

GOD, MAN, AND SIN

- A. Introduction: We are talking about learning to see God as He truly is and ourselves as we truly are in relation to Him. There are many things we could say, but in this section of our discussion, we are focusing on the fact that reality is: All men are guilty of sin before a holy God.
1. There is much misunderstanding about this reality -- misunderstandings that can keep us from being and doing all that God intends. So, we are taking some time to clear up the misunderstandings.
 - a. God did not make men to sin or for sin. He made men to be His holy, spotless sons living in loving relationship with Him. Eph 1:4,5
 1. God created man knowing that men would sin. But He devised a way to deal with our sin and still carry out His plan to have holy, blameless sons through the Cross of Christ. Rev 13:8
 2. God's goal has never been to punish sin but rather to remove sin -- its power, its penalty, its memory -- and then transform sinful men into holy, righteous sons. Ps 103:12; Isa 43:25; Isa 44:22; Isa 38:17; Heb 8:12; Rom 8:29,30; etc.
 - b. That doesn't mean there is no punishment for sin -- there is. God is a holy God who must respond to sin. But, we must understand how, when, and why God punishes sin. We'll get to that later.
 2. In John 8:1-11 we find an incident in the earth ministry of Jesus that gives us insight into these issues.
 - a. Jesus had been teaching in the Temple when the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman who had been caught committing adultery. Their motive in bringing her to Jesus was to try to trap Him in His words by getting Him to say something they could use against Him.
 1. The Law of Moses required that the woman be stoned to death (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22). But Jesus had been preaching love and forgiveness. They hoped Jesus would violate the Law.
 2. The Law also stated that the ones who witnessed the sin should throw the first stones (Deut 17:7), so Jesus said "Whichever of you is free from sin shall cast the first stone at her. (Knox)
 3. Convicted by their consciences, they left, one by one, leaving Jesus and the woman alone.
 - b. Here we have a woman clearly guilty of sin standing before God in human flesh -- Jesus who said, "I only do what I see my Father do." and "I speak His words and do His works." John 5:19; 14:10
 1. Note how Jesus responded. He said, "I do not condemn you." Condemn means judge against. Then He told her, "Go, and sin no more."
 2. That agrees with John 3:17--For God did not sent the son into the world in order to judge - to reject, to condemn, to pass sentence on - the world; but that the world might find salvation and be made safe and sound through Him. (Amp)
 - c. God's intention has never been to condemn men for sin but to turn the sinner in saints. Jesus came to die for our sins to save us from them and then produce a transformation in man.
 3. How do we reconcile this with all the various ideas we have: God is a God of wrath and judgment. He is a holy God who can't be in the presence of sin. The Old Testament especially is filled with people getting "creamed" for sin. Then there's the other side: Sin is not a big deal to God. It doesn't matter how we live. Daddy God understands. That's what we are working on in this series of lessons.
- B. It is important that we understand the relationship between God, us, and our sin in terms of the big picture. The Bible tells the story of God's desire for a family and the lengths to which He has gone to obtain His family through Jesus. Everything in the Bible somehow fits under and is consistent with that theme.
1. God personally formed the first man Adam and took Eve out of Adam. God's plan was that they bring the rest of God's family into existence through natural processes. Gen 2:7, 21; Gen 1:27,28
 - a. God, in love, warned Adam that if you make a choice contrary to my will, if you move away from me, you will die. You will cut yourself off from life. Gen 2:17
 - b. Sin at its most basic level, is choosing independence from God (Isa 53:6). It is choosing to put your will and your way above God's will and way.

1. Because God is the ultimate source of life, light, peace, joy, etc. any move away from God, any choice contrary to Him, is a move toward death, darkness, turmoil, sorrow, etc.
 2. The wages of sin is death, not because God will kill you for sinning, but because you've left life. Prov 14:12; 16:25; Rom 6:21,23
 - c. Adam, and man in Adam, went away from life, choosing independence from God through disobedience. Adam's sin brought death to the human race and the earth itself. Rom 5:12
 2. When Adam sinned, God came looking for him, not in anger, but with help -- the promise of a coming Redeemer who would undo the damage done by Adam's sin (Gen 3:15). Notice, neither Adam or Eve were incinerated by the presence of God, despite their sinful condition.
 - a. God shed the blood of animals to make coats of skin to cover Adam and Eve (Gen 3:21). This was not a sacrifice to keep an angry God from destroying these rotten people. It was a picture of the coming Redeemer and His sacrifice which would take away the sin of the world (John 1:29).
 - b. Adam, no doubt at the instruction of God, passed this idea of blood sacrifice onto his descendants as a way to deal with sin. Gen 4:1-5--Adam's first two sons, Cain and Abel, each brought an offering to the Lord. Abel's offering was accepted; Cain's was not.
 1. Cain approached God on the basis of what he had produced, the fruit of his land, not the blood of an animal. He chose to do it "his way". Cain chose independence from God. I John 3:12
 2. Once again, just as with Adam, God came looking for Cain and spoke to him, seeking to help him. v7--But If you refuse to obey, watch out. Sin is waiting to attack you, longing to destroy you. But you can conquer it. (Living Bible)
 - c. Cain did not listen to God and ended up killing his brother (the first murder). Once again, God approached Cain after this awful sin, speaking to him without incinerating him.
 1. God banished Cain for his sin (v12,14). This was not arbitrary or capricious. It is a picture of ultimate end of sin -- loss of a home with Father God. Cain would have moved from place to place as a continual testimony of the fate of those who choose independence from God (v24).
 2. Cain cried that his punishment was more than he could bear (v13). This word is the same used in Isa 53:6 for iniquity. Jesus bore our iniquity, the guilt and punishment of sin.
 3. God had mercy on Cain, giving him a lifetime to repent; no one was permitted to kill him. v15
 3. Despite the fall of man through Adam's sin, despite the first death of a being made in the image of God through Cain's sin, God did not destroy or abandon either one. God moved toward them when they moved away. He came to them with help: the promise of redemption; the provision of blood sacrifice; continued instruction concerning their condition and their need for a Savior.
- C. Gen 4:16-24--Cain journeyed east of Eden. Sin began to spread among his descendents. We are told of Lamech, who took two wives, violating God's plan of one wife (Gen 2:24). In a poem that suggests men were trying to seduce his wife, Lamech made a self-sufficient boast against God. (v19,23,24)
1. Adam and Eve had another son, Seth. His name means appointed or substituted, indicating their understanding that God's promise to them of a Redeemer would come through this son.
 - a. Seth had a son Enos, which means frailty, a recognition of man's need before God. v26--It was during his lifetime that men first began to call themselves "the Lord's people". (Living Bible).
 1. In Gen 5 lists the genealogical record from Adam through Seth because this is the righteous line through which the Redeemer will come. Luke 3:38 tells us that.
 2. This record also makes it clear that the curse of death is at work in the earth. v5,8,11,14,17,20
 - b. Gen 5:21-24--We are given some fascinating details about Enoch, the seventh from Adam through Seth. His name means dedication. Enoch walked with God -- lived close to God (Moffatt); went on in God's ways (Basic). Heb 11:5 tells us Enoch pleased God.
 1. God took Enoch to heaven without Enoch seeing physical death. That was not God's special "reward" to him because he was so good. His translation was a testimony to men that, for those who know God, life continues even when you leave this earth.

2. Adam was alive during the first 308 years of Enoch's life. No doubt they talked about Eden and the world before sin. Enoch was a prophet who added to the prophecy given in Gen 3:15.
3. We know that Enoch prophesied that the Lord was coming with His saints to deal with all those who have chosen to live "godless" lives -- lives independent of God. Jude 14,15
2. At age 65 Enoch had a son, Methuselah, who fathered Lamech, who fathered Noah (v21,26,29). How does a flood that wiped out all life on the earth "fit" with our discussion of God, man, and sin?
 - a. Noah and the ark is actually a picture of the Redeemer Jesus and His ministry. Noah's name means comfort or rest. Jesus brings comfort and rest to all those who trust in Him.
 - b. When Noah was born, his father Lamech prophesied that Noah would bring relief or comfort from the curse in the earth. Gen 5:29--This boy will bring us relief from our work, and from the hard labor that has come upon us because of the Lord's curse upon the ground. (NEB)
 1. God did not curse the earth. The verb tense in Gen 3 makes it clear that the curse of death came because of Adam's sin. Gen 3:17-19; Rom 5:12; 8:20; etc.
 2. Since the fall of man and the entrance of sin and the curse into the earth, God has promised: I will undo all of this. The prophets spoke of a coming restoration of all things through the Redeemer. Acts 3:21--When all things are put right (Basic); until the whole world is recreated (Rieu); until the final recovery of all things from sin (Taylor).
 3. Noah's flood prefigured the final cleansing and restoration of the earth still to come at the Second Coming of Jesus. Just as all who were in Noah's ark survived the cleansing process, so all who are in Jesus the Ark will survive that final cleansing.
3. The flood was not: God got really mad and decided to wipe out the human race. It was intervention by God. Normally, free will and its consequences (all of them) prevail. But there have been times when God's very plan for redemption was in danger of being derailed and God intervened -- like the flood.
 - a. By the time of Noah, the descendants of Seth, the righteous line through which the Redeemer was to come, was in danger of being wiped out by sin. They were intermarrying with Cain's descendants and being corrupted. Gen 6:2
 - b. If Seth's entire line was corrupted by sin, then God's promise of the seed of the woman (Mary) who would bruise the serpent's head (break his power) would not have been fulfilled.
 1. God had to preserve the line through which the Redeemer would come and rid the earth of the corruption that could have influenced Noah, the only remaining righteous man in Seth's line.
 2. Gen 6:11-13--Men had filled the earth with violence and corruption. All flesh corrupted its way. The word corrupt is often translated destroy. The corruption of sin brings destruction.
 - c. God was sorry it had come to this. God did not make men for this pitiful state. Gen 6:5,6--When the Lord saw the extent of human wickedness and that the trend and direction of men's lives were only toward evil, He was sorry He had made them. It broke His heart. (Living Bible)
4. God did not blindside anyone. He made it clear from the start what He was going to do. Gen 6:13,17
 - a. God gave the world 120 years to come back to Him. Gen 6:3--My spirit must not forever be disgraced in man, wholly evil as he is. I will give him 120 years to mend his ways. (Living Bible)
 - b. During that time, God worked to draw men to repentance. He sent prophets to plead with them and to warn them to turn away from sin, back toward Him.
 1. Enoch preached to them of coming judgment. Noah preached righteousness -- rightness and right relationship with God (II Pet 2:5). Men saw him working on the ark during that period.
 2. Although it doesn't say so, Methuselah and Lamech may have preached to men, too. Methuselah's name was a sermon. It means, "When he dies, it shall be sent; after him the judgment". He died the year of the flood, having lived 969 years, longer than any other human, showing God's patience with men. Gen 5:27; II Pet 3:9
 - c. There were people on earth during Noah's lifetime who actually knew Adam and Eve.
 1. Adam was alive during the first 243 years of Methuselah's life; Lamech was alive during last

50 years of Adam's life. Adam's grandson, Enos, died when Noah was 98.

2. All of these people could have heard Adam talk about God and the Garden of Eden. People living before the flood had the testimony of two human beings (Adam and Eve) who actually walked with God on earth. There was a witness of Eden and life before sin in the earth.
- d. Gen 7:4--God gave one final warning that there were only seven days left until the flood.
 1. Those who obeyed the Lord's command to come into the ark were shut in by the Lord Himself -- a beautiful picture of God's provision and protection for those who are His (Gen 7:16).
 2. For the next year, Noah and his family, and all the animals rode out the flood and its aftermath in the safety of the ark.

5. Gen 8:1--The Lord remembered Noah and the inhabitants of the ark. "Remembered" is a Hebraism for "began to act on their behalf".

- a. Gen 8:4--The ark rested. This is the second time the word rested appears in the Bible. The first was when God rested from the word of creation (Gen 2:2,3).
 1. It was the seventeenth day of the seventh month. Jesus rose from the dead on the seventeenth day of the seventh month of the civil calendar in used by the Jews at that time.
 2. This is picture of the deliverance from the judgment for sin for those who are in Jesus.
- b. God blessed Noah and his family and gave them the same commission He had given Adam: Be fruitful, multiply, subdue the earth (Gen 9:1,2).
 1. God entered into covenant with Noah and every living creature, promising that there would never again be a world wide flood. The rainbow was to be a sign of the covenant. Gen 9:8-17
 2. The rainbow was to be a perpetual reminder to all men that death is the price of sin, but in God there is life. God's ark, His Redeemer, would take men from death to life.
- c. When Noah left the ark he build an altar and resumed the practice of blood sacrifices. He had taken animals onto the ark specifically for sacrifice Gen 8:20; Gen 7:2,3
 1. After the flood, God gave men permission to eat meat. There were no restrictions on what kinds of animals they could eat. The only restriction was: Don't eat the blood. Gen 9:3,4
 2. The blood was for sacrifice. The blood represents the life sacrificed for sin, in place of the guilty one. It is substitutionary death -- a picture of what the Redeemer would do.

D. Conclusion: Sin is a real issue that must be dealt with -- and has been dealt with through the Cross (more on that in future lessons).

1. You can't let what you think you know about God and sin shape your view of reality. You have to get your information from the Bible. You have to look at the big picture.
 - a. When we look at God, our sin, and us in terms of the big picture we see that man's sin did not take God by surprise. Since the fall of man He has been working out His plan to undo the damage.
 - b. God has been working to show men the destructiveness of sin in this life and the life to come, to show men their need for a Savior, and to draw men back to Himself so He could have His family
2. God punished our sin in Jesus so He could remove it and have His sons back again -- transformed from sinners into saints. More next week!