

## LESSON V

# Man and Sin

## CHAPTER I

### THE NATURE OF MAN

The study of the nature of man is a fascinating subject. The Bible declares that God created man, in a distinct act. Further, Genesis 1:27 says that man was created in the image of God. In the light of the above statements from the Bible, we cannot limit our study of the nature of man to scientific anthropology. To know man's real nature we need, also, to go to God's Word. Thus we look at man from the viewpoint of Biblical anthropology. It is from this latter viewpoint that we will look into the nature of man.

**The Constitution of Man:** What is man made of? It is certain that Man is body. Man's body is a good thing, created by God as good. (Genesis 1:27-31). We should not despise man's body.

But we cannot limit man to his body alone. Man is also spirit and soul. Sometimes a distinction is made between spirit and soul. The Bible uses these words interchangeably, but also in separate meaning forms.

Those who say man is body, soul and spirit, distinguish between soul and spirit. I Thess. 5:23 speaks of man this way. But there are other passages which speak of man's heart, soul and mind, for example (Matt. 22:37). Thus it is really hard to find an actual distinction. The word soul refers, in the Bible, to a whole person, such as Exodus 1:5 when people are called souls. At other times it refers to the life of a person, such as in Matt. 6:25. Here it says, "Take no thought for your life..." The word 'life' here, is, in the Greek, the same for soul. And of course, soul also refers to the spirit of man – the inner being of man.

The spirit of man, in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament, nearly always refers to that which is non-material in man. Though man's spirit is differentiated from the Spirit of God (God is a Spirit), yet there is a kinship. Thus the spiritual side of man is closer to God than the body of man.

The spirit or soul of man can be defined as that metaphysical entity added to the body. It is invisible. We cannot say that the spirit of man is part of God. Not only will that make all men everywhere to make up, together, a sizable part of God, but it also contradicts the Biblical fact that man's spirit was created. In Genesis chapter 3, we see how Eve was tempted by Satan. One allurements Satan used was, that if she ate of the fruit, she would be like God. This shows that Eve, and Adam, as they were created were not part of God.

Let us not forget, however, that man is a unity of body and spirit. They cannot be separated. Man is incomplete without both. They are also compatible and we cannot talk of a man's body only, or a man's soul only, as the Real Man.

There is another way of looking at the constitution of man. We see man's body as a physical organism similar to the higher species of mammals. Man's mind is that part of man that is able to understand abstract thought and to rationalize. We can refer to man's spirit as the capacity of man which enables him to have fellowship with God, who is a Spirit. And man's soul is that which survives death and meets God at the judgment.

But to constitute man in this manner will lead to overlapping in some of man's capacities. And it really is not too important whether we take a trichotomic view (man as threefold: body, soul, and spirit); or a dichotomic view (man as twofold: body and spirit, with the soul and spirit being equated). What really matters is to realize that man has a physical side and a spiritual side. This is in accordance with the dichotomic view, but its significance is in the fact that we cannot look at man as body only, or spirit only. Salvation, therefore, is for the whole man. The 'inner man' (spiritual) is renewed through a man's faith in Christ and his obedience to Him. The body is renewed at the Second Coming of Christ, as Paul says in I Corinthians chapter 15.

Man, therefore, is entirely different from animals, in that he possesses a spirit that survives death. He is a person, possessing a "personality" due to his spirit. Let us not pay undue attention either to the body alone, or the spiritual side of man alone, but rather be aware of the complete or the entire man.

**The image of God.** The Bible says that man was made in God's image (Gen. 1:27). But what is the image of God? It is an inherent nature wherein a quality characteristic to man equips him for a peculiar relationship with God. This relationship between God and man reflects God's image in man.

The image of God is in the spirit of man that makes him a person. Originally man was created with a mind capable of thinking God's thoughts after Him; with a moral nature that makes him responsible for good or for evil. He had a capacity for religion and worship, and the ability to praise God.

Man not only possessed the capacity for these things, but actually possessed them. Man was created with knowledge, with ethical standards, with righteousness. Thus we can say that man was created holy and righteous. See Colossians 3:9-10 which talks about renewing ourselves, back to the image wherein we were created. It was a holy and righteous image.

So, by being created in the image of God, God gave man a spirit or inner self that will endure forever; a nature that is truly moral in character; and a mind and reason that could comprehend the knowledge of God. These things set man apart from the animal. Whereas man can claim rationality, the brute cannot. Neither can the animal claim a moral nature or the promise of immortality. These things were given to man as he was created in God's image.

**The Fall of Man.** When man was created in the image of God, he had a certain relationship with God and with the rest of the world. This was the purpose for God's creation of man. In relationship with God, Psalms 5:4-6 tells us that man was made a little lower than God and the angels, but he was given honor and glory. In relationship to the world, man was created to have dominion over it, develop it, subdue it and control it. He was to have dominion over the rest of creation. See Genesis 1:26. God was in total control, then came man, and finally the created world. This was the true status of man as he was created.

But then something happened. Man fell. Instead of following God's command, the woman gave in to the temptation of Satan. Satan persuaded Eve that, what God said was not true. We read in Genesis, chapter 3, that God had prohibited them to eat of a particular tree. But Satan gave his own interpretation to this prohibition. Adam and Eve could, and should, have obeyed God out of love. But Satan tried to make Eve see a reason into the prohibition to eat. And Satan's reason was false. He said God wanted to keep man down; to prevent man becoming like God. He also said the tree had strange powers to discern good and evil.

Eve succumbed to the temptation of Satan, who came in the form of a serpent. She listened to Satan and forgot God. Confusion set in. And she believed that God was keeping a good thing from her, by prohibiting her to eat of that tree. So she disobeyed God. She took of the fruit and she ate. And Adam eventually followed Eve's example. They sinned!

Consequently there were immediate reactions. Man gained a guilty self-consciousness. He became ashamed. He tried to hide from God. Their minds were contaminated with sin.

What happened to the image of God after the Fall? The form of God's image did not change, but the content of God's image did change. That is, man is still in contrast to the animals, though the image of God is marred. Prior to man's sin, man had the capacity for knowledge. But now that intellectual capacity is blurred with ignorance. His righteousness changed to a kinship with wickedness. And man became alienated from God. Thus he suffered a spiritual death. And, also, physical death marred his immortality. Though man lives forever, in eternity, wicked man will live alienated from God for eternity.

Further, the creation order was reversed. Man became very dependent on creation, for by toil and labor alone would creation sustain him. And he also began to worship creation. Woman was to lose, partially, a full partnership with man. And in childbirth there would be suffering. Thereby, we see that both man and woman received punishment in relationship to their individual roles.

The greatest loss was in man's relationship with God. The original fellowship was destroyed. A barrier between God and man arose. A separation ensued. And it needed a mediator between God and man to set that relationship right again. And Christ came to put man back into that right relationship with God.

God sent man away from the Garden of Eden where he was in close communion with God. He kept him away from the tree of life. So we see man, who was created good, and a good creature, fell from his goodness. And only Christ could put man back on his original level.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE NATURE OF SIN

Many religions do not have a definite concept of sin. Some use the term meaning some relative evil. Yet others may use the term to signify something bad, as opposed to good. Now the Bible does not give us a complete, philosophic dissertation on sin. But, however, the Bible does clearly show us what sin is; how it affects man; and the results due to sinning.

**What Is Sin?** Sin, as defined simply in I John 3:4, is transgression of the law. God's Law, that is. Those who deny the existence of sin often call sin an illusion, or a defect, or a symptom of maturity, etc. But mankind can, by honestly looking at his race, see the consequences of sin; know it in his conscience; and, of course, know it through the Scriptures.

A more detailed definition of sin explains sin "as the free act of an intelligent, moral and responsible being asserting himself against the will of His Maker, the Supreme Ruler of the Universe." (Thomas Whitelaw: The Biblical Conception of Sin). We need to understand, though, that sin as a free act, is not limited to deeds. Sin can also consist of thoughts and attitudes. That which is not in accordance with God's will and nature is sin. For deliberate contradiction to the righteous nature of God can only show, in us, a lack of perfect love for God.

Sin did not begin with God. Sin began in the angelic world. The angels are spiritual beings, though created. The essential nature of God is holy, and His holiness cannot contain sin. II Peter 2:4 says the angels sinned and I John 3:8 tells of how the devil sins from the beginning. Jude 6 implies that the angels did not keep their properly appointed place but abandoned it, and Paul warning Timothy of the sin of pride indicates that this was the cause of the fall of Satan (I Timothy 3:6).

Of course, sin in the human race began with Adam, through a voluntary act. He and Eve were tempted, and they fell. They sinned by believing the tempter and breaking God's command. And sin thus began in the human race.

**The Effects of Adam's Sin.** As a result of Adam's sin man has to encounter a physical and spiritual effect.

Physically, death entered the world through one man, because he sinned. Man became mortal because of sin, losing his immortality. In an incomprehensible way, death dominates man because of Adam's sin. A man when he is born, begins his life with the shadow of death always over him. Man is a "dying creature".

But spiritually too man was effected by Adam's sin. Spiritual death entered the world. We are dead, Paul says, in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1 & 5). Hence the need to be spiritually

re-born and re-created. And the person “dead” in his sin can only expect eternal “death” in hell. That is, eternal alienation from God, in hell.

But are guilty because of Adam’s sin? The Bible says that each individual is responsible for his sin. Innocent people do not suffer because of Adam’s sin.

But we can see how Adam’s sin brought sinfulness into the world. And man’s nature was affected. Man is not born with original sin. But in some ways we can say, that there is a spiritual sickness, universally. Thus every man sins, and the Bible says all have sinned. Thus, though man does not inherit sin from Adam, and is not guilty because of Adam’s sin, yet he is corrupt and can only be acceptable to God through the blood of Christ. Man cannot, because of his sinful nature, be a perfect being by himself. He needs Christ’s salvation. And by exercise of his free will he can be led to faith and obedience in Christ, and thereby gain salvation.

**The Effects of Personal Sin.** Man becomes guilty because of personal sin. When man sins he breaks God’s Law. Thus he is on the wrong side of the law, or not in the right relationship with God. As a law-breaker he is guilty.

As a result of this guilt there is a penalty or punishment. There is the temporal punishment as in Jeremiah 31:30, which says man shall die because of his iniquity. And then there is the eternal penalty and judgment when we stand before God (Romans 14:12). But thanks to God, our guilt can be removed by the blood of Christ and we can stand “not guilty” at the judgment.

But sin also makes us sick or corrupt. Our nature changes. We are sinners, therefore, not only because of ‘breaking the law’, but also in respect of who we are. That is, sin is not just what we do, but what we are. Thus Paul talks about our ‘old man’ on sin. (Eph. 4:22; Rom. 6:6)

But let us not think that we are “totally depraved” and unable to go to Christ. We may be sick but still we are able to save ourselves. We are able to go to the One who saves and gain salvation through Him.

Let us be aware of personal sin. Paul was, so he called himself “the chief of sinners”. When we are aware of sin let us realize that we need Christ. We cannot be good enough to save ourselves. But by God’s grace we can gain Heaven even though we have sinned. So let us become sinners saved by grace. And though the penalty for sin is climaxed in eternal death in hell, yet as Christians we can be proclaimed re-born, re-created and resurrected, and go to be with God in Heaven, escaping the penalty of Hell. Our old man can become new, putting us once again into the right relationship with God.

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Name:.....

Student No.....

Grade.....

## QUESTIONS ON LESSON V

### MAN AND SIN

**Note:** Answers to the questions below are found in the lesson material. Read the lesson carefully before answering. Try to answer in your own words, as much as possible. Wherever necessary, just fill in the blanks, or choose the correct word. Print out this page if you like. If you wish to send in the answers or to write further comments, or ask any questions yourself, do so on a separate sheet of paper and put your name and student number in a prominent place.

## CHAPTER I

### NATURE OF MAN

1. Man is made up of body and spirit. Do you agree? If so, tell me why. If you disagree, then also give your reason.

2. Does man's spirit die? If you say no, then what happens to man's spirit when a person dies?

3. In what way were we created in God's image?

4. What was the greatest loss of the Fall of man?



