



The Darkness of Sin

By Keith Greer

God gave man life and a beautiful, new world in which to enjoy it. God created all things for man's well being and gave him direct access to request anything further needed. Along with all the other blessings God gave man, He also gave him the freedom to choose -- free moral agency. What did God ask in return for all He had given to man? Not much...

"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but 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 2:16,17} Man could continue to enjoy the things his Maker provided, or he could pursue a different course -- it was his choice. What could possibly mar this picture of perfect harmony and peace between man and his Creator?

In the early part of Genesis, we read of another creature who makes an appearance. It's the serpent -- the tempter, man's adversary, man's enemy, and God's enemy. What did the serpent do? He asked a question. "Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, has God indeed said, you shall not eat of every tree of the garden." {Genesis 3:1} The woman understood God's instruction. "...We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die." {Genesis 3:2,3} It's clear that she understood perfectly. Eve told the serpent exactly what God had said. Many claim that Eve did not understand the meaning of dying. That is probably true, but she did understand that God said it would happen if they disobeyed.

How did Satan receive Eve's answer? "Then the serpent said to the woman, you will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." {Genesis 3:4,5} The woman was faced with making a decision. Should she obey God, who had given her life, this beautiful garden, and a relationship with her husband Adam; or should she believe the serpent. On the surface, this doesn't seem like a tough choice. The serpent had done nothing for her. Did he place any unwanted pressure on the woman? Keep foremost in your mind the fact that Adam and Eve made the choice; God did not make it for them!

What did Eve choose? "So 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. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings." {Genesis 3:6,7} The serpent led them down all three avenues of sin -- pride of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and pride of life. Sin always takes one or all of these three paths. It also does three things about which you are never told. It takes you FARTHER than you desire to go; it KEEPS you longer than you desire to stay; and it COSTS you more than you intended to pay. This was especially true for Adam and Eve.

Man always looks at stepping into God's place. The desire to be "like God" has always been a temptation. The serpent changed just one word (NOT) of God's truth. He said Adam and Eve would NOT die. He also told them some truth -- they would know the difference between good and evil. Satan is an expert at telling "half-truths." What kills is the part he fails to reveal when he tempts us. Sin looks to be enjoyable and harmless; that is one of its dangers. But this appearance of joy and harmlessness does not excuse our ignorance. And it did not excuse Adam and Eve.

"So he said, I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." {Genesis 3:10} Adam and Eve were ashamed, so they hid from God. When we sin, and we feel shame, we always wish we could hide, not only from God, but also from others who know what we've done. No cover is adequate to conceal our actions from God. Sin should cause us to be afraid. Why? "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." {Romans 6:23} Sin causes strong men

to tremble and become cowardly when they are in God's presence. When we face temptation to sin, we don't think about the consequences; but sooner or later, sin always brings fear and shame.

Keep in mind one important point -- man chooses to do wrong, all the while understanding what God has commanded and said. After making the wrong choice, he often tries to escape accountability, but God does not allow this to happen. Is this not the same path that Adam and Eve pursued?

"Then the man said, the woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." And the LORD God said to the woman, what is this you have done? The woman said, the serpent deceived me, and I ate." {Genesis 3:12,13} Adam not only blamed Eve, he also blamed God! God gave Eve to Adam, so God was to blame for Adam's sin. Eve, not to be left holding the proverbial bag, blamed the serpent for deceiving her. Both tried to escape accountability. Today, when man disobeys God's commands, he continues on the same course. Did it work for Adam and Eve?

Who did God punish? Genesis 3:15-19 tells us that all three -- the serpent, man, and woman -- were cursed, because each was accountable for his/her own actions. They had no one but themselves to blame. Man is still trying to escape the consequences of his disobedience to God's commands. Adam, Eve, and the serpent didn't escape -- neither will we.

God did what He promised to do if they ate of the tree. "Then the LORD God said, Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever -- therefore the LORD God sent him out of the Garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life." {Genesis 3:22-24} God said, "In the DAY you eat, you shall die." On that day, they were separated from God -- driven from His presence and from the Garden of Eden. Sin always separates man from God (Isaiah 59:1,2). Until man sinned, he had access to the tree of life. Afterward, God took away that access. Man now experiences physical death.

Why did Adam and Eve do what they did? Why didn't they weigh the consequences and think about what it would mean to lose fellowship with God? Sadly, when the devil tempts us, he always tries to keep this truth from us. God warned us. Sin is the enemy of our souls. It always has been, and it always will be.

Man and His Maker no longer had fellowship. It needed to be reinstated. God had a plan, and in Genesis 3:15, we are given a brief glimpse into that plan. Sin places man in spiritual darkness, and the only thing that can bring him out is the light that God's word provides. Adam and Eve made a terrible choice -- but they had the right to make it. Today, we still have that right to choose. There are very high stakes -- the eternal destinies of our souls. This would indeed be a sad ending; but thankfully, it's not the end of the story. Man took the wrong turn, but God provided an avenue back to Him. That's another part of the story.