

Sabbath School Lesson #1 – What Happened? – 27 March-2 April 2021

Christ is the only begotten Son of God. He brought all things into existence, and He preserves them in existence. His word caused them to exist, and His word upholds them. In all these things He acts, not independently, but conjointly with the Father. Said He: "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30). Their unity in creation is shown in the words, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26).

(1) In what condition was the whole creation when it came from the hand of God? "And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day" (Genesis 1:31). (2) Did this include man also? "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright" (Ecclesiastes 7:29). (3) Did man retain his uprightness? "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). (4) What prohibition had God laid upon the pair in the garden of Eden? "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 2:17). (5) Who first partook of this forbidden fruit? "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Genesis 3:6). (6) Was Adam deceived as to the consequences of the act? "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Timothy 2:14). (7) How was Eve deceived? "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3). (8) Who was the serpent? "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:2). (9) How did he begin his work? "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1).

(10) When Eve repeated the prohibition, what did the serpent reply? "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die" (verse 4). (11) What did he say that eating from the tree would do for them? "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (verse 5). (12) In so saying, what imputation did he cast upon God? Satan would first induce Eve to believe that God was unjust in His requirements. This is what was involved in his question "hath God said..." (verse 1), in other words: 'Can it be possible that God would do so unjust a thing as to forbid you to eat of all the trees of the garden? I have heard so, but it is so monstrous, so tyrannical a requirement, that I can scarcely believe it.' Thus with feigned words, under the cover of pretended interest in the good name of God, he sowed the seeds of distrust.

(13) In telling them that by eating the forbidden fruit they should be like God, what was Satan instilling into their minds? – *Pride*. (14) What was the cause of Satan's fall? "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isaiah 14:12-14). (15) What always follows pride? "When pride cometh, then cometh shame; but with the lowly is wisdom" "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 11:2; 16:18). (16) What was it that brought the heathen nations into their deplorable condition? "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things" (Romans 1:22-23). (17) What was the result of Adam's transgression? "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:17-19).

(18) Was he allowed to remain in the garden? "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (verses 23-24). (19) How extensive were the consequences of his fall? "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). (20) Did death pass upon all men regardless of their character, just because Adam sinned? "So death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12).

The mean cunning of the serpent may be seen in the way that Satan approached Eve. From the fact that while they were talking Eve took of the forbidden fruit, and ate, indicates that when the conversation began they were near the tree. Said the serpent, "Is it so, that God hath said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" 'Is it possible that God would make so arbitrary and unjust a command?' The object of this speech can be seen at once. It was threefold, namely, to cause her to doubt the goodness of God; to raise himself in her estimation to the same extent that he lowered God; and to make her feel that she was being deprived of her "rights." Pride and discontent were aroused, which prepared the way for open rebellion. "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Here was a square issue between Satan and God, and Eve had been worked into such a condition of doubt and discontent that she readily sided with Satan. This was the first sermon on the natural immortality of the soul of man. Notice that it was this teaching that caused the fall; consequently the teaching that man is by nature immortal, is responsible for all the evil that has ever come to mankind. "For God doth know," etc. Here again Satan charged God with deliberately withholding a good thing from Adam and Eve, so that He might keep them in a position inferior to that which their natural talents entitled them to. What was that position? "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof ye shall be like God." This is just what Satan said, and a literal translation of the Hebrews. Said Satan, 'You might as well be like God; He knows this, and has placed this prohibition upon you, so that He may keep you down. Now will you consent to be thus imposed upon? Do not do it; assert your rights and be free.' Who on earth is unfamiliar with this kind of talk?

We see that Satan caused Eve to fall, by instilling into her mind the same ideas that caused his fall (Isaiah 14:12-14). We see, also, whence Spiritualism comes, which claims that what the Bible calls evil is a necessity, that men cannot die, no matter what they do, and that each individual is the judge of his own acts, and is therefore equal to God. But read in Isaiah 5:20-24 the fate of those who call evil good. Beware of the flatterer. When a man begins to sympathise with you, to tell you how you are being "kept down" and abused, and what high positions you might occupy if it were not for the grasping selfishness of some in authority, then make up your mind at once that Satan is talking to you through him. Do not listen to him. Says Paul: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3). There is a vast difference between honest praise and flattery. It is right and just to encourage people by letting them know that their good work is appreciated. But flattery is always lying. It is Satanic in its origin. Look up and read carefully what the Bible has to say of the flatterer. "A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet" (Proverbs 29:5). See also Job 32:21-22; Psalm 12:3; Proverbs 20:19; 26:28. Solomon's words in Proverbs 20:19 indicate that a tale-bearer is likely to be a flatterer. Satan's question to Eve, "Is it so that God hath said," carries the air of virtuous indignation. The idea designed to be conveyed was, 'I would never do such a thing; just trust me, and you shall have liberty.' Peter aptly describes men who work in Satanic manner: "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage" (2 Peter 2:18-19). The man who comes with some false story about somebody else, trying to cast reflections upon him, does so only to conceal his own faults. The gist of his talk is: I would not do such things. "Be not thou like unto them" (Matthew 6:8).