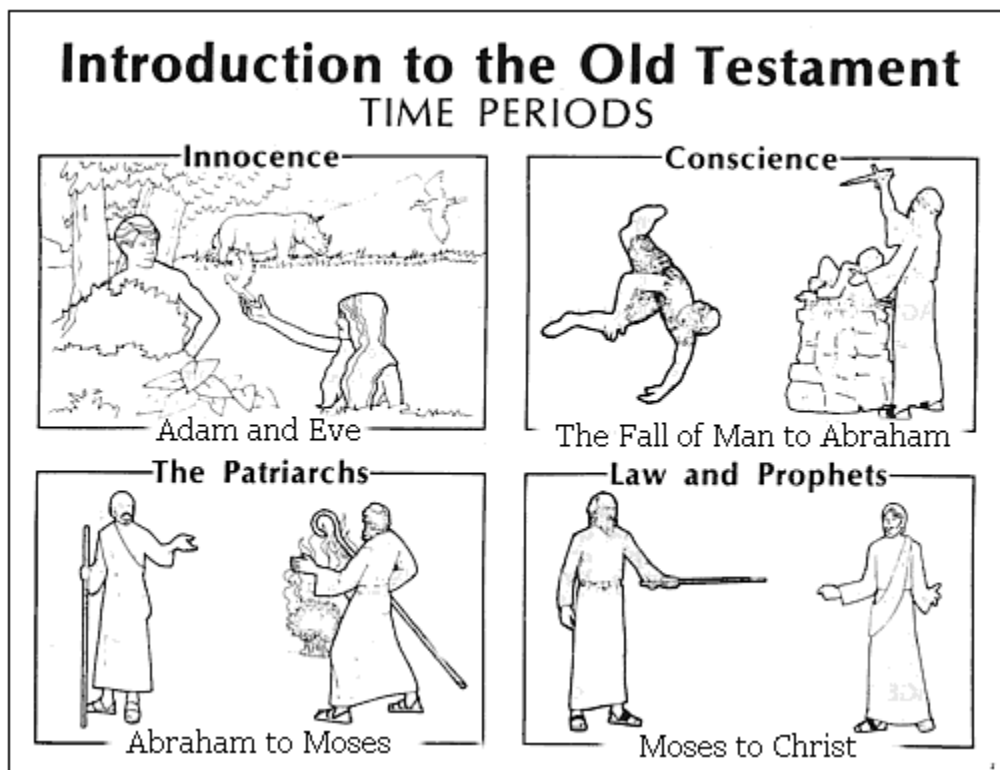


Lesson 1

Introduction to the Old Testament TIME PERIODS



I. Introduction to the Old Testament (Time Periods)

Our first lesson covers the events from the Creation to the first judgment. This lesson introduces us to Old Testament time periods where God dealt with mankind in a particular way. The Old Testament covers many events over a span of thousands of years. The use of time periods is simply a way to better understand some of the major events.

Four of these time periods are: **(1) Innocence, (2) Conscience, (3) The Patriarchs, and (4) Law and Prophets.**

Let us look at each of these first four.

1. Innocence

Innocence extends from the creation of mankind to his sin in the Garden of Eden. The length of this time is unknown.

2. Conscience

Conscience spans the time from the Fall of Man (the original sin) to Abraham.

3. The Time of the Patriarchs

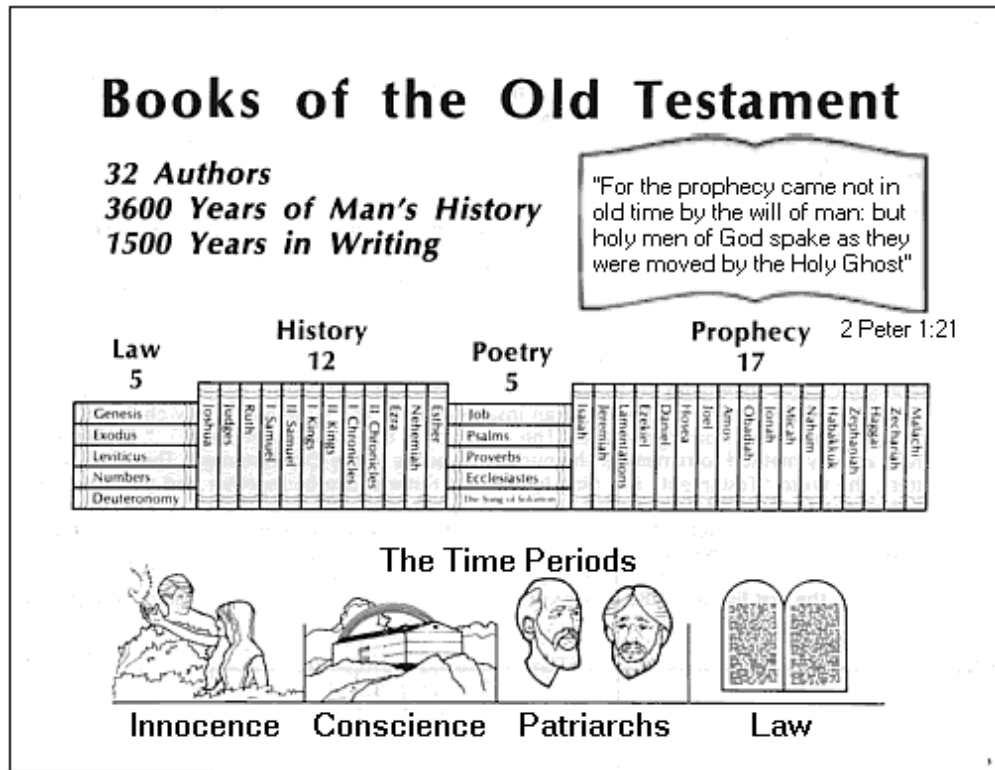
The time of the Patriarchs reaches from Abraham to Moses.

4. The Law and the Prophets

The Law and Prophets time period extends from Moses to Jesus Christ.

Lesson 1

Books of the Old Testament



1. The Bible is Inspired of God

II Peter 1:21 says, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Clearly, the Old Testament was inspired of God. According to II Timothy 3:16, all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

In the Greek language, the language in which the New Testament was written, the word *inspired* means "God-breathed." Notice that Scripture was not written by the will of mankind. In other words, mankind did not decide to write about God. Thus, the Bible is not mankind's book about God, but God's book to mankind. Another key word in II Peter 1:21 is *moved*. In the original language, it means "to be carried along," much like a ship is carried over the surface of the sea as the wind blows its sails.

2. The Bible is Revered as The Word of God

We should approach our study of the Bible with great reverence, because it is the Word of God and not the word of mankind. Therefore, each word is of absolute necessity.

God warned Moses, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2). A similar command is found in Proverbs 30:6: "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Just before the close of the Bible, God inspired John to add these words to the Book of Revelation: "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:19).

3. God's Word is to be Preserved

God did not just give His Word to mankind, but He promised to preserve it forever so that all we would have access to His revelation. "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever" (Psalm 12:6-7). On the same subject of the divine preservation of God's Word, Jesus said, "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail" (Luke 16:17). A tittle is a very small mark in the Hebrew language, the language in which the Old Testament was written.

The Bible is such a powerful book, and a study of it can change the whole perspective of a person's life. In the story of *Mutiny on the Bounty*, one incident is worth telling again. The mutineers sank their ship and landed with their native woman on the lonely island of Pitcairn. There were nine white sailors, six natives, ten women, and a girl of fifteen. One of the sailors knew how to distill alcohol, and the island became filled with drunkenness and vice.

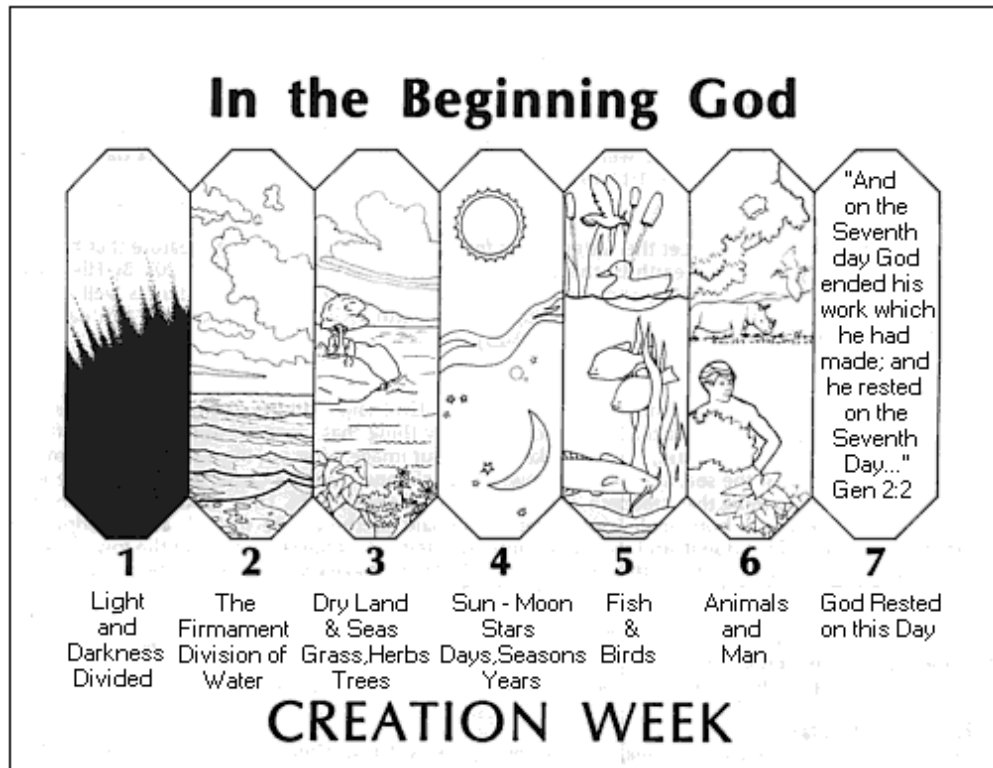
After a time, only one of the sailors was left living, surrounded by native women and their children. The sailor found a Bible in one of the chests taken from the *Bounty* and began teaching it to the survivors. The result was that his own life was changed, and finally the lives of those on the whole island.

In 1808, the United States ship *Topaz* visited the island and found a thriving, prosperous community, without whiskey, without crime, and without an insane asylum. The Bible had totally changed the lives of those in the colony! So it has been from age to age! "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Psalm 119:130). There is an easy method to remember the number of books in the Old Testament. The word "Old" has three letters; the word "Testament" has nine letters. Put three and nine together and you have 39—the number of books in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament was penned by thirty-two men, as the Holy Ghost moved upon them. It spans a period of some 3,600 years of mankind's history, and required about 1,500-1,600 years to complete. Its thirty-nine books can be divided into four sections: Law (five-books); History (twelve books); Poetry (five books); and Prophecy (seventeen books, the first five of which are called *major prophets*, and the last twelve are usually called *minor prophets*).

Lesson 1

Creation Week



III. CREATION WEEK

The first verse of the Bible says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). The Creation account reveals that God made all things in six days. On the seventh day, He rested. Let us examine each day.

A. The First Day

On the first day, God said, "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3). Then, God divided the light from the darkness. He called the light *Day*, and the darkness *Night* (Genesis 1:3-5).

At this point, the earth was still "without form, and void." (Genesis 1:2.) There existed a mass of waters.

B. The Second Day

On the second day, God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters" (Genesis 1:6). God called the firmament *Heaven*; today we call it the sky. This firmament divided the waters into those which were under it, and those which were above it (Genesis 1:6-8).

C. The Third Day

On the third day, God said, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear" (Genesis 1:9). He called the dry land *Earth*, and the gathered waters, the Seas.

On the same day, God also said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth" (Genesis 1:11). So the third day saw the appearance of dry land, the gathering of the waters into specific areas, and the creation of grass, herbs and trees on the land (Genesis 1:9-13).

D. The Fourth Day

On the fourth day God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth" (Genesis 1:14, 15). On this, the fourth day, God made the sun, moon, and stars. These were to divide the light from darkness, and to mark days, seasons, and years with their signs (Genesis 1:14-19).

E. The Fifth Day

On the fifth day, God said, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven" (Genesis 1:20). By His spoken Word, God created the great whales, and every living creature that moves in the water, as well as every winged fowl. God also said, "Be fruitful, and multiply in the earth" (Genesis 1:22). On the fifth day, then, God created the fish and the birds (Genesis 1:20-23).

F. The Sixth Day

The sixth day saw the creation of animals and mankind. God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind" (Genesis 1:24). Then, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26). Thus, God created man in His own image, and He made both male and female. God said to them, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon

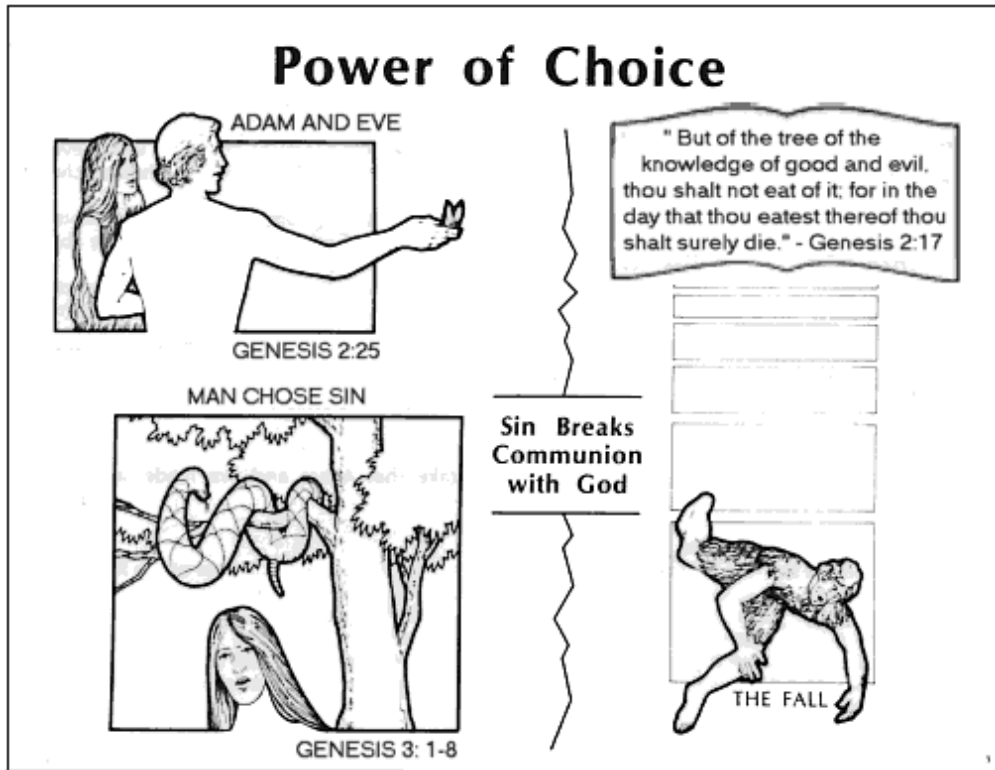
the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat" (Genesis 1:28-30). Man, then, is the only creation of God commanded to have dominion over all creatures, and to subdue the earth. Man is also the creation to be made in the image of God (Genesis 1:24-31).

G. The Seventh Day

On the last day of creation week. God rested (Genesis 2:1-3). Creation was complete, and God's relationship with mankind was just beginning.

Lesson 1

Power of Choice



IV. Adam and Eve—Innocence

The second chapter of Genesis restates the creation of man and woman, and gives more specific details. Also, this chapter reveals that God planted a garden eastward in Eden; this is where He placed the man, Adam. The garden was a beautiful place, growing every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food. A river went out of Eden to water the garden. Into this paradise God put Adam, with instructions for him to dress and keep the garden.

A. The Forbidden Tree

However, the Lord had other commandments for Adam, as well. He was not left to his own will; one thing was forbidden him. God said, "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). Another unusual tree found in the garden was the Tree of Life (Genesis 2:9). It was permissible for man to eat of that tree, but he was not to eat of the tree which would give him the knowledge of the difference between good and evil. He was in a state of innocence; eating of the tree would awaken his conscience.

B. Eve Given to Adam

The Lord had created Adam before Eve, and He noted that it was not good for man to be alone. God said, "I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). The words "help meet" are translated from one Hebrew word which means aid. The Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and He took one of Adam's ribs, from which He made a woman. God brought the woman to Adam, and he said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Genesis 2:23). In their innocence, both Adam and Eve were unashamed, though naked.

C. Man Given Free Will

Some have wondered why God placed the forbidden tree in the garden. Would not it have been better if God had never given Adam and Eve the opportunity to do wrong?

This question overlooks God's purpose in creating man. God did not create a puppet, or a robot. He created a being with the power of choice, or with a free will. God's promises are to be whosoever will (Revelation 22:17). Would it be possible for God to have joyful fellowship with a being who had no choice in the matter, who—in essence—was forced into that relationship?

One of the major differences between mankind and the animal kingdom is this power of choice; the opportunity consciously to choose to do good or evil. From the first, God has set before man the ability to choose to do right, and live or choose to do wrong, and die.

Two brothers were born into a family long ago. John Calvin was studious, thoughtful and respectful. At the early age of twenty-seven, he wrote one of the world's greatest books. The *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. When he died in Geneva in 1564, he left the world great principles of democracy and religious freedom. The other brother, Charles, led a life in the gutters of immorality. How do you explain the difference between the two? Not in heredity or in environment. Not in education for they grew up in the same home with the same influences and opportunities. The difference is to be explained in choice.

D. The Fall of Man

Chapter three of Genesis outlines the terrible mistake that Adam and Eve made, and its tragic consequences.

1. Eve Visits the Forbidden Tree

Evidently, one of the first mistakes that Eve made was to visit the site of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Since she knew that it was a forbidden tree, she should have avoided it altogether, she should have stayed away from it. Romans 13:14 commands, "Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." A similar admonition is

found in Ephesians 4:27: "Neither give place to the devil." Many hurtful temptations could be avoided if people stayed away from sinful environments and compromising situations. Nevertheless, Eve—as have multitudes since then—made the fatal error of knowingly and willingly making provision for temptation.

2. Satan Paid a Visit Also

Satan, who is very subtle, was waiting for the right opportunity to inject his deceitful influence into the tranquil setting of the Garden of Eden. He knew that he had only one possible course of action, and that involved the forbidden tree. So he made use of the most subtle of any beast God had made, the serpent. It is very essential that you notice the first words that Satan said to Eve: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1). Satan's first method of attack is always to question God's Word. In a very sly and crafty way, without actually denying God's Word, he tempts mankind to question the Word of God.

3. Satan's Wrong Interpretation

Next, observe the difference in God's perspective and the devil's viewpoint. This can be seen by comparing word for word what each said.

God said: "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. . ." (Genesis 2:16, 17).

Satan said God said: "Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden" (Genesis 3:1).

This may seem to be just a matter of semantics, or a play on words. But when talking about the Word of God, every single word is crucial, the phrasing is critical, and the perspective is important. This cannot be overemphasized!

Now compare these statements again, notice that God was speaking from a positive viewpoint; He told Adam that he could freely eat of every tree in the garden, except one. The serpent's viewpoint was negative; he focused on the fact that they could not eat of every tree. By so doing, Satan was attempting to cause Eve to feel deprived, rather than blessed! He wanted her to think about that little bit she could not have, rather than all that she could have! Time and time again Satan uses this technique.

Notice that this time God did not say what Satan claimed that He said. You must always watch for this. Satan will quote something that sounds so much like the Word of God, and is so close to what God actually said, that he will fool those who do not know the Word themselves.

4. Eve's Lack of Knowledge of God's Word

The next tragic step in this scenario is that Eve did not really know what God had said! This may come as a surprise because, again, Eve's statement sounds very close to what

God said. But remember: God forbids us to add one word, or take away one word, from what He has said. Adding so much as one word, or taking away as much, pollutes it and causes it to no longer be God's Word!

Notice how Eve added to what God had said: "And the woman said unto the serpent. We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (Genesis 3:2, 3).

Once again, compare this with what God actually said: "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).

What did Eve add? God did not say, "Neither shall ye touch it." Again, with the quickest of glances, this may not seem important. But we are not dealing with the word of men, we are handling the Word of God! And, while it may seem that Eve strengthened God's commandment by adding a condition that He did not mention, you must keep in mind that you cannot strengthen God's Word. When man adds his own conditions, it ceases to be the Word of God.

By thus misquoting what the Lord had said. Eve revealed to the serpent a major flaw in her ability to resist temptation.

A careful study of the temptation of Jesus in Matthew 4 will further clarify this point. The only way to resist the temptations of Satan effectively is to respond to his efforts with the Word of God, the pure Word of God. As he did with Jesus, Satan will attempt to enhance his temptation with his version of God's Word. He misquoted a verse from Psalms 91.

Being the Word made flesh, Jesus caught him in his error, and was not trapped. Satan is still in the business today of tripping up the unwary, those who do not know for themselves what God actually said.

If Jesus were not too great to be tempted of Satan, neither are you and I. Do not vote the devil out of existence. If he is not around, someone is certainly doing his work. A man was asked by a younger man, "I suppose you no longer believe in a devil?" "I certainly do believe in the devil," the older man responded, "If I didn't, I would have to believe that I was my own devil."

5. Satan Attacks God's Motives

The next step in the temptation of Eve was an attack on God's motives. Having discovered that she did not really know what God said, Satan now directly contradicted God's Word: "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" (Genesis 3:4, 5).

In short, Satan caused Eve to think that God prohibited them from eating the tree because he wanted to keep something good from them! This is another standard tool in the devil's kit. He tries to convince people that it would be to their advantage to do those things forbidden by God, and that God actually does not want the best for them, but wants to keep them in ignorance and bondage.

6. Adam's Disobedience

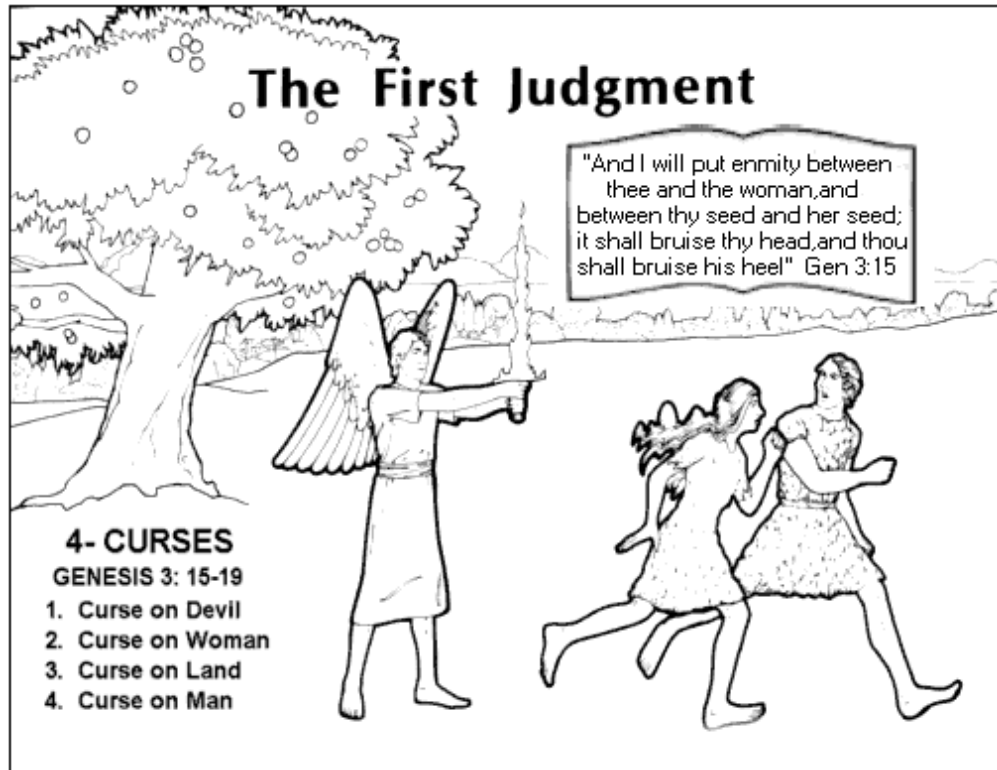
Eve took the next unhappy step down the road to spiritual death; She began to operate by her sense knowledge, rather than by faith in the Word of God. She saw that the tree was good for food (sight and taste), and that it was a tree to be desired to make one wise (an appeal to her pride). She ate the fruit, gave it also to Adam, and he ate. What makes all this even more tragic is that, while Eve was deceived, Adam was not. He knew exactly what he was doing (I Timothy 2:14).

In exploring God's Word, we discover the following facts about the fall of man:

- * Romans 5:12: "By one man (Adam) sin entered into the world."
- * Romans 5:12: ". . .and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men. . ."
- * Romans 5:14: ". . .death reigned from Adam to Moses. . ."
- * Romans 5:17: "By one man's (Adam's) offence death reigned. . ."
- * Romans 5:18: "Therefore as by the offence of one (Adam) judgment came upon all men to condemnation."
- * Romans 5:19: "For as by one man's (Adams) disobedience many were made sinners. . ."

LESSON 1

The First Judgment



V. The First judgement

The immediate result of man's choice to disobey rather than obey God was the first judgment on sin, in the form of four curses and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.

A. Serpent Is Cursed

The first curse was on the serpent, the devil. God said to him, "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shall thou eat all the days of thy life" (Genesis 3:14). There has been speculation that the serpent may have previously had some other way of travel, since the curse involved going upon his belly. We don't know this for sure. But if the serpent had a more noble and lofty appearance and image before, he lost it because he was an accomplice in the temptation of Eve.

B. The Curse Upon the Woman

The second curse was on the woman. To her, God said, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Genesis 3:16). As a result of Eve's sin, she brought upon the female population of the human race increased sorrow and conception. Even the very blessed and joyous event of childbirth is colored by the pain and travail. In addition, God said the man would rule over the woman. As unpleasant as these things may be to some, they are the consequences of sin.

C. The Curse Upon the Land

The third curse was upon the land. God said to Adam, "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 shall thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field" (Genesis 3:17, 18). Have you ever noticed that you don't have to plant weeds? You must carefully plant and cultivate the food you wish to grow, but thorns and thistles and all manner of weeds grow naturally! This is a result of the curse that God made. Every time you struggle to grow a beautiful flower, each time you weed your garden, or work to free your lawn from dandelions, the Lord is trying to remind man of the sinfulness of man, and of his need of God.

D. The Curse Upon the Man

The fourth curse was on the man, Adam. God said, "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 3:19). From this point forward, man would find life to be a struggle. He would only live by exertion, by effort, and would finally go back to the dust from which he was made.

E. The First Promise of the Redeemer

In the midst of these curses, however, there was a promise. God said, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15). This was a prediction of the ultimate triumph of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, over Satan. Notice, from the very beginning, the devil's fate has been sealed. He has never been within striking range of achieving victory in his evil struggle. From the beginning, he was a defeated enemy.

This state of innocence of Adam and Eve was ended with God giving them a promise. Also God provided a covering of skin for their nakedness (Genesis 3:21).

F. Man Driven From the Garden

Finally, as a direct result of their sin, Adam and Eve were put out of the Garden of Eden. In order to prevent man from eating of the Tree of Life, and living forever in his depraved state,

the Lord God sent him from the garden, to till the ground. At the east of the Garden of Eden, God placed Cherubims, or angelic creatures, with a flaming sword which turned in all directions, to protect the access to the Tree of Life. This happening to Adam and Eve is a story of influence and what it can do to someone else. The old gas lamps that used to light our streets tell a story. Harry Lauder said when he was a child, he used to watch one old lamp lighter as he moved along in the gathering shadows leaving a stream of light behind him. Harry said that even when his little legs would not move fast enough to keep up with the lamplighter, he could tell exactly where the lamplighter was by the trail of light that he left behind. That is true through all of life. People can tell where we are, how far we have gone and how much we have done by the light or darkness that we leave behind.