

# Christian Fundamentals

## 1. Sin/The Fall

The entrance of sin into the world is clearly set out in Genesis chapter 3 and is often called 'The Fall' when we look at basic 'Christian fundamentals'. We are told in Romans chapter 5 that sin entered into the world through one man's disobedience. That man was Adam, the first man, who disobeyed the commandment of God and took what is called 'the forbidden fruit', and as a result received into himself the fruit of his disobedience. God had told him, *"In the day that you sin, you will die"*. That death was not just the physical death, that comes much later, but spiritual death, with the nature/the law/the principle of sin and death entering into the spirit of Adam and causing the eternal damage. That sinful nature is then passed on to every generation and every person born on this earth. The word 'sin' really means to 'fall short', and in Romans chapter three we are told that 'we all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God'. The first human beings had been made in the image and likeness of God, and by falling into sin had fallen short of that image and likeness; they had fallen short of the Glory of God. They were therefore no longer able to fellowship with God, who moves them away from the Garden of Eden, in which the Tree of Life was planted, in case they ate of the Tree of Life and sin and death continued for ever. The cause of the act of disobedience, as we will see, came from the temptations of the devil to Eve and then to Adam. John in his letter says this, *"For the devil sinned from the beginning"*. We can read in Isaiah chapter 14 of the fall of Lucifer, the arch angel, who became the fallen arch angel. *"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground"*. He fell from heaven as the scripture shows us, and having come to the earth imparts the same fallen state into human beings. The devil did not create human beings, he has not that power, but covets them and hence the temptations to lead human beings away from their creator and take control of them and the age (**aion**) in which they live. This is the eternal state for the devil and his *angels*; *"Into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"*, that will be his state through all the ages to come. There is no intention to write much about the devil in this set of fundamentals but simply to make people aware of him and the damage he has caused and where the origins of sin are eternally. It is stated in *Isaiah*, *"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God"*. It is in the pride and desire to be above God and to be God. In many ways that is what sin does in the hearts of human beings. We read in Genesis chapter 3 in the description of the temptation, *"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"*. "You will be as gods" is the promise, you will be your own people and have your independence, make your own judgements, serve yourselves, and not serve God. That is the world and the state of sin. The words in **Bold** help us to see the subtlety of the temptation. *"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**"*. In Chapter 2 of Genesis we read of all the other trees *"And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is **pleasant to the sight**, and **good for food**"*. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was very much the same as all the other fruits, good to look at and good to eat, but with the added but lethal extra, it makes you wise, it makes you to know for yourself, you can make your own judgment and run your own lives. That is what entered into Adam and Eve and sin came upon the world. They knew that they were naked,

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their innocence had gone, and they had to hide. They were no longer able to stand before a holy God and the damage was done. God clothed them and then put them out of the Garden of Eden to till to ground and suffer all the results of their sin in having lives of toil and trouble.

The Lord Jesus was under no illusion as to the realities of the results of sin in the world. He said these things, *"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks"* and *"But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies"*. We will find, as we move on, that Jesus came to take away the sins of the world, and why His spiritual origins had to be different and without sin. However here we note, He says to the Jews, *"You are of your father the devil,"* and that applies to all people. *"He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sinned from the beginning"*. Our understanding of sin and its results can be increased by David's prayer after he had committed sin, *"For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou might be justified when thou speak, and be clear when thou judge. Behold, I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me"*

He helps us to see that sin is ultimately against God, it is a falling below God's standards, and the word 'transgression' used is 'to put the foot in the wrong place'. David had stepped outside the law; he had committed adultery and conspired to murder. "I was shaped in iniquity", which means 'lawlessness', "and in sin", in the 'falling short', "did my mother conceive me". This surely is the opposite to being made in the image and likeness of God; the form and the likeness of humans is completely changed by sin. It shows us, as we will see later, the reason for Jesus' virgin birth.

Paul tells the Romans, *"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men."* John in his letter says this about sin; *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us"*.

He distinguishes between sin and sins. Sin is the nature which we have understood entered into the first man when he sinned, and sins are the fruit of that nature. For people to come free from sin, there is the need, as did David, to recognise that we have sin, and to confess our sins, to acknowledge the fruit of that sinful nature, and God will then forgive us our sins and also cleanse us from all unrighteousness, in other words, remove the nature of sin from us.

Finally, we see in Romans 7 Paul's own experience of sin. He says this, *"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. No, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, you shalt not covet."* It was possible for him to control himself to not, among other things, make any graven image, not to murder and not to commit adultery, but he could not control himself coveting. Coveting is a desire of the heart, wanting something it

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cannot have or earn; satan covets God's people and is the originator of covetousness. What Paul coveted we are not told, but from his lifestyle it may have been power and position. Paul found it impossible to control his lust and greed, writing, *"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the **law of sin** which is in my members."* He found the **law of sin**, "sin dwells in me", **working** within his members, within himself, which meant he did evil rather than good, even when he wanted to do that which is good. Covetousness is described as idolatry, putting a desire for something before God, and as Paul coveted, he broke the very first commandment which is that *"You will have no other gods before me"*. This shows the power of sin and the results of its outworking, causing us to put our own will and desires before Almighty God; in doing so we break Jesus' first commandment, 'to love the Lord your God with all you heart, all you mind, all your soul and all your strength'. We will see later how Jesus Christ delivers us from the law of sin and death.