



MBS088

A MESSIANIC BIBLE STUDY FROM ARIEL MINISTRIES



THE FALL OF MAN



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*And Jehovah 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 of it:
for in the day that you eat
thereof you shall surely die.
Genesis 2:16-17*

INTRODUCTION

This manuscript is a study of the Fall of man, and it will be dealt with in four categories: the state of innocence, the temptation, the Fall, and the results.

I. THE STATE OF INNOCENCE

The first category concerns the state of innocence; man's state before the Fall. Four specific things should be mentioned: man's original state, man's original environment, man's original responsibility, and man's probation.

A. Man's Original State

There are four aspects of man's original state: his unconfirmed holiness, his power of contrary choice, his dominion over Creation, and his fellowship with God.

1. His Unconfirmed Holiness

Concerning the state itself, man was created in a state of maturity and perfection. Man, in the state of innocence, had two things: original righteousness and the image of God.

Original righteousness involved three things: first, there was perfect harmony and subordination of all that constituted man; secondly, it included knowledge, righteousness, and holiness (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10); and, thirdly, it included moral qualities that were basically passive. This meant that man, in his original state, was innocent of any wrong doing. Theologically, this is called "unconfirmed, creaturely holiness." He was created holy, but that holiness had not yet

been tested; therefore, it was an unconfirmed holiness. Furthermore, it was not the holiness of the Creator, who does not have the capacity to sin, but it was the creaturely holiness that had the option of disobedience and the capacity to sin. God is not capable of sinning, but man, in his original state, was capable of sinning. Thus, it was unconfirmed, creaturely holiness. Adam had an innocent, moral character that was not yet tested.

The image of God in man includes certain facets of the outward image, as well as the inward image, and four things should be noted: first, it refers to those features of God which are also true of man; secondly, there is one feature that no longer exists, and that is unconfirmed creaturely holiness which was lost in the Fall; thirdly, there are still other features that God and man share, so man still has the image of God in him, but it is marred; and fourthly, although it is marred, there is still enough of it left that men are commanded to respect their fellow man accordingly. The content of the image of God in man is not a physical likeness, but it is a personal likeness, a spiritual likeness, a moral likeness, a social likeness, and an authoritative likeness.

2. His Power of Contrary Choice

A second aspect about Adam in the state of innocence is that he had the ability to sin or not to sin. Theologically, this is called “the power of contrary choice,” the ability to choose contrary to one's nature. Adam was holy and perfect, but he had the capacity to make an unholy and imperfect choice. Even God does not have this ability. The Bible clearly teaches that the nature of God is such that He is not capable of sinning. That is a character of God. But Adam had the ability to sin or not to sin in his original state.

3. His Dominion over Creation

A third aspect about man in the state of innocence was that he had dominion over Creation. Originally, it was Satan who had authority over this earth, but he lost it when he fell. As a result, God created a new race of beings, man, to whom he gave this authority. Adam was given authority over the earth; he had dominion over Creation (Gen. 1:26; Ps. 8:5-8; Heb. 2:5-8).

4. His Fellowship with God

The fourth aspect about man in the state of innocence was that he was in fellowship with God. Genesis 3:8 states: *And they heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.*

Regularly, on a daily basis, *in the cool of the day*, which is when the sun is setting, God would appear in some visible way to Adam and Eve and fellowship with them. Man, in his original state of innocence, had unbroken fellowship with God, which was exercised in a meeting face to face, regularly, on a day-by-day basis.

B. Man's Original Environment

Man's original environment during the state of innocence is described in Genesis 2:8-15: *And Jehovah God planted a garden eastward, in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made Jehovah God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became four heads. The name of the first is Pishon: that is it which compasses the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasses the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goes in front of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. And Jehovah God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.*

Man's environment was the Garden of Eden. In this garden, there were plenty of provisions for the sustaining of man through the various fruit trees and also through *the tree of life* to sustain life itself. Furthermore, while labor was part of the original environment, it was not toilsome labor. Labor would be necessary, but it would be light.

C. Man's Original Responsibility

Man, in his state of innocence, had a responsibility that can be summarized in two points: first, he was obligated to dress and keep the garden (Gen. 2:15); and secondly, he was to obey God (Gen. 2:16-17).

D. Man's Probationary Period

Man, in his state of innocence, was on probation. This probationary period involved three things: the test, the duration, and the goal.

1. The Test

There are three things involved in the test itself: the object, the nature, and the purpose of the test.

a. The Object of the Test

The object of the test was the two trees *in the midst of the garden*. One tree was *the tree of life*, which was the means of imparting eternal life. Had Adam passed his probationary period, he would have been allowed to eat of the Tree of Life and would have eternal life from then on without ever seeing death. The other tree was *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Partaking of this tree meant that it would impart to Adam experiential knowledge of the difference between good and evil. It would be experiential knowledge rather than merely head knowledge. With disobedience, they would know experientially, but also bitterly, what evil was and how it differed from good. Once they partook of this tree, they would have the power to do evil, but not the power to do the good that would commend them before God.

b. The Nature of the Test

The second thing was the nature of the test itself, given in Genesis

2:16-17: *And Jehovah 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 of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.*

The nature of the test was simple: man was allowed to partake of every other tree in the garden, except one. This included the Tree of Life, although it is obvious that he had not partaken of the Tree of Life up to this point and probably had no need to so early in his existence. He was given only one prohibitive commandment: *of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shalt not eat of it.*

The range of the testing was very restrictive in nature. For example, there could be no covetousness involved, because he was lord of the earth. Furthermore, there could be no immorality, because he was married to the only woman around. The only possibility of failure was in the repudiation of the will of God. He would fail the test in respect to the obedience to God. So the range of this testing was quite restricted. There was no reason why he should not have passed this test.

c. The Purpose of the Test

The purpose of the test was probationary so that his unconfirmed, creaturely holiness could be tested.

2. The Duration

The duration of the period of probation was temporary. After a period of time, there would have been a removal of the prohibition.

3. The Goal

The goal of the probation was to confirm his creaturely holiness so that he would pass from having the ability to sin to no longer having the ability to sin.

This period of probation can be summarized in two points. First, if man had passed the test, the probationary period would have ended eventually. Secondly, once an act of commitment had been made and he had resisted Satan's temptations, man would have been removed from the period of probation to a position of permanent sonship by means of the partaking of the Tree of Life. This is what would have happened if Adam had not eaten of that tree.

II. THE TEMPTATION

The second category regarding the Fall of man is the temptation that brought about the Fall itself. This will be discussed in three units: the Scriptures, the nature of the temptation, and the reason for the penalty.

A. The Scriptures

The passage that details the temptation is Genesis 3:1-6: *Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made. And he*

said unto the woman, Yea, has God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God does know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

B. The Nature of the Temptation

Concerning the nature of the temptation, three things can be mentioned: the progression, the areas of temptation, and the creation of wrong desires.

1. The Progression

First, there was a progression in three stages. The first stage was an appeal to innocent appetites. Verse 1 states: *Yea, has God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden?* There was nothing wrong with eating; eating is an innocent appetite. In fact, God told them they could partake of any tree in the entire garden – except one!

The second stage in the progression was the implantation of doubt in God's Word, "Did God really say such a thing?" Suddenly, there was a shadow of doubt concerning God's Word.

The doubt concerning God's Word led to the third stage of the progression in which there was a denial of God's Word in verse 4: *And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die.* In Genesis 2:17, God said that if they partook of this tree they would die; but here in verse 4, there was a denial of what God had said, a denial of the Word of God.

Indeed, this is a typical progression that all people go through with any temptation. It begins as an appeal to an innocent appetite. There is a right way and a wrong way to satisfy an innocent appetite. Once one begins to think in wrong ways of satisfaction, he begins to doubt the Word of God, and eventually, that which one merely doubts leads to a clear cut denial. That was the progression of this temptation.

2. The Areas of Temptation

The second thing about the nature of the temptation is that it was in the three areas listed in I John 2:14-16: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Indeed, the temptation took place in all three of these particular areas in verse 6.

First, in the area of the lust of the flesh, *the woman saw that the tree was good for food.* If she had been hungry, there were a lot of trees in the

Garden of Eden and she could have gone to any one of them to satisfy her hunger. That tree was good for food, but so were the other trees. Suddenly, the lust of the flesh came into the picture and she felt she could only satisfy the lust of the flesh with this particular fruit, and no other.

Secondly, in the area of the lust of the eyes, the tree was *a delight to the eye*. Before the temptation, she may never have noticed that this tree was necessarily more beautiful than any other. In fact, it probably was not any more beautiful than the other trees, but suddenly, that which was prohibited became the most beautiful.

The third area was the pride of life, the tree was *to be desired to make one wise*. There were other ways of gaining wisdom, but she now wanted to be just like God. This is the desire that caused the fall of Satan. He expressed his desire in Isaiah 14:14: *I will make myself like the Most High*. Now Eve expressed the same desire; she wanted to be as God, *knowing good and evil*.

3. The Creation of Wrong Desires

The third thing about the nature of the temptation is that it created wrong desires. Here again three things can be mentioned. First, it created a desire to have what God had forbidden (vv. 1-3). God had forbidden this particular tree; now they desired it.

Secondly, it created a desire for them to be what God had not intended for them to be (vv. 4-5). God did not intend for them to be like Himself; He created them to be human, not divine.

Thirdly, this temptation created a desire to know what God did not reveal (v. 6). It was an attempt to gain hidden knowledge, and this became the first delving into the occult world, desiring unrevealed or hidden knowledge. Here, as always in the world of the occult, is the being of Satan himself.

C. The Reason for Such a Great Penalty

Why such a great penalty for such a simple sin of disobeying one command? Four points should be made. First, it was a slight command, but it was a test of the spirit of obedience. If they could not obey God in a slight command, how could they be trusted to obey a much greater command?

Secondly, the external command was not arbitrary or insignificant, but a concrete presentation to the human will of God's claim to His domain and absolute ownership. It was not an insignificant or arbitrary command. It was a test to see if the will of man would submit itself to God's lordship.

Thirdly, the sanction that was attached to the command shows that

man was not left in ignorance of its meaning or importance. Man did not fail because of ignorance. He knew exactly what the command was, and also what the consequences of violating this particular command would be. So the sanction attached to the command shows that man was not left in ignorance of its meaning or importance.

Fourthly, the act of disobedience was a revelation of a will alienated from God and corrupted; it was a will given to rebellion. Because the act of disobedience was a revelation of a will alienated from God and corrupted, a will given to rebellion, this is the reason that the punishment and the penalty were so great.

III. THE FALL

The third category concerns the Fall itself, and four things will be noted: the biblical record, self justification, the consequences, and the dispensational consequences.

A. The Biblical Record

The Fall of man is very much a crucial part of the biblical record. It is impossible to take away the Fall of man and have the Bible make any sense at all. It is very much an integral part of the biblical record. That is true after Genesis, in both the Old and New Testaments. Some examples include: Job 15:14: *What is man, that he should be clean? And he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?*

Job 20:4-5: *Know you not this of old time, Since man was placed upon earth, That the triumphing of the wicked is short, And the joy of the godless but for a moment?*

Job 31:33: *If like Adam I have covered my transgressions, By hiding mine iniquity in my bosom.*

Ecclesiastes 7:29: *Behold, this only have I found: that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.*

Romans 5:12-21: *Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that 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 until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come. But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many. And not as through one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment came of one unto condemnation, but the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification. For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ. So then as*

through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous. And the law came in besides, that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly: that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I Corinthians 15:21-22: *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*

II Corinthians 11:3: *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ.*

I Timothy 2:13-15: *For Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled has fallen into transgression: but she shall be saved through her childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety.*

From these examples, it is quite clear that even when one goes beyond the Genesis record, the Fall of man is very much a crucial part of the biblical record in both the Old and New Testaments. So much of what happens in the Scriptures is based upon the fact of the Fall. The ministry of Yeshua (Jesus) makes sense only in light of the Fall of man.

B. The Self Justification

The second thing about the Fall of man is the procedure that man used to justify his actions in Genesis 3:6: *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.*

Eve justified her eating in three ways. First, she saw the tree *was good for food* and said, "This is good food and there is no reason why I should not eat it." Secondly, it was *a delight to the eyes* and therefore had aesthetic value. So she said, "Why should we not enjoy the beauties of life?" Thirdly, the tree was *to be desired to make one wise*, then she said, "What is wrong with wanting more wisdom?" In these three ways, Eve justified her eating, and that act of eating was an act of disobedience. Next, *she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.*

C. The Immediate Consequences

The third thing about the Fall is that there were four immediate consequences. First, there was an immediate sense of guilt and shame in verse 7. They had been naked all along, but for the first time it became a problem to them.

Secondly, there was a desire and effort to hide from God in verse 8. They had not tried to hide from God before, when God, on a regular basis, would appear to them in some visible way in the cool of the day. Now, for the first time, when they heard the voice of God, suddenly there was a desire and an effort to hide from God.

The third immediate consequence was judgment, which came on four beings: on the serpent that allowed itself to be used by Satan, on Satan, on the man, and on the woman.

The fourth immediate consequence was expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

D. The Dispensational Consequences

The fourth thing about the Fall is that there are also certain dispensational consequences. First, the Fall meant a transition from the first dispensation, the Dispensation of Innocence, to the second dispensation, the Dispensation of Conscience.

The second dispensational consequence is that it marked the termination of the Edenic Covenant. At this point, the first of the eight covenants of the Bible was broken and terminated.

The third dispensational consequence was the inauguration of the Adamic Covenant, which is the second of the eight covenants of the Bible.

IV. THE RESULTS

The final category concerning the Fall of man is to deal with the results of the effects of man's relationships in six areas: to God, to his environment, to his body, to his nature, to his guilt, and to the penalty.

A. Man's Relationship to God

The first result was the effect on his relationship to God. It was at this point that the image of God in man was marred.

B. Man's Relationship to His Environment

The second result was the effect on his relationship to his environment, which changed in two ways. First, the animal kingdom developed a strain of animals that became carnivorous. Until the Fall of man, all animals had a vegetation diet. These animals were already in existence, but they then became carnivorous.

The second effect of his relationship to his environment was the cursing of the material world and nature. Because of this, labor developed a toilsome aspect. In place of light labor, there was heavy labor. In place producing easily, of the land would now produce harshly and man would have to battle thorns and thistles, droughts

and floods in verses 17-19.

NOTES

C. Man's Relationship to His Body

A third result of the Fall of man is the effect on his relationship to his body. First, he was now subject to physical sickness, weakness, and illness. These are part of human frailty. It is wrong to teach that every illness or sickness is the work of a demon. Some are, but not all. Often sickness, illness, and weakness are purely from human frailty as a result of the Fall.

Secondly, man was now subject to physical death; he would now die physically at some point.

D. Man's Relationship to His Nature

The fourth result was the effect on his relationship to his nature, which was spiritual death. Man was now spiritually dead and no longer in a vital, living, spiritual relationship or fellowship with God.

There are two aspects of spiritual death: total depravity and total inability. The first aspect, total depravity, can be defined both in terms of what it is not and what it is. Negatively, total depravity does not mean that man is as bad as he could be; he could be even worse. Total depravity does not mean that man is destitute of conscience or void of all good qualities. It does not mean that man engages in every sin, nor does it mean that he can do no good. Positively, total depravity means that man is capable of every sin. He is devoid of love and obedience to God as demanded by the law of God. While man is not guilty of every sin, the point of total depravity is that sin extends to every part of man. Total depravity means that man is enslaved to sin, and that man is dead in his trespasses and sin. Sin has touched every part of his being (Jn. 5:42; 8:34; Rom. 7:23; Eph. 2:1; 4:18).

The second aspect of spiritual death is total inability. This means that man no longer has the power of contrary choice that he had before the Fall. In his state of innocence, he was holy and perfect; he could choose to obey or disobey. But as a result of total depravity there was now also total inability. Man no longer has the power of contrary choice; he is still able to choose, but only in accordance with his nature, which is enslaved to sin. He is dead in trespasses and sin (Eph. 2:1). So total inability means that the sinner cannot, by a single act or volition, bring his character and life into complete conformity to God's law. He cannot change his fundamental preference for sin in favor of the love of God. Man, in his natural, fallen state, is unable to respond to God, nor can he do any act that will commend him to God (Jn. 6:44; Rom. 7:18; 8:7; I Cor. 2:14).

E. Man's Relationship to His Guilt

The fifth result of the Fall of man is the effect on his relationship to his guilt. This means that man deserves to be punished. Guilt means

that there is the obligation to render satisfaction to God's justice, as determined by God's law. The very fact that man is declared to be guilty carries with it the obligation to render satisfaction to God's justice for the self determined violation of God's law.

When a man is declared to be guilty of a crime, that very declaration of guilt means he deserves to be punished. Therefore, he has the obligation to satisfy the demands of the broken law. So for a specific crime, satisfying the demands of the law could mean spending a certain number of years in prison or even execution. Guilt is the objective result of sin (Rom. 1:18; 3:19; Eph. 2:3).

F. Man's Relationship to the Penalty

The sixth result of the Fall is the effect on his relationship to the penalty. The penalty means the pain or the loss that is directly or indirectly inflicted by the lawgiver in vindication of his justice. This is the natural outworking of the declaration of guilt. For sin, the content of the penalty is death (Rom. 6:23). The penalty involved physical death, spiritual death, and eternal or the second death. The only way that one can escape the penalties of physical death, spiritual death, and eternal death is to accept someone else's payment of the price. Yeshua, on the cross, took upon Himself the penalty of the Law. If we accept Jesus, then He has suffered the penalty in our stead and we will not have to. But, if we reject the Messiah, then we will have to suffer this penalty.✠

NOTES

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