



Aim of lesson

To establish that mankind is sinful and what the remedy is.

Bible background

Genesis 3; Romans 5:12 6:23

Preparation required

You may need to look at lessons 6-10 (especially at lesson 8) before teaching this lesson because some of the same material is covered again. You could decide what to emphasize here.

You will need a concordance and an Authorised Version for part of this lesson.

Outline of lesson

Talk about the beginning and how everything was 'very good.' God had created a beautiful world and everything in it, and man had been created to fill the earth and to have dominion over all other living things. Check that the class know what happened in the Garden of Eden.

How Adam and Eve were - before ...

Talk to the students about what Adam and Eve were like before they ate the fruit.

They were made in the image of God and were therefore mentally superior to the other living things - but they were still innocent of wrong-doing and had never had any experience of disobedience to God's will.

Secondly, they were neither mortal nor immortal. They couldn't have been mortal because death is the wages of sin and they hadn't sinned yet. They also couldn't have been immortal because then they would have been incapable of dying, which clearly was not the case. So they were in a state of continually existing, always having the possibility of sinning but until they did actually sin they were not in a dying state.

Genesis 2:7 in the Authorised Version describes man as being made a 'living soul.' If your students use this version it is a good idea to explain that he did not *have* a living soul, he *was* a living soul. Other versions use the word 'creature' or 'being'. Even if they use a modern version it may still be worth pointing out that the 'soul' translation of the word is part of the reason why many Christians believe in heaven going. If your class wants to pursue this there is an exercise in the students' books.

The students might like to consider where the Garden of Eden was. The map in the students' books shows the Tigris and the Euphrates which are mentioned in Genesis 2:10-14. Genesis 25:18 and 1 Samuel 15:7 give us hints as to where Havilah might be.

... and after

All this changed when they ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Their eyes were opened, they knew that they had sinned, they became aware of their nakedness and they hid from God because they were ashamed and afraid.

Such a terrible change must have been a dreadful experience for Adam and Eve and we can hardly begin to imagine how they regretted their actions.

Get the students to look at Romans 5:12 to see that the effect of their sin has been felt and continues to be felt by all subsequent generations.

Now get them to look at Genesis 3:14-19 and itemise the punishments that God gave to Adam, Eve and the serpent. Talking briefly about what it all means does help us to realise these things happened and are not just a fairy story

- Snakes would now live on the ground - they may have had legs before and/or lived in the trees
- They would eat dust - they don't just eat dust but they often live in dusty places
- People don't generally like snakes.
- Women would have pain through childbearing.
- They would be subject to their husbands - this is probably too big a topic to enlarge on now but the Bible clearly says that the man should be head over the woman.
- The ground would be cursed and men would have to do hard work - even though people don't now all grow their own food, in one way or another we all have to work to live.

- We all go back to the dust - the only certain thing about life is that we will die.

Death

The main point of these verses as far as this lesson is concerned is the curse of death. This is what God said would happen and it changed everything from then on.

The class could look up the following verses to see what David (Psalm 6:5), Solomon (Ecclesiastes 9:5) and Hezekiah (Isaiah 38:18) said about what death is. There is a cessation of thought, ability to speak, listen, praise, etc.

So the curse of death brought the ending of life, and without any further intervention from God would have meant oblivion for all of us.

Life

Look again at Genesis 3:15 and talk about the deeper meaning of this verse. That the serpent represents sin and the woman's offspring is Jesus. God knew that he would send Jesus and that through his death and resurrection (bruising the heel) sin could be conquered (bruising the head) and mankind could be saved.

Ephesians 2:12-13 tells us that without Christ there is no hope but now we can be brought near to God again.

It is only through the work of the Lord Jesus that our mortal, hopeless state is changed to one of hope and confidence. So although the state of man even now is one of mortality. Ie. A dying creature, yet having a wonderful promise of life for ever!

Relevance to our lives

Get the students to think about how this affects them. We know we keep doing wrong things. Even on what may seem to be a good day and we haven't directly disobeyed we find there are many, many things we could have done that we didn't.

And there would have been no hope for any of us at all had it not been for God's plan of redemption which gave man the hope of life.

We should be grateful to God for showing us that from the start there was hope and we should want to associate ourselves with Jesus who made it possible.

Of course if we want to take up the offer of salvation then we must associate ourselves with Jesus Christ by baptism - but that is another lesson.

Extension activities

If any of the students are bothered about women being subject to their husbands you could go into it in more detail. Lesson 27 in 'The Way of Life' Part 3 deals with the subject in detail. Relevant references are Galatians 3:27-29; 2 Corinthians 6:17-18; Ephesians 5:21-33

Lesson 27 in these notes also talks about the Spiritual aspect of marriage.