

THE EFFECTS OF SIN ON MANKIND

- 1) **FUTILITY OF MIND AND ACTION** - Sin enters the world through the promise of "*gaining wisdom*" - **Genesis 3:6** - "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate." Wisdom is sought *apart from the revelation of God Himself*. Man always stumbles when his desire for doing things his own way overrides his submission to the greater wisdom of God.

Paul teaches that sin has always taken this course - **Romans 1:21-22** - "[21] For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. [22] *Claiming to be wise, they became fools....*" In our very first lesson we saw that *the only way man can know anything about God is for God to take the initiative to reveal Himself*. When Adam and Eve chose to ignore the truth of God they fell into a state of *shame, fear of the Creator, and confusion of mind* (Genesis 3:7-13). In short, "*....since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know Him*" (1 Corinthians 1:21).

- 2) **IDOLATRY IN WORSHIP** - Because of his disobedience, man is uncomfortable with the God of creation. In the Garden they *ran and hid* (3:8-10). Naturally, Adam and Eve both *avoided direct questions from their creator* (3:11-13). Then, from Genesis to Revelation, man sets up gods he is more comfortable with. Paul singles out *idolatry as the first act of the fallen heart* - **Romans 1:21-23** - "Claiming to be wise, they became fools, [23] and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles." Even as the Ten Commandments are being given to Moses on the mountain, the children of Israel are dancing around a golden calf in the valley (**Exodus 20:1-4, 32:1-6**).

- 3) **SEXUAL PERVERSION** - Interestingly, Paul moves directly from the sin of idolatry to the *outward manifestation of sexual immorality* - **Romans 1:24-27** - "Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, [25] because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. [26] For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; [27] and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error."

This connection of *idolatry and sexual immorality and distortion* is consistently portrayed throughout the Old Testament as well - **1 Kings 14:23-24** - "For they also built for themselves high places and pillars and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree, [24] and there were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations that the Lord drove out before the people of Israel."

The lesson is vividly displayed in today's headlines. Not always immediately, and not in every life, but the *general direction* of any people who create an unnatural relationship with God will be to manifest an unnatural relationship with humankind as well. In other words, when the *male/female relationship*, modelling the unity with diversity that exists in the triune life of our Creator, and the *marriage relationship*, modelling the relationship between human kind and the Redeemer - when these realities of our God and His relationship are ignored and despised, there is nothing to sustain sexual purity.

- 4) **GUILT BEFORE GOD** - **Genesis 3:7** shows their *guilt was sensed instantly* - "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths." They had been naked all along (**Genesis 2:25**). Rebellion against God, however, brought instant *shame* and *alienation*.

Man throughout Scripture continues in this path of sin:

- a) Sin against *the love and compassion of God* - **Isaiah 1:2,4** - "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord has spoken: 'Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged.'"
- b) Sin against *the written law of God* - **Exodus 34:6-7** - "The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, [7] keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." See also **James 2:10** - "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it."
- c) Sin against the *inward law of God written on the heart through conscience* - **Romans 2:14-16** - "For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. [15] They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them [16] on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus."

- 5) **DIVINE PUNISHMENT AND JUDGMENT** - It's important to notice the *different forms and degrees of judgment in the Scriptures*:
- a) First, there are the **results of sin experienced in the life itself** - **Galatians 6:7-8** - **"Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. [8] For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."**
- Notice verse 8 - **"will of the flesh reap corruption."** The flesh itself will bring about it's own deterioration and corruption. Man was simply not designed to center everything on his own desires and appetites.
- b) Second, some punishments are the **direct intervention of God on man's affairs** (ie. Sodom and Gomorrah, etc.).
- c) Third, there is yet to come the **final judgement of God in eternity** - **Romans 2:5-8** - **"[5] But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. [6] He will render to each one according to his works: [7] to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; [8] but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury."**
- 6) **SEPARATION FROM GOD** - **Genesis 3:23-24** - **"...therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. [24] He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life."** God's intention was that man experience only the knowledge of good and to abstain from the experience of evil. In his fallen state, he is kept from partaking from the tree of life in the center of the garden. God will not allow man to live forever in his fallen condition. Separation from God meant **spiritual death immediately** and **physical death eventually**. All through the Bible there would always be distance between God and man. Man cannot live in God's immediate presence. **The Holy of Holies would now be off limits.**
- 7) **ESTRANGEMENT FROM FELLOW MAN** - The results of the fall flow through the Scriptures. Cain kills Able (Genesis 4:8-16), God punishes the earth with a flood for it's violence (Genesis 6:5,11), Jeremiah laments over man's brutality (Jeremiah 9:5,8), cruelty is rooted deep in man's fallen heart (Matt. 15:19), and James says this is the root cause of all the wars of mankind (James 4:1-2). **Times of peace are only pauses in the fighting.**
- 8) **BONDAGE TO HIS FALLEN STATE** - For Adam there was no way back to the Tree of Life. Man's wisdom will never bring him to God (1 Corinthians 1:21). All of the gods of man's religions only serve to alienate him further from the Living God - **Acts 17:22-23** - **"So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. [23] For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you."** They **worship**, but they don't **know** God. Jesus said **"everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin"** (John 8:34). The important point made here is that **one never sins and walks away from his sin**. You really only sin freely in the very early stages of disobedience. Then the character becomes altered. The will becomes bent. The mind becomes blind and futile. **Man desperately needs outside help.**