

Study 6 – The Christian Life 1: the beginning

1. The Origin of Sin

In the beginning God created a man, Adam, in His own image (Genesis 1v26-27) and then Eve, to be his helpmeet. Adam was given authority to rule over the animals but also encouraged to worship God.

In the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve lived in constant fellowship with God (Genesis 3v8). However God had put restrictions on Adam (cf Genesis 2v17) which were contradicted by Satan, a fallen angel, who persuaded Eve and then Adam to disobey God's Words (Genesis 3v1-6). The result was that sin came into the world and into the life of every living person since (Romans 5v12.).

God had said that if they disobey Him they would surely die (Genesis 2v17). Though this did not happen immediately from a physical point of view it did happen spiritually. They were cast out of the Garden - out of God's presence - and the fellowship with Him they had known was finished.

From that time onwards every person has been a sinner - far away from God (cf. Psalm 51v5). The Bible defines sin as rebellion (cf. Isaiah 4v2; 63v10) and lawlessness (1 John 3v4); that is, disobedience to God's will and laws. Sin is falling short of God's standard (Romans 3v23). It is a refusal to acknowledge Him as Lord (cf. Luke 19v14) preferring to worship other gods (idols) (Exodus 20v3-6). We are not sinners because we sin: we sin because we are sinners. The effects of sin are everywhere (cf. Romans 2v1-16): in suffering and pain (e.g. Genesis 3v16; Ecclesiastes 2v23; Job 5v7); in immorality (Romans 1v18-32), etc. Sin causes guilt (Genesis 3v10; 2 Samuel 12v13); bondage (Galatians 3v22); death (Ezekiel 18v4; Romans 5v12; Ephesians 2v1-5) which is the ultimate separation from God.

2. The Answer to Sin

Despite our sinfulness God still longed for fellowship with us, but how could a Holy God fellowship with sinful people? Until our sinfulness was dealt with, it was impossible. Nor was it a matter of dealing with our sins (the wrong things we do, think or say) but our sinfulness (the people we are). Sins are the fruit but sin is the root. Sins are the effect but sin is the cause. God needed to deal with the root if the fruit was to stop (cf. Romans 8v7-8; 1 John 3v8-10).

God needed to show us that fellowship could be possible again only if sin was dealt with. Throughout the Old Testament God not only repeatedly showed His desire for fellowship but also made a way possible through the sacrificial system (cf. Leviticus ch.1-7). However the sinfulness of His people (the Israelites) demonstrated that there needed to be something more radical to deal with the problem. God solved it by sending a perfect, sinless Lamb (Jesus) to be our substitute. The sinner had to be punished but Jesus became sin for us (1 Peter 3v18). He took our punishment. He died in our place. God accepted Jesus' sacrifice and raised Him from the dead. (Acts 2v32; 1 Corinthians 15v20-22)

Today we can again fellowship with God but only through the 'new and living way' (Hebrews 10v20). As soon as we realise we are a sinner (because of who we are, not what we do) and that Jesus bore our punishment for sin, then we can approach God. We need to repent (be sorry for but also turn away from our sin) and exercise faith (belief and trust) in Jesus. On confession of faith in our Saviour Jesus we shall know forgiveness (1 John 1v8,9) and cleansing and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. At this moment we become a Christian (Romans 8v9).

QUESTIONS

Why did God create us?

What restrictions did God put upon Adam and Eve? (Genesis 2v16-17)

How did Satan succeed in causing Adam and Eve to sin? (Genesis 3v1&3-4)

What is sin?

What is the difference between 'sin' and 'sins'?

What are some of the effects of sin?

What was the only way a Holy God could fellowship with sinners?

How did Jesus become our Saviour? (cf. John 1v29)

What steps are needed to become a Christian

Have you taken these steps yet?

FURTHER STUDY

Choose two Bible characters to see how sin spoilt their lives e.g. Jacob, David, Peter, etc.