

Consequences of Sin

God's Great Plan

Soon after the creation of Adam and Eve, a very cunning enemy of God and people entered the Garden of Eden. That enemy did not come in as a warring force with which to be reckoned. Instead, he came in with a question. He was getting the minds of his victims working in the direction he wanted them to go. *"Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Indeed, **has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'**"* (Genesis 3:1). Satan already knew the answer. However, he wanted people to start thinking about what they did not have instead of what they did have. From there it is a short trip to "why can't I have that?" and on to "I want that." and "I am going to get that."

Satan also knew the penalty for eating from that tree. The law concerning the tree and its punishment was given to Adam while he was still alone. *"The LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die'"* (Genesis 2:16-17). As Satan talked to Eve by way of the serpent, his true nature stood out. Satan was and still is a liar. *"The serpent said to the woman, 'You surely will not die!'"* (Genesis 3:4). With those five words, Satan not only lied to Eve by insinuating that God lied. Unfortunately, Eve believed Satan and, led by her desires, ate the fruit from the tree. She also gave Adam some of the fruit, and he ate it. With that act of disobedience, sin entered the world, and people have sinned, in their unique ways, ever since.

Once sin became present in the world, death also was present. Without the tree of life, taken away with the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 3:22-23), Adam and Eve began the gradual process of perishing. God knew when He made Adam that someday, every human, created or born, would die. Death is God's preplanned end to life. By giving people free-will, allowing them to do good or evil, God knew that eventually, each person would choose wrong. *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). Early evidence of man's sinful nature; *"Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"* (Genesis 6:5).

"The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The LORD said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.'" But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD" (Genesis 6:6-8). Therefore, God's grace and mercy saved Noah and his family and destroyed the earth's sinful population.

Because God knew that humans would sin, he had included a method of reconciliation that he first shared with Abraham. God told Abraham that a great nation would come from his descendants if he would follow Him. God also promised Abraham a good land and a future descendant that would bless all peoples everywhere (Genesis 26:3-5). The purpose was to build a holy nation, separate from the sinful world population. Later, as Moses led the nation, known as Israel, into the promised land, he told them of the good and evil that awaited them (Genesis 30:15-20). If the people chose to obey God, only good things would happen. But if they rebelled against God, only tribulation and death would come to them.

For many years the people followed God, obeying His commandments and the leaders given to them. However, as time passed, the people became complacent in obeying God and concerned about pleasing themselves. *"In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes"* (Judges 17:6). Scripture tells us that the people rejected God as their King and wanted a man for a king. *"But you have today rejected your God, who delivers you from all your calamities and your distresses;*

yet you have said, 'No, but set a king over us!'" (1 Samuel 10:19). Then the kings, with few exceptions, led the nation into idolatry and all kinds of sin.

As a consequence of the sins committed by the kings, God divided the nation into two kingdoms. Israel to the North turned immediately to idolatry. Judah to the South remained primarily faithful. When God determined that Israel would not stop sinning, He allowed Assyria to conquer them. *"Israel was carried away into exile from their own land to Assyria until this day"* (2 Kings 17:22-23). About 136 years later, Judah was also carried away as slaves into captivity because they too became addicted to sin.

God remained faithful to His promise to Abraham by protecting those faithful to Him. The next part of God's great plan promises a savior to give true freedom to His children.