TRUTH LESSONS—LEVEL ONE

LESSON FIVE

THE FALL OF MAN

OUTLINE

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      2. Man's anger.
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      2. The rebellion of the human race.
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TEXT

We have seen that after God made man, He placed man in front of the tree of life, that man might contact the tree of life and receive His life which is the uncreated life. But before man could contact the tree of life and join with God in life, Satan took the opportunity to come first. He tempted man to contact the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and caused man to have an illegal union with him. This became the first step of man's fall.

According to the record in Genesis 3 through 11, mankind had four steps of the fall. The first step is the fall of Adam, which is recorded in chapter three; the second is the fall of Cain, recorded in chapter four; the third is the fall of the crooked and perverse generation before the deluge, recorded in chapter six; and the fourth is the fall of the whole human race rising up collectively to rebel against God, which is recorded in chapter eleven. These four steps of the fall continued one after another. In these four steps, Satan's subtlety was exposed to the uttermost.

I. THE FIRST STEP OF THE FALL

A. The Cause

1. The Serpent's Temptation

If the serpent had not come to deceive and tempt man, man would not have fallen. The tempting serpent is the incarnation of Satan. The evil one was crafty; he came in stealthily. Instead of coming in openly, he hid himself in the subtle serpent to tempt man. Thus, Revelation 12:9 says that Satan (the ancient serpent) deceives the whole inhabited earth.

The way Satan tempts is to ask man questions (Gen. 3:1, 4) causing man to doubt God's word. God clearly commanded man, saying, "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. 2:17). But Satan said to the woman, "Hath God said?" Again, he said, "Ye shall not surely die." After Eve received Satan's proposal, she began to doubt God's word. Thus, she took of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and ate. Even to this day, Satan still uses the same method to tempt man into sin or to instigate him to reject God's salvation. However, the Bible tells us that heaven and earth shall pass away, but the Lord's words shall by no means pass away (Luke 21:33). The Lord's word is not yes and no (2 Cor. 1:18).

The proposal made by the serpent also caused man to doubt God's heart. The serpent said to the woman, "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5). The serpent wanted man to think that God was trying to deceive him when He prohibited man from eating the tree of knowledge because He was afraid that man would be like Him in knowing good and evil. This is also one of Satan's most frequently used malicious stratagems. Today man is far from God and not willing to come to God's presence, because he has been deceived by Satan. Thus, he misunderstands the love of God and does not know God's heart.

2. The Woman's Assuming the Headship

Another cause of man's fall was the woman's assuming the headship (Gen. 3:2-3, 6). Originally, God created only one man. There was only one head, not two. Adam was the head; Eve was not. Eve was built out of the rib from Adam's side (Gen. 2:22). Eve's head was Adam. The reason Eve was tempted by the serpent was that she assumed the headship, made the decision on her own, and fell into Satan's snare. Even before she ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she was already ensnared by the evil one. She passed over the man and assumed the headship to deal with the situation. This resulted

in her being deceived. Thus, the Bible says that Adam was not deceived, but the woman being quite deceived was in transgression (1 Tim. 2:14).

Here we see a great principle. In the universe the unique Head is God Himself. Whenever we assume the headship in dealing with any situation, denying the headship of God and of Christ, we will surely be deceived.

B. The Process

The first step in the process of the fall was man's failure to use his spirit. After man was created, he ought to have always used his spirit to contact God and live before Him. When man lives according to the spirit, he is preserved by God. But whenever man does not use his spirit to contact God, he bypasses God and puts God aside; consequently, he falls into the hand of the evil one.

The second step was the exercising of the soul (Gen. 3:2, 3, 6). When Eve spoke to the serpent, she firstly reasoned in her mind. Then she was tempted in her emotion and desired the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Eventually, she decided in her will to take the fruit and eat it.

The third step was the action of the body. When the soul is exercised, the body will naturally follow. The soul directs the body. When she was tempted this way, surely she would take and eat. Her taking the fruit to eat was the action of the body. First, the eye sees. Second, the hand takes. Third, the mouth eats.

In our daily living, we should use our spirit first, and then let our spirit direct our soul, which, in turn, directs our body. If we do not use our spirit but use our soul instead, we assume the headship and our soul takes the lead. Once the soul takes the lead, it will direct the body to do things that offend God.

C. The Result

The first result of the fall was that the soul was polluted, corrupted, and occupied. Even before Eve partook of the tree of knowledge, her mind had been polluted already. While she was talking to the serpent, the serpent's concept penetrated her mind and defiled it. Hence, her mind was corrupted. Eventually, her mind was fully occupied by the evil one after she ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The second result was that the body was changed in nature, having the element of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the element of Satan, added to it, making it the flesh (Gen. 3:7). The human body originally created by God was pure. However, it now contains the evil element of Satan. This evil element is the indwelling sin which makes its home in man's flesh. In Romans 7:17 Paul says, "So now it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells in me." This evil substance, the nature of sin, has contaminated our body, making it flesh, full of evil and lust.

The third result was that man's spirit was deadened, becoming insulated from God and losing its function toward God. Ephesians 2:5 tells us that before we were saved we were dead. We were not dead in our body or in our soul, but in our spirit. To be dead is to be without function or sensation. When man's spirit was deadened, man no longer possessed the ability to contact God and fellowship with Him.

The fourth result was that the fallen man was constituted a sinner (Rom. 5:19). Due to man's fall, a certain element has been injected into man, an element which the Bible calls sin. Romans 5:12 says, "As through one man sin entered into the world." Thus, we all have been constituted sinners. Sin has already entered into us and become our subjective element within. Hence, we are not sinners because we sin; we sin because we have been constituted sinners.

The fifth result was that the fallen man was condemned (Rom. 5:18). We were all in Adam. The condemnation includes not only Adam but also the entire human race. The entire human race was condemned in Adam.

The sixth result was that the curse was brought in (Gen. 3:17-19). Because of one man's sin, all of creation is subjected to vanity, groaning and travailing under the slavery of corruption (Rom. 8:20). The earth was cursed and it brought forth thorns and thistles. Furthermore, by the sweat of his face man will eat bread throughout his lifetime. These are the items of the curse brought in through man's fall.

The seventh result was that man was cast out of paradise (Gen. 3:23-24). Paradise was the realm of life which included the tree of life and the sphere in which man may receive life. Thus, to be cast out of paradise means to be driven away from the sphere of life.

The eighth result was death (Gen. 3:19; Rom. 5:12). First, man's spirit was deadened, and eventually his body will die. Through Adam's transgression sin entered into the world and death through sin. Death reigns over all men (Rom. 5:14). Thus, in Adam all die (1 Cor. 15:22).

II. THE SECOND STEP OF THE FALL

A. The Background

After Adam and Eve sinned, they hid themselves from the presence of God. But God came to seek them and promised that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). When Adam heard this, he immediately called his wife Eve (Gen. 3:20). Eve means "Living." This proves that Adam believed God's promise and received God's gospel. Then, Genesis 4:1 says, "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have acquired a man, Jehovah" (Heb.). Cain means "acquired." When Eve gave birth to Cain, she declared, "I have obtained it!" According to Eve's concept, Cain was the seed of woman promised in Genesis 3:15. Her words in Genesis 4:1 prove that she believed that promise and received the gospel of God.

With such a background, man should have obtained God's salvation by God's mercy. Yet, how pitiful it is that man fell again.

B. The Cause

Genesis 4 shows us two kinds of examples. Abel was an example of believing the gospel and living for the gospel, while Cain was an example of turning from God's way of salvation. The latter brought about the second step of the fall.

1. The Devil's Gain

One reason for Cain's continuing the fall was that the Devil had gained him inwardly. At the time of Genesis 4, Satan had already entered into man's body. Hence, in man's second fall, apparently it was Cain who rejected God's glad tidings; actually it was Satan who kept him from God's way of salvation and even caused him to fall further. Thus, the second step of man's fall was instigated by the subtle one who had gained Cain and worked within him.

2. Man's Presumption in Forsaking God's Way of Salvation

God had shown man His way of salvation—to clothe him with the skins of sacrificial lambs (Gen. 3:21). However, Cain was presumptuous in that he forsook God's way of salvation. He followed Satan and put aside God's salvation. This was the cause of man's further fall.

C. The Process

1. Serving God according to Man's Own Way— Inventing a Religion of Man's Concept

"Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect" (Gen. 4:3-5). Both presented offerings to God. One offered according to his own opinion and the other offered according to God's concept. Abel followed the way of God's salvation to offer a sacrifice as his substitute by the shedding of blood. But Cain rejected God's way in his service and offering; he invented a religion of man's concept, according to his own ideas.

2. Man's Anger

When he learned that God did not look upon his offering, "Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell" (Gen. 4:5). This is the result of serving God according to his own concept.

3. Man's Murder of His Brother

"And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him" (Gen. 4:8). Cain began by serving God, then continued by being angry, and finally ended by killing. No wonder the Lord Jesus says, "An hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think that he is offering service to God" (John 16:2). The question is not whether we serve God or we commit sin,

but whether we act according to God's way or according to our own opinion. We should not give any room to our concepts in all things that we do.

4. Man's Lie and Arrogance toward God

"And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9). Cain's answer to God was not only a lie, but it also showed how arrogant he was. Man was somewhat afraid of God after the first step of the fall. But here man dared to display his arrogance toward God.

D. The Result

As a result of the second step of the fall, God pronounced a greater curse: man would till the ground, but the ground would not yield to him her strength. Furthermore, he will become a vagabond wandering on the earth, and he was cast out of the presence of God, unable to see God's face (Gen. 4:11-12, 14).

Eventually Cain and his descendants invented a culture without God. This culture included building a city for self-existence, inventing cattle-raising for making a living, inventing music for amusement, and inventing weapons for defense (Gen. 4:17, 20-22). The further man drifts away from God, the less he has His presence. Having lost God, man was forced to invent a godless culture. This is the result of the fall of man.

III. THE THIRD STEP OF THE FALL

A. The Cause

In the first step of the fall, the enemy of God was outside of man. In the second step of the fall, this enemy was inside of man. Now, the enemy took another step, causing man to fall even further.

*1. The Evil Spirits Mingling with Man—
the Fallen Angels Joining with Man
through Illegal Marriage*

Genesis 6 tells us that the sons of God married the daughters of men. Here the sons of God were the angels. In Job 1:6 and 2:1 we are told that the angels are called the sons of God. Also, the Syriac Version of the Old Testament renders "the sons of God" as "the angels" in Genesis 6. The angels that married the daughters of men were those who did not keep their principality, as recorded in Jude 6 and 7. Some of the fallen angels under Satan came down to the earth and took human bodies. They formed illegal marriages with the daughters of men. They committed fornication through the bodies of men, so that the human race was no longer pure but became a mixture of human nature with the fallen spirits. Hence, God decided to send the flood to exterminate the human race.

2. Man Becoming Flesh

Genesis 6:3 says, "And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for that he indeed is flesh" (Heb.). In the first step of the fall, man did not exercise his spirit. In

the second step of the fall, man followed his own will and lived by his soul. In the third step of the fall, man abused the fallen body and became flesh. Romans 7 and 8 reveal to us that the flesh is thoroughly and absolutely hated by God. God will not tolerate it. Therefore, when the entire human race became flesh, God came in and told His servant Noah that He was going to destroy that whole generation together with the earth (Gen. 6:11-13).

B. The Process

The first step was the fulfilling of the lusts of the flesh. Man lived and indulged in lusts, and every imagination of his thoughts was evil continually (Gen. 6:5). The second step was that man was not only evil, but corrupt to such a degree that even the most tolerant God could not tolerate it any longer (Gen. 6:11-13).

C. The Result

First, the Holy Spirit withdrew Himself. The Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever" (Gen. 6:3). Before that time although man had fallen, God's Spirit was continually striving with man and moving in man. Nevertheless, at this point God could not do anything further. When man had become flesh, the Spirit of God had to withdraw. Man was completely separated from God and forsaken by God. Second, the deluge brought in the judgment of destruction. With the exception of Noah and those in the ark with him, all were exterminated by the flood.

IV. THE FOURTH STEP OF THE FALL

A. The Cause

There are two factors in each step of the fall. The first factor is Satan, and the second is man.

1. The Instigation of Satan

Before the flood there was no human government. It was only after the flood that God established a deputy authority on the earth. Man began to exercise God's authority to rule over others. At the fourth step of the fall, Satan utilized the authority which God gave man to form the nations and to instigate a rebellion against God with the nations. Hence, man fell into an open rebellion against God collectively.

2. The Rebellion of the Human Race

Rebellion is the denial of right and authority. In the rebellion at Babel, man declared that he denied God's right and that he was absolutely free from God's authority. The entire human race was stirred up, having been instigated into rebellion, to declare that they did not care for God's right or for God's authority.

At his fall in the beginning, Satan's intention was to overthrow God's authority, but he was not successful in his attempt. Hence, he came again into the fallen human race to

inject the same thought into man, inciting man to rise up collectively against God's authority.

B. The Process

The first step was the conspiracy to rebel against God (Gen. 11:3-4). The created men who were under God's ruling came together to conspire to rebel against God. The second step was the making of bricks with the earth by human labor. According to the whole revelation of the Bible, God's building has never been with any kind of bricks. God's building is with stones. Man built the tower of Babel with bricks instead of stones. This means that man uses the misused earth plus human labor to replace God's work. The third step was the building of a city to have a man-made, godless life. A city is the center of human living; hence, it represents human living. The city built with bricks signifies a man-made human life, which is a godless life. The fourth step was the building of a tower to declare the renouncing of God. The tower of Babel was a mark and an announcement of the city of Babel. It declared that the people there lived a life rejecting God and His authority. The final step was that they made a name to deny God's name, that is, to deny God Himself.

C. The Result

First, God came in to scatter them. Since they rebelled against God collectively, God came in to scatter them that they might no longer live together in one place. Second, God confounded their language so that they were no longer able to have the same language. Third, confusion was brought in. Babel means "confusion." This is due to the curse and judgment.

When man reached the fourth step of the fall, he had fallen to the uttermost, so that even God could not do anything to recover the fallen race. Eventually, God was forced to give up the race of Adam and had to call Abraham as the head of a new race for the fulfilling of His purpose in man.

SUMMARY

The man created by God was very good and without sin, but he was deceived by God's enemy, the Devil, to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; thus, he fell and became a sinner. On the one hand, he had sinned before God, and on the other hand, he now had the sinful nature, Satan's evil nature, within him. The fallen nature of man caused his descendants to fall again and again until they reached the point of rebelling against God and standing against Him. At this stage, man was utterly fallen and met with God's rejection.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the cause and the result of the first step of man's fall?
2. What were the cause and the result of the second step of man's fall?
3. What were the cause and the result of the third step of man's fall?
4. What were the cause and the result of the fourth step of man's fall?

5. When did sin enter into man? Explain with the Old Testament facts and the New Testament verses.
6. When was man condemned by God? Explain with the Old Testament facts and the New Testament verses.
7. What was the way of salvation provided by God for man?
8. How was human culture developed?