

THE DAWN OF HISTORY

Study 1

Banished



Genesis 3: 9-24

Our study this week concerns the effects of the first sin upon the history of mankind. Perhaps you say, as you read this story, 'What a terrible punishment for such a simple crime'. It is true that Eve only took of the fruit of the tree in the garden. Many excuses, no doubt, could be made for her, and certainly have been. Yet the sin of disobedience cannot be measured in degrees of wrong, whether great or small. However small you may think that the sin of Eve was in taking of the fruit which was forbidden, basically it was very serious indeed. For God had been disobeyed; His commands had been disregarded and the Bible makes it quite clear that this one sin destroys a sinner. This marks for us the true nature of disobedience.

Sometimes I try to put myself in the place of Adam and Eve, the first few moments after they had sinned. Can you imagine how they felt? I am sure there was a deep realisation that they were guilty "**The eyes of both of them were opened**". (verse 7) Some voice within told them that they were wrong. They became aware of themselves in a new way. They covered themselves with fig leaves and then they tried to hide themselves from God. There came a voice out of the silence of the garden. God called as He did every day when He came to walk with them. What a lovely picture of friendship we have here. But on this one never-to-be-forgotten day the friendship was broken. They hid themselves among the trees. No more friendship - no more freedom - only **FEAR**. Notice the admission of Adam, "**I was afraid**," (verse 10) The happy relationship between God and man had been broken.

Take time to carefully look at the rest of the chapter. The first entrance of sin into the world is often referred to as the **FALL**. It is called this because of the way in which Adam and Eve fell from the high position that they held in the **FAVOUR** of God, and in falling they brought down into sin the whole of the race that was to follow them. Thus in **Romans 5: 11-19** we read that through Adam's sin all that followed him were made sinners. Consider this very carefully. It emphasised the tragedy of the sin committed in Eden's garden. This is what we mean when we talk about **ORIGINAL SIN**.

To use this expression often brings either ridicule or opposition: 'How can we be responsible for actions which were not ours'? You may think that God is unjust to reckon us as guilty even before we have committed sin. It is important to realise that when Adam fell it was just as if evil had been injected into the very blood-stream of the human race. To partake of 'original sin' means that we are, as

David confessed, "**born in sin and shapen in iniquity**". (**Psalm 51 :5**) How tragic this is!

Notice to begin with that God had something to say to the **SERPENT**. He put a **CURSE** upon him for his part in the deadly affair. (verse 14) Although Eve should not have responded to temptation, yet the part that Satan played in her fall was certainly not overlooked by God. God saw him as the greatest enemy to His purposes. And the curse that God put upon Satan will one day in the future mean that he will be finally banished. (**Revelation 20: 10**) Remember, that Satan attacked creation at its highest point when he brought about Adam's fall.

Next notice what God had to say to **EVE**. The fact that she was beguiled to sin first is not overlooked. Because of her sin she would know **PAIN** and **SORROW**. In bringing children into the world she would suffer pain. Notice this point and its fulfilment in the ordinary course of human life. But there is another point worth noting -The New Testament stresses the fact that Eve sinned first. In its teaching as to the place of women in relation to men, **2 Corinthians 11: 3, 1 Timothy 2: 11-15**. Nowhere can we find that women are treated as inferior. But the man is seen as being the head of the woman and Christ as the head of the man, **1 Corinthians 11: 3**. In our day when the equality of women is being pushed to its furthest limits we need to go back to the beginning and learn God's order.

Then God came to **ADAM**. What did He do? Because the man followed the woman into disobeying God, He put a **CURSE** upon the ground. Instead of the beautiful conditions of the garden of Eden, with all that was perfect, thorns and thistles would come up. Did you realise that man's sin brought this curse upon **CREATION**? It did, and God soon made Adam realise that **DEATH** followed sin. Out of **DUST** Adam was made, and because of **SIN**, to dust he would return. (**Genesis 3: 19**)

Let us look more closely at this sad picture. Satan had triumphed and it was such a victory that for centuries the universe and all humanity would suffer bitterly. Man who should have found in God a friend and should have lived in close companionship with Him, was driven from His presence. (verse 24) The beauties and blessings of all that Eden represented was behind his back.

What a bleak prospect lay before Adam and Eve as they were banished from God's presence! Yet we have even worse to consider - we begin our lives away from God. The

Lord Jesus must have had this in mind when He told the story of the prodigal son. Man's journey has taken him further and further away from God, and if we today do not get to know Jesus Christ as Saviour, our position is just this. Is there no light at all in this chapter? There is just one verse that gives us a ray of light. **Verse 15** tells of the conflict between the **SERPENT** and the **SEED** - the descendants of the woman. This verse tells of the bruising of the serpent's head. There is the hope that man's fall would one day be avenged in the destruction of the serpent, when the Lord Jesus, the true fulfilment of this promise came into the world. He came to destroy Satan's work, and by dying on the Cross He gained the victory over **SIN** and **SATAN**!

Study 2

My Brother



Genesis 4: 1-15

Genesis is the book of beginnings - this is what the Hebrew word means. It has been called the "seed plot of the Bible" because in it we find the beginnings of ideas which are developed throughout the Bible. We have already considered some of these. We notice that God was "**in the beginning**" - He is Eternal. But life, light, man, marriage - so many things, find their first mention in this book. Saddest of all, as we saw in our last lesson, the beginning of **SIN** and all that went with it, is described. Our study this week relates to the first family in history and also, sad to say, the first murder.

In this chapter we read of the first home. Adam and Eve began their life outside the Garden of Eden. Their children were born, first Cain and then Abel. We can imagine the beginnings of a happy home, although we can be sure the shadow of their sin was over them. Yet it is obvious that Eve was a happy mother with her boys. Cain and Abel were brought up well and as they grew older each moved into his own occupation. Cain was a man of the land. He tilled it probably following his father's profession. Abel became a shepherd, looking after his flock of sheep. It is interesting to notice that these two occupations, which figure so largely in the later life of the people of the Bible, especially in the nation of Israel, are found in the first family of the race. It is important to notice the circumstances out of which the first murder arose, and to learn a lesson from it.

Notice first that Cain was **WRONG IN THE EYES OF GOD**. We read about the first two offerings made to God in the Scriptures. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground. No doubt he was a good gardener and brought of the finest of his produce. Abel, on the other hand, brought the spotless lamb from his flock. He, too, brought the best to God. God accepted Abel's offering. Remember here that the lamb was slain, the blood was poured out and the first animal sacrifice by man took place. But God did not accept Cain's sacrifice. The fruit of the ground was not what God wanted because the ground had been cursed as a result of sin. We can assume from this passage and the later teaching of the Old Testament on sacrifice, that Adam had taught his boys the right way to approach God. You will notice as you study your Bible, that the way to God was only through the offering of a perfect sacrifice. Look at **Exodus 12** and you will see this in the case of the Passover lamb. This of course points on to the time when the Lord Jesus gave Himself as a sacrifice for sin. Every Old Testament sacrifice

pointed forward to this. That is why God accepted Abel's sacrifice and not Cain's.

Cain was very angry because his offering was rejected. Notice how God reasoned with him, seeking to show him that he could come the same way as Abel. But it was all to no avail. The eldest son of Adam was just out of touch with God. It is important to notice this. Doubtless we would be right in saying that because Cain was out of touch with God, **HE BEHAVED WRONGLY WITH HIS BROTHER ABEL**. We are told that he hated his brother and hatred led to murder - the first murder in history. How pointless it was. Cain was hard, cold and felt no responsibility for his brother's death. "**Am I my brother's keeper**"? (**verse 9**), he casually asked. God knew what he had done and pronounced him guilty. So the trail of hatred, cruelty and murder in human history began with this event. What a terrible harvest has been reaped from this first act of violence and murder.

We cannot leave this study without thinking of the implications of Cain's **ATTITUDE**. We can think about the world in which we live with all its violence and cruelty. If we multiply murder and take it to its logical conclusion, the history of war and bloodshed is explained. "**Am I my brother's keeper**"? describes a philosophy of irresponsible selfishness. But we notice that the New Testament takes up this incident and applies it in a practical way to Christian relationships. Look at **1 John 3: 11-15**. Here John is teaching the need of loving one another. "**Do not be like Cain,**" he says. How severe his words are! "**He belonged to the Evil One**". So murder was the result of evil thoughts and designs. "I would never do such a thing"! - you and I might easily say. But "**Whoever hates his brother is a murderer**" (**1 John 3: 15**), is John's summing up of the situation. The atmosphere of love is essential if we are to please God and enjoy the fellowship of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We see what a practical application is made of this early incident in man's history. We can state the words of the Lord Jesus: "**A new commandment I give to you that you love one another; as I have loved you**". (**John 13: 34**)

Study 3

The Progress of Man



Genesis 4: 16-26

As we begin this lesson perhaps we can just look at the way things are going with man. Notice now that the whole interest of the Bible story is concerned with people. I want you to really take note of this. The Bible is a book about people - all kinds of people. It is a Book about people because God loves people. The Bible is a revelation to men and women about people and what God wants to do with them and through them.

What a mess things were in now! Adam and Eve driven out of the Garden of Eden; Abel murdered, and Cain punished by being banished from the Lord and from his home. God did not punish Cain with death. He sent him out into the world and he became a wanderer. I always like to look at **verse 15** and think of how kind God was. He put a mark on Cain so that he should not inevitably be murdered. God is always like this in His ways with man. Although He hates sin and must judge it, yet He still loves the sinner and is always patient with him.

Now notice four points about the growth of population in the world. You will find very little in the Bible about early civilisation. Archaeologists and geologists can tell us much about these things, and it is amazing just how much has been learned about early man and how he lived and worked. Does this mean that the Bible is of less value to us because of this? Not at all! The Bible is not intended to be a Book of Science or Art, or even just History. It is a book that deals primarily with the **MORAL** and **SPIRITUAL** needs of men. Nevertheless, the Bible has been proved to be true, over and over again, by those who have discovered facts about the ancient past through archaeology and science.

The four points to notice are:

The beginning of COMMUNITY LIFE. (verse 17)

The first city is built and named. Thus man's citizenship as a city-dweller began. With this city came its own policies of government and social structures. Notice that Cain named the city after his son. He intended that something of a permanent nature should be built.

The beginnings of AGRICULTURE. (verse 20)

This seems a contrast to the 'city-dwellers' for these dwell in tents and had livestock. You will notice as you study the history of Israel that they were essentially people of the land.

The beginnings of ART and MUSIC. (verse 21)

Here we have the first mention of a feature of life which has expressed, perhaps more than any other, the character of man's culture. Different cultures have their different art forms. Primitive music is vastly different to that of modern civilisation. But it is interesting to look back to the beginning of time and notice man's expression of himself in this developing culture. Man's sinfulness and immorality also are often very clearly expressed through his art and music.

The beginnings of INDUSTRY. (verse 22)

Brass and iron represent the minerals which came from the earth. Thus at the very beginning man discovered the treasures in the earth. It is interesting to consider that for these things to exist at this point in history, must indicate that the earth itself was even then of great age. God provided for all man's needs, in the world that He made. Yet how many weapons of war have been made out of the misuse of these treasures of the earth!

Although you may feel that this Scripture record is rather insufficient to build theories upon, remember that it teaches us very important lessons from this passage. Here in the dawn of history, following man's separation from God, man begins to develop his own values in order to make himself more self-sufficient. As he uses the powers which are his, the skill and intelligence which God has given him, he becomes great in the earth. It will not be long before he will be opposing the things that God stands for - even God Himself, revealing a sad misuse of his powers. Look at our present civilisation and think how tremendously advanced it all is. Even in your studies at school or college, think of the amount of knowledge you need to have, just in order to keep abreast of the times. Man has grown tremendously in ability, in skill and in learning, and in achievements - but he has also grown in rebellion against God and **SIN** - which spoils **ALL**. What would man have been like, if sin had never entered the world?

This chapter then shows man growing greater, but growing greater **WITHOUT GOD**. The violent speech of Lamech

tells us this. (**verses 23-24**) That is why I feel that **verses 25-26** are so important. Another son is born to Adam and Eve to take the place of Abel. The hope of a godly line of people was revived in him. Notice what it says as Enos is born after Seth. "**Then men began to CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD**". (**verse 26**)

We can learn from this that there came into the human race at this time, a longing to be right with God. We cannot tell what it really meant, but I am sure that it shows us that God has not given up those who had done so much wrong against Him. He was still there and they could seek and find Him. There must have been a desire on their part to find God and depend on Him. Perhaps we can close by realising how vital this same approach is for us today. **Romans 10: 13** makes it very clear that "**Who ever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**"

Study 4

Walking with God



Genesis 5

This chapter is one that you may feel is not very important. It is a collection of names! Notice it is called "**The book of the genealogy of Adam**". It is something of a family tree, beginning with Adam and ending with Noah. Therefore, it stretches from the Creation to the Flood. The one fact about it that we must realise is this: it deals only with the godly line of the human race which came through Seth after Abel had been murdered by Cain. It is possible that in our Bible study we shall always be tempted to pass by such chapters as these. Just a collection of Hebrew names. Yet remember what we said in our last lesson: God is interested in people. Around each of these names a life and a history could be built. Unfortunately all we know about most of these folk is a name.

Look at the chapter again, there is something quite striking about it. In some ways it is like a song with a refrain that comes in very often. Adam was created; he came from God's hand and was made in God's likeness. (**verse 1**) Then a process began. Notice in **verse 3** that Adam was the father of a son "**in his own likeness**". This was through natural birth and so our race began. These verses tell us three great facts about life **BIRTH, EXISTENCE** and **DEATH**. The refrain at the end of each brief history is just this "**And he died**". However long these people's lives were, and we are told that Methusaleh lived for 969 years, death came at the end.

This chapter emphasises a most important point in our study of 'beginnings' in Genesis. Death began when man sinned. **Romans 5: 12** states this, "**Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to ALL men because ALL SINNED.**"

Each of the names represents the life of a person. Personalities were different, abilities; activities, enjoyments and relationships varied, but except in the case of one of them, the same is said - **THEY DIED**. There was no escape and all the way through history the process has been repeated. Death with all its terrors, its sadness and sorrow, is the direct result of **SIN**. In our day, it is obvious that the process of dying can be postponed, often for many years. Medical science can deal with disease and sickness and we can be thankful for every discovery that relieves pain and

suffering and that brings healing. But death is man's inevitable enemy and we find spelt out very clearly the truth "**the soul who sins shall die**". (**Ezekiel 18: 20**) Thus the refrain, "**and he died**" becomes doubly sad when we understand the cause of death.

When we come to study the New Testament we find that it says a lot about sin and death - putting them together. Here are two instances. **Romans 6: 23**, "**For the wages of sin is death**", and **James 1: 15**, "**Sin when it is full grown brings forth death**". In both cases the issues are clear. Just as at the end of the week, or month you collect your wages - the money which you have earned - so death is the 'wage' for a life of sin. Maybe you are saying, 'But even Christians die!' You are right - they do! What then does death - the result of sin - really mean? It goes beyond the death of the body. It means to be totally separated from God for ever - to be lost and in hell. **Revelation 20: 14** calls this the second death. Yet remember it was said of the Lord Jesus that He died. This is remarkable because He never sinned. Because we have sinned, He died - really died - **FOR OUR SINS. (1 Corinthians 15: 3)** Because He died, we can live, for death has been destroyed.

Learn this tremendous truth:

*He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good,
That we might go at last to Heaven
Saved by His precious blood.*

As we look at this list of names, we find among them one man who was different. His name was Enoch; and of him we read that "**he walked with God**". (**verse 24**) This always strikes me as being wonderful. We shall see in our next lesson how sin and violence had increased. Yet in such a terrible world, this man "**Enoch walked with God**". And notice he did not die, it says, "**he was not, for God took him**". What does it all mean?

However sinful the world is, there are always those people who love God and become His special friends. Enoch was one of them. In **Hebrews 11: 5** we read how his life was pleasing to God, and because of this, the bridge of friendship was built between his life and God. Notice that we do not read that he died, but he was not found, for God took him. He was one of those people in the Bible who did not die at all. He was taken by God into His presence. Difficult to understand? Yes - but it seems clear that this was true.

God wants people who are willing to live lives that please Him - even in our wicked world today. Through the Lord Jesus Christ and His saving power, this kind of life can be ours. This is how we can begin to walk with God. You see He speaks to us through his Word, the Bible; we speak to Him in prayer, and so in this way friendship begins and we can **WALK with GOD**. Make sure this is your experience too. There is just one point worth noticing as we end this study. It is good to think that there are people in the world today who maybe will not die. For every Christian there is the wonderful possibility that the Lord Jesus will come again and then there will be no death for them. Like Enoch we shall be taken right into the presence of the Lord. This will be a tremendous experience. This is the hope that inspires all those who follow the Lord Jesus.

Questions

Study 1 BANISHED

1. Why was Eve's sin so serious?
2. How did sin affect the relationship between God and man, and why?
3. What does the term 'original sin' mean?
4. How do we know that God did not overlook the part played by Satan in the sin of Adam and Eve?
5. What ray of light is there in this chapter?

Study 2 MY BROTHER

1. In what way did Cain show that he was wrong before God?
2. Why did God reject the sacrifice offered by Cain?
3. Of what was Abel's sacrifice a picture?
4. What lesson is the Apostle John teaching us when he uses Cain as his illustration in **1 John 3**?
5. What other lesson have you learned from today's study?

Study 3 THE PROGRESS OF MAN

1. With whom are the Biblical writings mainly concerned?
2. With which of man's needs does the Bible mainly deal?
3. Which four aspects of civilisation have their beginnings in these verses we have studied?
4. What is the importance of **verses 25 and 26**.
5. Why is it important for us to make this same type of approach today?

Study 4 WALKING WITH GOD

1. What continuously repeated cycle is seen in this chapter?
2. What was the difference in the case of Enoch, and why?
3. How can we walk with God today?
4. Who eventually broke the cycle and how did He do it?
5. There are many people living in the world today who probably will never die. Why is this?