



Lesson 22

SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES (Part 1)

Reading Genesis 2 and 3

The world is in a mess! Wars, famine, disease, death, crime, violence...

God created a beautiful world. Man has spoilt it. Man's sinful nature, with his greed, selfishness, jealousy and disobedience has ruined society and this earth.

Where did it all start going wrong?

In the beginning God created the first man, Adam. He was formed from the dust of the ground and we read that:

"The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7).

God provided a beautiful garden for Adam to live in and then provided his wife, Eve. At this point, Adam and Eve had not shown whether they would obey God or not. They had not been tried. God then gave them a simple command:

"Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 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" (Genesis 2:16-17).

Adam and Eve had a choice

Either they could obey God or they could disobey Him and eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree. They had free will. God had not made 'puppets' that had no choice as to whether they obeyed or not. God wanted men and women who would choose His way because they loved and respected Him.

The serpent came along and lied to Adam and Eve. The serpent said they would not die if they ate the forbidden fruit, and that instead they would become like gods, knowing good and evil. Adam and Eve wanted to be more like the angels. They chose to eat of the fruit. They sinned and they disobeyed God.

The Punishment

God had said they would die if they disobeyed. So Adam and Eve were condemned to death and driven out of the Garden of Eden.

Although they lived a long time after this, they became dying creatures - and just like you and me, they would become tired and sick, grow old, and finally die.

What is death?

Death was a punishment for sin. God had said:

"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:19).

So Adam's body decayed when he died and returned to the dust from which it was made.

Remember, God made Adam from the dust of the earth and then God breathed the breath of life into him before he became a 'living soul'.

DUST plus BREATH = A LIVING SOUL

So when Adam died,

LIVING SOUL minus BREATH = DEAD SOUL

that is, the LIVING SOUL without BREATH became DUST

Part of Adam did not go on living in heaven. Of course not! His death was God's punishment for sin and death means the end of all the life processes.

Adam's death was no different from ours. We all sin, so we all die.

“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” (Romans 5:12).

(This does not mean that all men are murderers or adulterers or liars. Unkind and unclean thoughts, pride, selfishness, bad temper - these everyday weaknesses are just as much sin in the sight of God.)

None of us will go to heaven when we die. There is no such thing as an 'immortal soul'. The Bible does not mention immortal souls. There is nothing that carries on living after a person dies. There is no 'immortal' or 'divine spark' in man.

Soul means life; person; living creature

Below is a list of some of the passages in the Bible where this word 'soul' is used. (The passages are taken from the Authorised or King James Version. Other translations may vary but the meaning is still the same.) Look them up for yourself and see if you agree with the comments.

REFERENCE	COMMENTS
Genesis 46:15	Jacob's (living) children are called 'souls' in this verse.
Genesis 46:26	"All the souls" clearly means "all the people".
Leviticus 5:2,17	Souls can sin (in other words people can sin).
Leviticus 17:12	No soul was to eat blood - no person was to eat blood.
Joshua 10:28,30 32,35,37	All the souls (people) were utterly destroyed. (Note 'souls' can be destroyed!)
Joshua 11:11	They killed all the souls so there was none left that breathed.
Ezekiel 18:4,20	"The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Souls die! (This simply means that if we sin, we die.)
Acts 27:37	There were 276 souls in the ship. 'Soul' here clearly means 'people'

There are many more examples we could give to show that the word 'soul' means person or being. (In fact the word translated 'soul' is also used of animals; see Genesis 1:21, 24; 2:19; 9:10. In these cases it is translated 'creature'.)

This all proves what Ecclesiastes 3:19-20 says:

"For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."

There is no difference in death between a man and an animal. An animal does not have a part which goes to heaven when it dies any more than a man does. Both have lifeless bodies when they stop breathing.

'SOUL' means LIFE, PERSON, CREATURE or BEING

Look at these passages which show us what happens when we die.

(Look them up so you can read them in full.)

Psalm 146:4	"Man's breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish."
Ecclesiastes 9:5	"... the dead know not anything..."
Psalm 6:5	In death there is no remembrance of thee: in the" grave who shall give thee thanks?"
Psalm 39:13	"O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more."
Psalm 115:17	"The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence."

These passages all show that dead people cannot think.

When King Hezekiah was told that he was going to die he was sad. He wanted to stay alive because he knew that there was nothing in death. He said:

"For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth" (Isaiah 38.18).

Instead, he said,

"The living, the living he shall praise thee" (Isaiah 38:19)

If he was dead he could not praise God.

What about King David? We are told that he did not go to heaven (Acts 2:34) - even though he is called a man after God's own heart.

All men are condemned to death because of sin. They do not live on in another form after death.

If we do not understand this we will never appreciate the way in which the Lord Jesus suffered and died to set us free. If we had immortal souls there would have been no need for Jesus to die for us.

But the Bible tells us we have no hope of life apart from Christ.

Summary

1. God made Adam out of the dust of the ground.
2. He caused him to live, by breathing into his nostrils the breath of life.
3. God gave Adam a commandment. He told him that if he disobeyed this commandment, his punishment would be death.
4. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and broke His commandment. They became dying creatures.
5. All men are descended from Adam, and inherit his sinful nature. All men sin, and die.
6. The word 'soul' means life or being, and usually refers to a person.
7. The phrase 'immortal soul' is not found in the Bible.
8. Death is a punishment for sin.
9. Death is a state of unconsciousness. There is no part of us which goes on living when we die

A chapter to read

Ecclesiastes 9

A verse to learn

Psalm 146:4

"His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."