



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

A Systematic Study of Bible Teachings (Dogmatics) Lesson 4.2 – The Doctrine of Human Beings and Sin

The Fall of Man into Sin

The beautiful harmony and bliss in the Garden of Eden came to an end when the devil introduced thoughts into the hearts of Eve and Adam that led them to disobey God's commandment concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God's Word was clear: **"Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die"** (Genesis 2:17). Adam and Eve did not sin because of any deficiency in themselves. The temptation to sin came from an outside source, the devil. **"He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning"** (1 John 3:8).

The account of the fall into sin in Genesis 3 does not mention the devil or Satan by name, but the identification is made clear in Revelation 12:9: **"So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan."** The tempter was the devil, using the serpent as his disguise. The apostle Paul wrote: **"The serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness"** (2 Corinthians 11:3). He spoke to the woman, not the man, perhaps because the man had received God's commandment directly, whereas the woman had learned of the commandment indirectly. Satan's method suggested that God was perhaps not such a good God after all, since He had kept something apparently good from them. The creation of doubts about God, insinuations, and finally outright lies led Eve first of all, and then Adam, to disobey God's clear command. Jesus said of Satan: **"He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. ... He is a liar, and the father of it"** (John 8:44).

There is a difference in the sin of Eve and the sin of Adam. Paul said: **"Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression"** (1 Timothy 2:14). It seems Eve really believed Satan's lie: **"when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate"** (Genesis 3:6). Although Adam was not deceived, he also ate, contrary to better knowledge. In this way sin entered not only into Adam, but into all.

Before the fall into sin, Adam and Eve both had the ability to resist the devil's temptation. They had the ability to prevent sin from entering the world. They had the freedom either to obey or disobey God. In their freedom they chose to sin. It was not God's fault that they sinned; it was their own fault. Because of their sin, they died immediately in a spiritual way. They no longer loved their Creator. Instead, they were afraid of Him and tried to escape from Him.

Their actions did not come from good reasoning, but from evil desires that were suggested by Satan. Solomon said: **"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life"** (Proverbs 4:23). Because their sin has been passed down to us, man's heart is filled with evil desires. **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"** (Jeremiah 17:9).

Many of those who call themselves Christians today consider Genesis 1-11 to be human speculation on how the world originated. They speak of myths and legends and tales of origin, as though these things never really took place. But the words of Genesis do not in any way suggest that these events did not really happen. Jesus quoted the first chapters of Genesis as factual history (Matthew 19:4-6). The Gospel of Luke presents the ancestry of Jesus all the way back to the beginning, **"to Adam, the**

son of God” (Luke 3:38). Most emphatically, the apostle Paul lays out for us a grand comparison between Adam and Christ in Romans 5:12-19. None of this would make any sense if Adam had never really existed and the fall into sin had never occurred. This is the comparison:

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned – (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:12-19)

This is a complicated comparison worthy of careful study. But it makes no sense at all if Adam was not a real person who lived as Genesis says he lived. The comparison is between two actual historical figures: Adam and Jesus. If Jesus truly lived, as we believe He did, then Adam must have lived also.

The Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) subscribes to the Brief Statement of 1932, where this confession is made:

We teach that the first man was not brutelike nor merely capable of intellectual development, but that God created man in His own image, Genesis 1:26-27; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10, that is, in true knowledge of God and in true righteousness and holiness and endowed with a truly scientific knowledge of nature, Genesis 2:19-23.

We furthermore teach that sin came into the world by the fall of the first man, as described Genesis 3. By this Fall not only he himself, but also all his natural offspring have lost the original knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, and thus all men are sinners already by birth, dead in sins, inclined to all evil, and subject to the wrath of God, Romans 5:12, 18; Ephesians 2:1-3. We teach also that men are unable, through any efforts of their own or by the aid of ‘culture and science,’ to reconcile themselves to God and thus to conquer death and damnation.

Questions

1. What one commandment did God give to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden?
2. Who talked to Eve to lead Eve and Adam into sin?
3. What method did he use in his temptation?
4. What are the four names given to the tempter in Revelation 12?
5. Why did Eve eat the fruit of the forbidden tree?
6. What is difference between the sin of Eve and the sin of Adam?
7. In what way did Adam and Eve die as soon as they sinned?
8. Why do we say that Adam and Eve had the freedom not to listen to Satan?
9. Why is it important to teach that the fall into sin was a factual event?
10. In what way are Adam and Christ similar to each other?
11. In what way are Adam and Christ different from each other?