

WHAT HAPPENED TO MAN IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

(**Bold type** and underlining of scripture text have been added for emphasis)

(Your questions and comments are welcome)

Appreciation for the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus is enhanced by a clear understanding of man's inward state inherited from Adam. In the book of Genesis, we are told at: Genesis 1

27 So God created man in **his own image**, in **the image of God** created he him; male and female created he them.

Genesis 2

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 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**.

In a previous consideration, we learned that Gods purpose with man was to enlarge the company with whom he might dwell, and find pleasure in sharing his reign over the rest of the creation. However, we learn that quite early in this divine endeavor, His purpose was opposed. Continuing in the book of Genesis, we read at: Genesis 3

1 Now **the serpent was more subtil** than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, **Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?**

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4 **And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:**

5 **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.**

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife **hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God** amongst the trees of the garden.

9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

10 And he said, **I heard thy voice** in the garden, and **I was afraid**, because **I was naked**; and **I hid myself**.

11 And he said, **Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree**, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

12 And the man said, **The woman** whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, **The serpent** beguiled me, and I did eat.

The referenced scriptures present several points for our consideration:
First--God created man in God's own image and in His own likeness. **Second--** God commanded man to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **Third--**Satan instigated man's act of eating of the forbidden tree. **Fourth--** Eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would result in man's death.

In a previous consideration, we referred to scriptures that evidenced man's mental, emotional, and volitional faculties, wherein man's image was in the likeness of that of God. *Our present discussion concerns what happened to man's image as a result of eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

Upon examination of Genesis chapter 3, we observe three personalities involved in the transaction that culminated in a separation of mankind from God.

We see the serpent (Satan) moving in opposition to God's purpose with man by confronting the woman. The serpent is described as subtle (verse 3), having no truth in him, a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44)

Satan's method of approach was *to engage the woman's mind* concerning God's directive for eating of the trees in the Garden of Eden.(Gen. 3:1,4,5) At the beginning of the dialogue, the woman is quite clear in her understanding of the directive, as evidenced by her response, as we read at: Genesis 3

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, **Ye shall not** eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, **lest ye die.**

The serpent denies such consequences for eating of the tree in the midst of the garden, saying at: Genesis 3

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall **not** surely die:

He then entices the woman by suggesting the benefits to her from eating of the tree. Genesis 3

5 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

The woman's first mistake is *the entering into dialogue* with the one who is characterized as subtle, devoid of truth, a liar and the father of lies. Satan's suggestion that the consequence of death will not occur, contrary to what God had said, is a clear indication that this thought is not worthy of her attention, or her consideration.

Satan's subtlety is seen *in his implication* that death is such an extreme penalty that it would not occur. "Ye shall not surely die" (untrue). He continues by suggesting that instead of death, the result of eating of the tree that God identified as the "knowledge of good and evil" would open her eyes to know good and evil (true) and make her wise as the gods (untrue).

Through Satan's subtle suggestions, that are part truth=false, the woman's perception of the tree and of the affect from eating its fruit was changed.

Genesis 3

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was **good for food**, and that it was **pleasant to the eyes**, and a tree to be desired **to make one wise**, she took of the fruit thereof, and **did eat**, and gave also unto her husband with her; and **he did eat**.

Satan, by subtlety, had deceived the woman. She accepted a lie. *Her mind being blinded* to the truth, she took the fruit and ate it. "**** and gave also unto her husband and he did eat."

We are told at: 1 Timothy 2

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

Thus, Adam knowingly and willingly disobeyed God's will concerning the eating from this tree. This act of willful sin clearly affected their relationship with God. "And the eyes of them both **were** opened, and **they knew** that they were naked****"- **Genesis 3:7.**

The Hebrew word translated "naked" is from another Hebrew word meaning "to be bare". They had breached their relationship with God, and they had knowledge of such breach.

Adam and Eves response to such knowledge was an attempt *to cover their nakedness*: "and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons". It is evident that this effort to cover the breach was ineffective and that *their guilt remained*. **This is evidenced at:**

Genesis 3

8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

Then God asked Adam: Genesis 3

11 And he said, **Who told thee that** thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

It is noteworthy that: The man did not say a simple, yes, I did eat of that tree. But rather, he was attempting to use the woman as a scapegoat for his behavior. Nor does the woman say, I ate of the tree from which you commanded us not to eat. Instead, she directs God to the serpent. *These scriptures show that man's perception of his existence has changed.* He has knowledge about himself that he did not have before he sinned. He is aware of not being right before God and is therefore, afraid.

Rather than being truthful, he attempts to hide from the truth through the mechanism of excuse. *This dishonesty is inherent in the nature of man in his fallen state.* This is in accordance with the character traits ascribed to the devil

who instigated man's initial rebellion against God. Thus, *man's image had been transformed* away from the wisdom, honesty, and peace of God to an egocentric existence characterized by fear, deceit, and self-preservation. *Man's disobedience has separated him from the capacity to perceive divine things.* As God had said, "In the day that ye eat thereof ye shall surely die."

The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, explains that Adam's sin and attending death was inherited by all men: Romans 5

12 Wherefore, as by **one man** sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon **all men**, for that all have sinned:

19 For as by **one man's** disobedience **many** were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord

This Roman's passage tells us that *the constitutional transformation that occurred in Adam was inherited by all of those that descended from him.* Therefore, the unregenerate person's inward state is not caused by his or her sinning, but rather, one's sinning is a product of one's inward state.

The inward condition that scripture refers to as death has in scripture a twofold explanation: *blindness* (or darkness) and *desire*. In reference to the first, the apostle Paul wrote to the church which was at Corinth:

2 Corinthians 11

3But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent **beguiled** Eve through **his subtilty**, so **your minds** should be **corrupted** from **the simplicity** that is in Christ.

Here the apostle Paul tells us that the initial affect of Satan's influence upon Eve was *the distorting or darkening of her understanding.* This distortion or blindness related to her perception of the meaning of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as well as, the consequences from eating of it.

Referring back to Genesis chapter 3, verses 3 and 6, we learn that, while God purposed that the tree was not for man's food, the woman, through Satan's suggestion, came to perceive it as good for food. Also, she saw the tree as one that would produce in her, wisdom. God had said that it would cause death, which is evidenced by her blindness to the true nature of things. Also, while God said that man should not eat of the tree, the woman saw it as desirable. *Thus, the meaning and purpose of the tree was lost from the woman's view. Such mental distortion not only motivated the eating, it also remained with man to be a governing part of human nature.*

The apostle Paul explains that the devil continues to be active in the matter of blinding men's minds. Also, that this blindness separates men from the life of God. Paul writes at:

2 Corinthians 4

3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

4 In whom the god of this world hath **blinded the minds** of them which believe not, lest the **light** of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, **should shine** unto them.

Ephesians 4

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity **of their mind**,

18 Having the **understanding darkened**, being **alienated from the life of God through** the **ignorance** that is in them, because of the **blindness** of their heart:

The expressions “blinded their minds”, “vanity of their mind”, “understanding darkened”, “ignorance that is in them”, and “blindness of their heart” does not suggest that man is without understanding or that he is devoid of wisdom.

However, it does mean that *man’s perceptions are not in accord with the truth as revealed by God.*

This discussion presupposes the existence of divinely revealed truth and an attending reality. **However, this truth is outside of the range of man’s unaided comprehension.** This is not a consideration of physical truths perceived through the physical senses. Rather, scripture is explaining a reality governed by divine principles that requires *clarity within man’s spirit, which clarity was lost through disobedience.*

The apostle Paul particularly explains the existence of two such realities as being separate and distinct, one from the other:

1 Corinthians 2

1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of **man's wisdom**, but in demonstration of **the Spirit** and **of power**:

5 That your **faith** should **not** stand in **the wisdom of men**, but in **the power of God**.

6 Howbeit **we speak wisdom** among them that are perfect: yet **not the wisdom of this world**, nor of the princes of this world, **that come to nought**:

7 But we speak the **wisdom of God** in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained **before the world unto our glory**:

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed them unto us **by his Spirit**: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knoweth **the things of a man**, save **the spirit of man** which is in him? even so **the things of God** knoweth no man, **but the Spirit of God**.

12 Now **we have received**, not the spirit of the world, but **the spirit which is of God**; that we might **know the things** that are freely given to us **of God**.

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which **man's wisdom** teacheth, but which the **Holy Ghost** teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the **natural** man receiveth not **the things of the Spirit of God**: for they are foolishness unto him: **neither can he know them**, because they are **spiritually** discerned.

15 But he that is **spiritual** judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have **the mind of Christ**.

This passage of scripture provides a clear explanation of the two realities. One is lived, by man, according to *the fallen state* inherited from Adam, while the other is lived through *enlightenment by God's Spirit* to those who are inwardly devoted to God.

When Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he rejected divine instruction and chose to live by the independent use of his volitional, mental and emotional faculties. Thus, man's course is determined by where his reasoning and his feelings take him. This is quite contrary to the apostle Paul's statement in verse two above: "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified". Here the apostle Paul is saying that *he rejects knowledge acquired by means of the natural reasoning process*, declaring to them *knowledge acquired only through revelation by the Spirit*. Our conclusions *concerning the things of God and His kingdom* that are the product of *the natural reasoning process* fail to express *the true meaning* of such things. This is the explanation of verse fourteen above. *The things of God are spiritually discerned and are outside the range of our natural reasoning.*

The other characteristic of death, resulting from sin, as explained in scripture, is desire or lust. In Strong's Exhaustive Concordance Of The Bible, the word "lust" is most often translated from two Greek words: epithumetes meaning "a craver", and epithumia meaning "a longing". These two Greek words are from the Greek word epithumeo meaning "to set the heart upon". This characteristic is explained in these scriptures: **John 8**

44 Ye are of your father the devil, and **the lusts** of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Ephesians 2

1 And you hath he quickened, who were **dead** in trespasses and sins;

2 Wherein in time past **ye walked** according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that **now** worketh in the children of disobedience:

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the **lusts of our flesh**, fulfilling the **desires of the flesh** and of the mind; and were **by nature** the children of wrath, even as others.

Ephesians 4

22 That **ye put off** concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And **be renewed** in the spirit of your mind;

James 1

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15 Then when **lust** hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth **death**.

1 John 2

15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is **not in him**.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is **not of the Father**, but **is of the world**.

Galatians 5

19 Now the works **of the flesh** are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

²²But the fruit **of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live in the Spirit, let us **also walk** in the Spirit.

These scriptures show that man, in his natural state, lives according to the affections and desires of his own heart. The world and the things in the world are the focus of such affections and desires. There is wisdom and knowledge that is the product of rationalizing this existence of self-gratification. It is an earthly reality that conflicts with the divine reality as explained by the apostle Paul at:

Galatians 5

16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil **the lust** of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

In conclusion, we learn that while man was created in God's image and after his likeness, Adam's disobedience so contaminated man's spirit (perceptive faculty-see 1 Corinth. 2:11) that he could no longer comprehend God's purpose for his being. His resulting inward state was oriented, no longer toward God, but rather, toward the world. Such earthward direction of his desires focuses his attention upon the world around him in contradiction to God's original, interim, and final purpose that man "attend upon the Lord without distraction**". (1Corinthians 7:35)**

Man is constituted a sinner. Sinful behavior is simply that behavior which is brought forth by the interests and desires that are active in man's nature. Such behavior is referred to as "works of the flesh". Any desire of the flesh is an avenue through which Satan will make his appeal to us, which appeal, if not

immediately rejected will result in disobedience to God's will. Thus, resistance to God's restorative efforts to draw men back to Himself is found in the very nature of man. God's efforts to restore man back to the fellowship that is in His Son are directed toward reconstituting man from his nature inherited from Adam, to partake of the divine nature provided in and through Christ. The apostle Peter addresses this matter of reconstitution at:

2 Peter 1

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the **knowledge** of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto **life** and **godliness**, through the **knowledge** of him that hath called us to **glory** and **virtue**:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be **partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped **the corruption** that is in the world **through lust**.