



Adam

Our study of biblical characters and the lessons of their lives begins in a logical place—with the first man! The biblical imagery of creation is at its most beautiful when it describes the forming of the first man, Adam. Over the five previous days of creation God had created solely through the power of His word. This should not be a surprise, when you consider that God is a Spirit, not limited to a corporeal form, and certainly would not be required to create in the limited fashion that humans create. He did not require tools grasped in giant hands or to wipe sweat from His brow as He labored under the sun. He simply spoke everything into existence. But Scripture describes a shift in operation when God began to fashion the first man.

Handcrafted

The first difference is that God intimately involved Himself with the process. He did not just speak man into existence, but instead fashioned him from existing material. The Hebrew word that is used also describes the actions of a potter or a sculptor. In a very real sense, man was God's workmanship, His art (Ephesians 2:10). He took the clay, the dust of the earth, and sculpted the flesh of man. The flesh of man is forever linked to this planet, this Earth.

The name *Adam* means “earthy.” It reflects the reddish tones of the clay that God used to fashion him. This is the only instance in Creation where God became intimately involved with the actual crafting of His creation. Everything else He spoke into existence (or mass produced), but man was handcrafted. In every way the creation of Adam (and then Eve) was the highlight of all God’s endeavors. God put a great deal of thought and effort into the form and shape of man.

Why did God care so much about this minute part of His great creation? This question unfolds a greater mystery. God cared so much about the creation of man because the form of man was the canvas that the invisible God chose to express Himself on. One of the great wonders of Scripture is revealed when you stop to think that the first Adam was created in the image of the second Adam, Jesus Christ. Only a God with complete foreknowledge, a God who lives outside of time, could create man in the image of the human form that He would not actually assume for more than four thousand years into the future! The body of Adam was fashioned after the blueprint of Christ, the “*express image*” of God (Hebrews 1:3). The entire universe was designed around the manifestation of God in flesh, Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:15-16). In the plan of God, the Word (Jesus Christ) comes first! (John 1:1-3). We can be confident that this entire universe was created for man, because the Bible implicitly states that all of creation was created for Jesus Christ, and we are created in His image. Jesus was the physical explanation or manifestation of God, and we are created in that image. God cared so much about the form of Adam (and of man) because God had already chosen that form as the one that He would manifest Himself in.

While we understand that this physical body that we inhabit is the least important of the elements that make up man, to say that it (or its appearance) is unimportant is to grievously devalue an

aspect of man that is very important to God. One of the great fallacies common to Christian thought is that “God only cares about what is inside.” Many people have twisted God’s words to Samuel about the sons of Jesse into a doctrine. God was chiding Samuel because as he observed the sons of Jesse he was weighing each of them solely by their physical appearance and bearing. This irritated God, mostly because Saul had already proved that just “looking the part” was by no means an effective measure of character or any indicator of having what it takes to be king. God was emphasizing to Samuel that He was able to observe what was in the heart of man as well. God can clearly see all aspects of man—not just what is observable from without. The point to Samuel was that judging a man solely upon his physical appearance was both limited and deceiving. It was a carnal judgment, not a spiritual one, and Samuel should have known better.

That being said, it might shock some to realize how often the Bible describes a person based upon their physical appearance. In fact, when David arrives a few verses later, Scripture describes him as ruddy, handsome, and having beautiful eyes. Scripture describes not only the attractiveness of faces on both men and women but in several cases also comments on a woman having a beautiful figure (Genesis 29:17; Esther 2:7 NET¹). Other passages refer to men as being “well-built” and handsome. The King James or Authorized translation often uses the term *goodly* to describe someone, which literally means “beautiful, comely, or handsome.” To say that God does not care at all about our physical appearance is disingenuous. The effort that God put into shaping the form of man (before He ever got to the soul) is ample proof that God certainly cares about the beauty of man. Man was the corporeal form that God chose to express Himself on out of all the endless choices He could have made. I have often wondered what Adam and Eve looked like, because they would have been a very good indicator of God’s stan-

dard of physical beauty. God certainly does not judge man based upon his appearance, but to say that God does not care about man’s appearance is certainly not true.

A Living Soul

At this moment of formation, however, man was still incomplete. He was like the other animals in terms of being animated flesh in varying forms of complexity, but God had higher aspirations for man than to just be another one of the animals. It is incomprehensible why many otherwise intelligent human beings are so antagonistic towards biblical creation. It seems to me that being carefully crafted in the image of God and being given a living soul is far more preferable to simply being considered one of the more highly evolved animals and the product of random mutations and genetic permutations. In fact, the next act by God made man forever distinct from any other part of God’s creation—including those in the spirit realm. Genesis 2:7 describes how God breathed His own breath into man and man became a “*living soul*.” The Hebrew word for God’s *breath* is the same Hebrew word for God’s *Spirit*. It is no wonder that the soul is eternal! It could be said that this breathing of God’s breath or spirit into man resulted in the first birth (of the flesh) while the infilling of God’s Spirit is what causes the “New Birth,” or the spiritual birth of man (John 3; Acts 2).

The soul of man is permanently linked to his spirit. It is eternal, and from the moment of awakening it becomes aware and cognizant for eternity. God gave man a free will, the power of choice, for better or worse. Unlike the animals, man will never function solely on instinct or reflex. Man has been given the power of reason and rationality, and there are many times that reason should override a more base instinct. With this amazing gift came the burden of responsibility. Man is responsible for his actions, his decisions,

because they are based upon more than just an animal instinct. A lion might kill because that is its instinctive response; a man kills because he has made a choice to kill. The lion is what it is by nature; the man becomes who he is through his choices. He is more than just a product of his environment or genetic structure.

God made us in His image in more ways than just fashioning us in the form that He chose to manifest Himself in, for we are also like Him in our capacity to reason and choose. We are like Him in the complex relationship between emotion and reason. We feel like He feels. In a far diminished sense, we think like He thinks, although His capacity to reason and think is so far above man that it is unimaginable. Isaiah wrote,

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9 NKJV²).

Man’s decisions will always be based upon incomplete information. We are limited by space and time, and even by our own limited intellect. Our decisions are often flawed simply because of our own personal limitations of character, perspective, or education. Unlike our decisions, however, God’s decisions are based upon perfect knowledge and a complete overview of all of time (and beyond). He knows every minute implication of every decision, and His ways and choices are always perfect. We are like Him, however, in the way that we arrive at our decisions. We weigh choices, try to consider the facts, and are influenced by our emotions and how we “feel” about certain issues. To varying degrees, we are also influenced by our own personal code of morality and ethics. We are like Him! We think because He thinks. We rationalize because He rationalizes. We feel because He feels! God becomes much more personal when you realize this fact. The writer of Hebrews says regarding Jesus Christ

that we have a high priest than can be “...touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Hebrews 4:15). The English Standard Version states that He is “[able] to sympathize with our weaknesses.”³ The passage goes on to state that when He came as a man He was tempted in every aspect like us, but was without sin. Oh yes, God took His time with the formation of that man named Adam! David put it well when he penned the eighth psalm:

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:3-6 ESV).

The amazing complexity of the human body and its design is only overshadowed by the even more complex design of our soul and spirit. We have the capacity for great goodness and selflessness; we also have the capacity for unbelievable cruelty and selfishness. Human beings are complicated, to say the least! Once again David provides the perfect description, writing, “*I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well*” (Psalm 139:14).

God lovingly formed that first man, and then that first woman, and when He evaluated the job that He had done, He deemed them very good. From the beginning, God chose man as the apple of His eye, the object of His affection.

A Man with a Purpose

There have been several great existential questions that man has asked for millennia. They typically run along the same lines: “Why

am I here?" "What is my purpose?" An examination of the first few chapters of the book of Genesis quickly answers these questions in both word and deed. God gave Adam and Eve a simple purpose when He commanded them to "*be fruitful and multiply*," to "*fill the earth*," and to subject it to their "*dominion*" (Genesis 1:28 ESV). One could say that the first purpose of mankind was to get married, have kids, and be the keepers of this earth. We see a deeper purpose, however, in the example we first see in Genesis and can follow all the way through to Revelation. God had a deeper purpose in mind when He created man than just for man to have a fulfilling and productive life. The whole purpose of Creation was an act of love. John beautifully penned the purpose of the coming of the Savior when he observed that "*God so loved the world*" (John 3:16). In short, God was lonely. He desired an object of His love and affection. He (like Adam originally) had no equal, no counterpart. God will never have an equal, for who is like God? God proposed that while there was no other god, no equal to Him, that He could still love and have a bride. For some reason God chose humanity to be His first and only love. We are called the bride of Christ, and it could be logically stated that God created man because He had already chosen that form as the one that He would manifest Himself in. He needed to create a counterpart to that form that He had already chosen so that He could have a relationship. There is no equal, no counterpart to God in His transcendent form, but in Christ and His bride there is at least counterparts, two pieces that can fit together to make a whole.

Adam's initial purpose was the same purpose that every human to follow should have: he was created to worship and love God out of his own free will. We are created differently than any other creature, for we have the power of choice. We can choose to worship God or choose to not worship Him. All of the rest of creation worships God by its very existence. When a wolf howls, it is praise to

God. When the wind whistles through the trees, it is praise to God. When the waves crash against the shore, it is praise to God. When a lion roars, it is praise to God. But humans are different. We are not powered by instinct but by an all-pervasive will that allows us to choose whether or not we will worship Him.

This will can cause us to become separated from God, but it is also the vehicle by which we can have greater intimacy with God than any other creature in the universe. Love that is voluntarily given is far more fulfilling than love that is commanded. Humans can worship and love God on a much deeper level than any other part of creation. The rest of creation worships and loves God because they were created that way; they respond to God on an instinctual level. While humans were also created to worship and love God, our love must come from our will rather than just an instinctual response. It is the only way by which we could have a relationship with God that could in any way equal the biblical imagery of marriage. God chose to create us. God chose to humble Himself to a human form. God chose to redeem us. God chose to love us. The only fitting response would be that humans also make a decision to love and pursue Him in return.

The first thing we see between man and God is nothing short of a courtship. Spending the evenings of every day walking and talking together. Building a relationship. Falling in love. The loneliness of Adam that was only filled with the creation of Eve mirrored the loneliness of God that could only be filled with the creation of man. It is impossible to understand just how fulfilling those shared times were to God. We see the true heart of God in this simple relationship. When man devises religion, it is full of trappings and pageantry. It is a circus of rituals, costumes, sacrifice, and often lofty but meaningless words and expressions. What God desired then (and now) is intimacy. He wants a relationship! The significant men of Scripture whose spirituality is noted are men

that “got it,” men like Enoch, Abraham, Moses, David, and John the Beloved. Enoch walked with God. Abraham was the “*Friend of God*” (James 2:23). Moses talked to God face to face like a friend. David was a man after God’s own heart who praised Him intimately. John simply loved Jesus, and Jesus loved him in return. Jesus pointed out that the whole of the law and the prophets was built upon two central pillars—to love God wholeheartedly and to love one’s fellow man (Matthew 22:37-40). One of the most important benefits of Calvary was to provide the opportunity to restore the intimacy that was lost through Adam’s sin. It is impossible to realize how deeply hurt God was when this line of communication was severed by sin!

Adam’s other main purpose was to become the progenitor (father) of the human race. This process did not actually begin until he was outside the garden. Every human being that has ever existed has the genetics of Adam and Eve within their body. There is no “secondary” or “inferior” species of humans upon the earth. Europeans have Adam’s genetics. Africans have Adam’s genetics. Pygmies have Adam’s genetics. Asians have Adam’s genetics. There are no exceptions, despite what prejudice might say! Evolutionary teaching has been the leading cause of promoting racism in our world for the past two centuries, but it is interesting to note that the world of genetic science has opened up a new perspective on race (or an old perspective, we might say). It turns out that genetic markers show that all humans have common ancestry, and DNA evidence shows that all humans are related. There is typically more genetic diversity within a particular “race” of humans than there is between “races” of people. Perhaps it should not come as a surprise that science has dubbed the common maternal ancestor of humanity “Mitochondrial Eve,” while the common paternal ancestor is known as “Y-chromosomal Adam.” Be fruitful and multiply indeed!

Adam’s primary “job” in the garden was not only to be overseer of nature but also to name each of the diverse species. Adam was perfectly suited for this task. He had an intrinsic advantage over every other human being until Christ; he was created perfect. He was the summation of physical perfection, created perfectly strong and mature. He never had an awkward stage or a period of immaturity but started out his very existence at the pinnacle of manhood. This pinnacle lasted very likely for hundreds of years. What a sad thing it must have been to God when that perfect body finally began to waste and age. What a sad day when God’s perfect handiwork began to show the effects of sin! Not only did Adam have physical perfection, but he was also unbelievably intelligent. Adam’s mind was not clouded by stress, disease, or the overshadowing of war and evil. Our mental capacity has been diminished through the residual effect of sin and genetic mutation, making it safe to say that modern man rarely (if ever) makes full use of the brain’s capacity. In fact, there is still little that is known about the extent of the capabilities of the human mind. It is staggeringly complex and unbelievably powerful. It is surely safe to say that the geniuses of today would be overshadowed by the brilliance of this perfect mind perfectly used. The wisdom of the first man has only perhaps been matched by Solomon and Daniel, and the latter two probably had more focused wisdom but perhaps not the broad natural wisdom of Adam. The massive task of naming all of these animals and classifying them was one that Adam was uniquely suited for. The Bible states that God presented each of the species of animals and birds to Adam, and whatever Adam named them, that is what they were!

The Bible describes a state of harmony that existed in nature where all animals were herbivores and the concept of predator and prey was nonexistent. It was a lush and perfect world where fear and competition between the species (and with man) was nonexistent. It was paradise! It was during this idyllic period of meeting

Adam: A Man Alone?

and naming each of the diverse species that a certain kind of loneliness was awakened in Adam. He saw a sense of order in all of creation, for God is a God of order. Each species was perfectly matched with a male and female counterpart. Romance abounded in God's natural world, with many species enjoying elaborate courtship and mating rituals. Everything had a counterpart...except Adam. Just as God had looked over the whole breadth of every plane of existence and found no counterpart for Himself, Adam observed that there was no one like him.

A Man Alone?

Adam was already a part of a greater divine romance, but that did not stop him from experiencing a physical loneliness. God loved His creation and did not want him to be alone in the flesh (Adam was no more alone in the spirit than any other human who has ever lived). He created a counterpart, the woman, and between them He created a union that would mirror (in some small way) the greater union that was designed between the creation and the Creator. Just as God had made Adam from the substance of His existing creation, He fashioned Eve from the substance of the man. God caused Adam to fall asleep, and from his side He took a rib, and from this small piece of genetic material God fashioned a woman (and no, it is *not* true that women have had one more rib than men ever since!). It could be said that the very first surgery was a "ribectomy."

It has long been noted that God took the woman from the man's side, not his head or his feet. She was not from above him or beneath him, but from his side to be protected and near to his heart so that she might be loved. She was designed as a counterpart, literally a "helper comparable" to man, and only through their union would Adam ever be complete and whole again. There is a degree of completion that can only be found through the beauty of mar-

HARD KNOCKS AND LIFE LESSONS

riage. In an even greater sense, there is no human being that is complete until they are joined together with God in an eternal relationship.

When God's work was complete, He presented His new creation to Adam, who exulted in the fact that he had finally found his counterpart. He called her a "*woman*" because she had literally been taken from the man. The Bible makes the important point that it was always God's intention for the man to be the head of the family unit. The wife was created for the man, the helper comparable to him, and God will always view the husband (for better or worse) as the head of the home (1 Corinthians 11). The wife is the equal of the man, but the man has been given the position of leadership. Like it or not, this is God's way! This was God's design from the beginning, before the fall and not the result of it.

It could be said that God married them on the spot, giving the first (and probably the best) wedding vow and marital counsel: that a man should leave his father and mother (his old family) and become one flesh with his wife. Through this union, they will become a new family. Many of the early problems in marriage come when a man or woman cannot leave their old family (and their ways) behind and fully commit themselves to forming a new family unit.

It is in this context (following God's command to become one flesh) that Scripture notes that the man and his *wife* (further evidence that God married them) were both naked and were "*not ashamed*," Genesis 2:25). It is God that created the sexual union between husband and wife, and the wording of Scripture is carefully crafted to show that there was no shame or sin in their coming together in this sexual union. Many have tried to paint sexuality as a fallen condition, something associated with sin and shame. The original sexual union was designed, blessed, encouraged, and facilitated by God and was anything but a source of shame or sinfulness.

Adam: A Man Alone?

Because the biblical narrative moves along at a sharp clip, we tend to view the events in the garden as just spanning a few brief days. This is almost certainly untrue. In fact, Adam was most likely alone for a good deal of time in the garden. Genesis 2:20 would seem to indicate that Adam had completed the entire task of naming all of the animal species before God created Eve. This was certainly not done overnight! In fact, this process probably spanned at least several months...and this was before Eve was even created. There is another scriptural clue that gives an idea of the length of the stay in the garden before sin. Genesis 5 states,

“When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. The days of Adam after he fathered Seth were 800 years; and he had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died” (Genesis 5:3-5 ESV).

We know that Seth was not the first of the children that Adam fathered. Cain was first, followed by Abel, and very possibly other children. The biblical narrative makes it seem that Cain was conceived soon after the Fall, and it is unlikely that there was a massive gap between the birth of Abel and Seth. People married at a much older age than is common today according to this genealogy (65 being the youngest [Mahalaleel] and 187 being the oldest [Methuselah]), but Adam was different than every other person in that genealogy. His age is not reckoned from birth but from his creation, when he was already a fully grown man. His marriage certainly took place at a much earlier point in his given age than these other men. Even if there were 50 to 80 years between the births of Abel and Seth (who the Bible states was given as a replacement for Abel), there was certainly plenty of time in that initial 130 years of Adam's life for him (and Eve) to have lived in the Garden.

HARD KNOCKS AND LIFE LESSONS

The point is that Adam and Eve could have enjoyed a sexual union that lasted for years before sin was ever introduced into the world. Like everything good that God has created, the corruption of sexuality was when it was taken outside of the bonds of the union that God created it for. There was no shame in this union that God created between Adam and Eve, and, in fact, it was the only vehicle by which they could carry out His initial command to be fruitful and multiply. There is certainly no need (nor does it make logical sense) to attempt to cram all of the events of the garden into a few weeks. It was an idyllic period that probably lasted for years before everything was shattered by sin.

God created competition for His affection when He created the woman. There was a new relationship for Adam to explore, and the bond between a man and a woman can be particularly strong. There was a new, competing romance that must have certainly added some nuance to Adam's relationship with God. This factor played an important role in the biggest decision that Adam ever made.

The Serpent and the Stumble

Biased observers of God's ways have always complained about all the rules and the “do's and don'ts,” but there certainly were *not* many rules in the beginning. In fact, there is only one “don't” that we find in the beginning. In the midst of the garden there were two significant trees. One was the tree of life, the other the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God's one command regarding Adam's behavior was that he was not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for if he did, he would die (Genesis 2:17). It is important to note that God gave this command before the creation of Eve and left the responsibility to Adam of communicating His command to Eve. It can be argued as to whether or not this tree and its fruit had any particular powers, but I personally doubt that

it did. It was simply a tree that God had designated as taboo and forbidden. If man did not have a choice, an opportunity to exercise his free will, then he would not be truly made in the image of God. It is possible that this tree and its fruit were no different than many other trees. Human nature has certainly shown that all that is required to tempt us is to designate something as being off limits.

This brings us to the serpent. There is a great deal of debate and speculation as to the identity and form of this serpent. We certainly know that it was (at the very least) a vehicle for Satan to offer temptation and was perhaps Satan himself in the form of this serpent. It seems more likely that the serpent allowed itself to be used for Satan's purpose, as it would be hard to see God cursing all serpents simply because Satan had impersonated one. It is impossible to know its true form before the curse, because its present form and slithering on its belly is the result of the curse. The serpent is still used as an example of wisdom and cunning (Jesus told us to be wise as serpents in Matthew 10:16), but this wisdom is certainly not comparable to the cunning of this original form of the serpent. The Bible clearly states that it was the most shrewd and crafty of all the created animals. This is not shown in a negative light, just stated as fact. Surely its form and appearance was far more pleasing than the present form (which few people are fond of), although it must be remembered that there was not yet any fear or loathing of any species. It was a far more innocent world.

The ability to speak could certainly have been supplied by Satan, although it is not the only example in Scripture of an animal being given the power of speech. It is also within reason to suppose that the pre-curse serpent could have had the power of speech. In a sense it would have less disconcerting to Eve if she was accustom to the serpent speaking. Regardless of the source of its speech, its words were clearly the words of Satan. He started by quoting Scripture, but with a new twist and emphasis. God's words

had been inclusive, letting Adam know that he could eat of every tree save one, while Satan's emphasis to Eve was that God was excluding her from something. He made it sound like God was forbidding them from eating of many trees, that somehow God was being unreasonable. He phrased it as a question, inviting further questioning of God's command from Eve (Genesis 3:1). It must be noted that it takes very little to distort a statement and, through a slight emphasis, restructure the whole intent. Satan is a master of distortion.

Eve's response was very interesting. It was a rebuttal of sorts, showing that she realized that there was only one tree that God had forbade and that it was not an unreasonable request. Her response, however, is slightly different than God's original words. She stated that not only were they not to eat of the tree, they were not to touch it (Genesis 3:2-3). This is viewed by some as an early breakdown in the chain of communication, evidence that original statements quickly get distorted and changed. It is like the game of "telephone," where the original statement whispered in the ears of another gets distorted through transmission around the circle. This is, of course, possible. Perhaps Adam did not exactly frame the words correctly, or perhaps Eve did not hear them properly. For two people with such remarkable intelligence and lack of distractions, however, this doesn't seem likely. It is *not* possible that Adam purposefully distorted God's word in a dishonest way, for that would be sinful, and no sin had yet been committed.

Another viewpoint seems more plausible, and that is that Adam had done exactly what God wanted the head of the home to do—set boundaries. Adam knew perfectly well that if they never touched that tree, they would never have a problem with eating from it. Going by the letter of God's statement, they could have theoretically made a tree house in that tree, had a fruit basket filled with its fruit on their table each day, or played catch with a piece

Adam: The Serpent and the Stumble

of its fruit...as long as they didn't eat it. This is what many choose to do. They try to see how much they can "get away with" and still be saved. By setting a stronger line, however, Adam would be doing a better job of protecting his family.

Satan then shifted tactics by directly challenging God's assertions. The serpent told Eve that she would *not* die. He then spun the fruit into being a mysterious and powerful link to higher knowledge and existence. It was a conspiracy designed to keep them mortal and low, for if they ate of the fruit they would become like gods themselves (Genesis 3:4-5).

Many have questioned why God would put this tree in the garden. Did God want Adam and Eve to fail? Did He tempt them to do evil? It must first be understood that it is a biblical principle that God never tempts anyone to do evil. James 1:13 states,

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (James 1:13).

Note that God brought two specific special trees to Adam and Eve's attention. The other tree was the tree of life (Genesis 2:9). One could as easily say that God tempted Adam and Eve to do right as He did to do evil. Both trees had equal prominence and thus presented equal temptation. What it really boils down to is choice. If Adam and Eve could not have chosen between two extremes, then they would not have been fully human nor created in the image of God. While eating a piece of fruit seems like a fairly innocent sin, it was the principle that was being established. That principle is that all have the opportunity to choose good or evil, God or the world, the tree of life or the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God does not cause people to sin, and neither does He force people to live for Him. He gives us the power of choice, and this is what defines humanity!

HARD KNOCKS AND LIFE LESSONS

This was certainly not the last time that Satan used this same device, particularly upon those already enjoying the privilege of a relationship with God. He makes it seem as if they are being robbed of something special. He attempts to make them feel naive and discontent with the "boring" good life they enjoy. He tempts them with his own original failing. His pride caused him to rebel against God's natural order, God's way, and attempt to usurp God's place for himself. His rebellion was the first act of sin. If right is everything that the holy God is, then wrong is that which is in defiance of God's perfection. God's way is good; rebellion against God's way is sin.

Unfortunately, his ploy was successful. Eve fell for it hook, line, and sinker. She was deceived into thinking she was doing the right thing when she reached for that fruit. That was her failing, but her husband's was worse.

Genesis 3:6 makes it clear that Adam was with her at the time that she took of the fruit. Where else would he be? He didn't have a job to go to, there were no other people to be with, and his primary mandate was to be fruitful and multiply...with her! It stands to reason that they would be inseparable. His first failing seems to be that he passively watched as her deception took place. Paul makes it clear that Adam was not deceived by Satan's ploy (1 Timothy 2:14), so Adam's decision was a willful act of disobedience. This act of will, of rebellion, is remarkably similar to the first act of sin by Satan, and it is for this reason that Adam is the one that released sin into the world. Sin is rebellion against God's ways, God's precepts, and God's holiness. Adam's decision released the curse of sin into the world.

Why did Adam make that willful act? There are certainly no previous signs of a rebellious nature within him. He did not have a sinful nature guiding him. So why would he rebel against God's instructions? Adam failed to provide leadership for his wife in the

moment she needed it most, and, in the process, inadvertently exposed her weakness, her susceptibility to the serpent's ploy. Once she had acted, Adam was faced with a remarkable decision: he had to choose between his two loves. If he was not deceived, then, at the least, he had to recognize that there was about to be a fundamental shift in their existence. His wife had stepped over a line and broken a direct commandment of God. God had been clear that there was going to be significant consequences for that action, namely death! It is unclear how fully developed Adam's concept of death actually was, as there was no process of death actively occurring anywhere in the physical world. It is clear, however, that Adam and Eve both understood that death was a negative consequence and was to be avoided at all costs.

To better understand Adam, let us step back for a moment and consider the nature of God. Could God sin? If sin is rebellion against the holy nature of God, could God commit sin? God has all power, so there is no force that exists that can limit what God can do...except for the limitations that God imposes upon Himself. James made it clear that God is not tempted by evil (James 1:13), but that does not mean God is incapable of committing evil if He chose to. The point, however, is that God chooses not to sin. He limits His power and existence to the confines of His moral character. God does not sin because He has no desire to sin. His utter holiness removes every bit of temptation from sin. This foreshadows the existence of the redeemed on the other side of the resurrection. The Bible clearly states in Revelation 21:27 that no sin in any fashion will ever enter into the New Jerusalem. Does that mean that the redeemed are incapable of sin? Will we have lost our power of choice? I don't believe that is the case, for that would imply becoming less like God rather than becoming more like Him! No, I believe that we will become like Him in the sense that we will have eternally triumphed over the appeal of sin. The temp-

tation of sin will no longer have any hold upon us, much like the angels that triumphed and remained loyal to God during Lucifer's insurrection against Him. They passed their test, and, in the process, triumphed over the temptation of sin. It no longer has any appeal to them, which is why we see no angels rebelling against God and becoming demons after that point. They simply aren't interested! The redeemed will become holy like God in the sense that sin will no longer have any power to tempt us; not because we are incapable of sinning, but because we will never again have any desire to sin.

But Adam was not in his glorified, redeemed body. He had a perfect human body untainted by sin, but that is not to say that he was not tempted. Just because he had not yet sinned did not mean that he was above the temptation of sin. Unlike Eve, he was not deceived by Satan's ploy, but that does not mean that the temptation to rebel against God was not present in him. Lucifer was also once without sin, yet through his rebellious will, sin was found in him (Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28:15). It is clear that both Adam and Eve were drawn to the forbidden, for they were both there. Eve was deceived into believing all the words of the serpent, and while Adam was not, he was surely tempted in some way to join with her. Is it possible that he chose to not stop Eve as she reached for the fruit because he was interested in the outcome? He could witness the outcome of her disobedience without stepping over the line himself. He could see what God meant by "death" without putting himself personally at risk.

Eve was fully convinced. She was gung-ho to try the fruit. Perhaps Adam's passivity came because he decided to let her have her way and become the guinea pig for him. Adam might have become more personally emboldened to try the fruit for himself when he saw that she did not immediately collapse and die. Everything looked fine, she seemed pleased with herself, and so he

Adam: The Serpent and the Stumble

chose to please her by following her into her folly. He gave into temptation after he judged the consequence to be acceptable. She had crossed a line, so Adam knew that things were going to fundamentally change. While she might not have immediately died, I believe that he trusted God's word enough to know that change was coming. The consequence would separate them in some way. So Adam made a willful choice to join her. We might view this line of logic as being brutally calloused, but in Adam's case it might have been more a matter of curiosity. He certainly had no malice towards his wife. What is clear is that while he knew better, he chose to not intervene when his wife reached for that fruit. The reason for Adam's sin is remarkably similar to the motivation for much of our sin. We don't view it as a malicious act against God (although it is), but, as James puts clearly:

But each one is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desires. Then when desire conceives, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is full grown, it gives birth to death. (James 1:14-15 NET.)

People sin because they want their own way rather than God's way. Adam clearly chose his own desires (and those of his wife) over the command of God.

As he watched her perfect teeth biting into the flesh of her own destruction, these thoughts must have raced through his mind. Is it not possible, that in that moment, Adam made a split second decision to choose to share in his wife's fate? He had no reason to make a malicious act against God. I believe that in his mind he was simply choosing their way over God's way. He chose to please her (and himself) rather than to please God. He chose to share in her consequence and, through his willful act, released the curse of sin that would affect every human being since.

In many ways Adam's act was the direct inverse of Jesus' act at

HARD KNOCKS AND LIFE LESSONS

Calvary. Both of them made a conscious decision, with their eyes open and with complete awareness of the consequence of their actions. But while Adam chose his own will, Jesus chose to surrender His will as a man to the divine will of the Father. Adam allowed Eve to "take the fall," but Jesus sacrificed Himself for His bride. Adam joined his bride in her sin; Jesus saved His bride from her sin. Adam released sin through an act of rebellion; Jesus conquered sin through an act of submission. Adam failed to show leadership, but Jesus provided a perfect example for all mankind to follow. The second Adam undid the curse that the first Adam had wrought. The higher nature of God is revealed in the way that even His punishment was tinged with mercy. His cursing was combined with a blessing. From this earliest point, God's plan of substitutional sacrifice is introduced. We see the foreshadowing of the way that the second Adam would undo the failure of the first Adam within just a few hours of that first sin. The union between man and woman was blessed in such a way that the fruit of the womb (although accompanied by pain) would be the source by which redemption would eventually come. It is also likely that the reason why Cain and Abel were born so soon after their removal from the Garden was that God was giving a very lonely man and woman comfort. They had chosen one another, and God blessed them by opening up her womb, and even in their state of death, new life could begin. Even though God had been rejected, He was still rich in mercy.

There were consequences, of course. The unique curse of the man and the woman was released as recorded in Genesis 3:16-19. The woman began what would be a miserable cycle of reproduction that would plague both Eve and every woman to follow after her. Her very nature would often rebel against the submissive role that God had established for their marriage instead of the effortless partnership that they had previously shared. Her original failure would create similar difficulties for every woman to follow after

Adam: The Serpent and the Stumble

her. The curse of the man would be that his failing would become the burden of responsibility for him and every man to follow. He had not provided the leadership that his wife needed, and it now became his curse. He would be the provider, the defender, and the leader of the home with all the responsibilities that came with it. He would spend a lifetime in labor to provide for his family, and eventually death would come to claim him. Many a man has worked himself to death in a desperate attempt to provide for his family. Responsibility can be a heavy yoke.

Adam and Eve had long lives yet ahead of them, and I am sure that there were many moments when they longed for the simplicity of paradise lost. To Adam's credit, it appears that he stepped up after the Fall and acted like a real man. He provided for his family (which many believe eventually numbered over fifty), and it is apparent from Scripture that Adam was faithful to his new form of relationship with God. It was not even a shadow of the former relationship, but he was faithful to it nonetheless. He was faithful to both his sacrifice and the teaching of the sacrifice to his children. Cain did not offer up an offering displeasing to God because he had been improperly taught, for Abel was completely pleasing to the Lord in his offering. Abel's sacrifice was an act of faith, an act surely instructed by his father. Cain was also a creature of choice, and just as Adam had chosen sin and his own will, so did Cain. But the other two principle children of Adam and Eve, Abel and Seth, were men that pleased the Lord. The Bible says of Seth that he was a child in Adam's likeness (Genesis 5:3). This indicates that Seth inherited the godly nature of Adam. It is possible that Seth was not the third child born to Adam and Eve (other children, male or female, are not named in the genealogy) but rather he was the child that most reflected the godly nature of his parents since the birth of Abel. This illustrates the true nature of Adam: he never turned on God or became bitter, but accepted the consequence of his

HARD KNOCKS AND LIFE LESSONS

actions *like a man* and did the best that he could for his family from then on. In the midst of all his failings, do not forget this honorable behavior.

Adam's story is remarkably similar to the story of humanity, for he is our beginning—the beginning of the human race, the beginning of man's relationship with God, the beginning of marriage and the love between a man and a woman, the advent of sin and destruction, but also the beginning of the process that would result in the second Adam, Jesus Christ, and the great salvation that we have been privileged to become partakers of.

Hard Knock

Adam's principle failing was one that is common to many men: he did not fulfill his God-given responsibility as a leader at a crucial moment. Eve desperately needed Adam's leadership when she was vulnerable. She needed his counsel, his strength, and his level-headed decision-making to help her in a weak moment. If they were to function as a unit, then Adam's passivity in the moment of temptation was the first act of familial dysfunction. He failed his wife when he followed her instead of leading her. How can I say that so absolutely? Because God said it! In Genesis 3:17 Adam is cursed “...because you obeyed your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, You must not eat from it” (NET Bible). It was not Adam's place to passively follow his wife into her folly; it was his responsibility to protect her from it! He was not deceived, but because of his inaction he might as well have been.

Many men suffer from this same malady. They want to exert their authority only when it suits them, not when it is necessary. They pull out the word *submission* as a trump card when they want their way, but often in the moments when leadership is desperately needed they suddenly become mute or disengaged. Men are often

disengaged as parents or spouses and as a result do not provide leadership that can be respected by their children or spouses. A man is not a leader simply because he is male; a man is a leader *in his family* because it is his God-given responsibility. It is a full-time occupation. Authority should not be wielded on a whim; it should constantly be a part of a man's character. Leadership should be motivated by a love for his family and a desire to serve them. If you are a man reading this book, accept your responsibility as a man and provide the godly leadership that your family desperately needs...and desires!

Life Lesson

Adam may have failed as a man in the garden, but I believe that he succeeded as a man outside of it. I cannot begin to imagine how devastating it must have been to be separated from God's presence after the remarkable intimacy that Adam had enjoyed with God. I cannot imagine how frightening and lonely it must have been to be pushed out into a very big, very empty world with nothing but the knowledge that it was your responsibility to provide. Many would be overwhelmed just by the sheer weight of it all. Some men might have cut and run, but not Adam. From all accounts he seems to have stepped up to the plate and become the husband his wife needed and the father that his family would later need. He was faithful to his sacrifice, faithful to his God, faithful to his wife, and faithful to his family. It was his responsibility to provide for them, and that is exactly what he proceeded to do...for probably more than 900 years! He accepted his punishment. There is no record that Adam became bitter or resentful. He did not "bail out" on his family. He was a fallen man, but he acted like a real man and, I believe, a godly man. Adam is the father of us all, and I believe that he became the kind of man we all would be thankful to have as a father!

Accept the challenge to fulfill the role that God has established for you. Be the father, husband, and Christian that God has called you to be. Be the wife, mother, and Christian that God desires you to be. If you had a failed, dysfunctional family, then break that curse for your family! Be the father that you did not have. Be the mother that you missed. Give your family the home life that you lacked. Don't curse your family with the failings of a previous generation. If you have been a failure in the past, wake up, and begin anew! Adam's failure is perhaps the most well-known of all, yet Adam found a way to put it behind him and become the man that God intended him to be. You can do the same!