foolish if we reject God's offer of a way of escape through Jesus Christ.



## **Summary**

1. God made Adam from the dust of the ground.
2. He caused him to live, by breathing into his nostrils the breath of life.
3. God gave Adam and Eve a commandment. He told him that if they broke this commandment, the punishment would be death.
4. Adam and Eve broke God's commandment. They became dying creatures.
5. All men are descended from Adam; all are sinners, and all die
6. As we shall see in the next three lessons, Christ brought men a hope of life.