

Last week we looked at who Jesus is and now we will look at why He had to come to this earth.

1. In the beginning

Read Genesis 1:26-31. Also Genesis 2:8-9 and 2:15-17

- a) When God created us, what sort of people did he make us to be? (Genesis 1:27)

- b) Who did God choose to put in charge of everything else he had made? (Genesis 1:26)

- c) How did God feel after He had made us? (Genesis 1:31)

- d) What were the names of the two trees that God had made grow in the middle of the Garden of Eden?? (Genesis 2:9)

- e) What was the one command that God had told Adam that he must not do and what would happen if Adam disobeyed?? (Genesis 2:17)

In the beginning, God created a perfect world including man and woman. God created mankind with the ability to love, and to choose. At this point in history, perfect people lived in a perfect environment in a perfect relationship with each other and in perfect harmony with God. We know that this is not even close to the situation we have today...so what went wrong??

2. If God created a perfect world then what went wrong?

Read Genesis Chapter 3. This Chapter in the Bible is an important foundation for Christians because it reveals the craftiness of the devil, the consequences of sin and the resulting suffering that the world now lives in.

- a) In your own words, what is sin?

- b) Who led Adam and Eve to disobey God's command?? How did he convince Adam and Eve to eat the Fruit? (Gen 3:1-5)

The very moment that Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, sin entered the world, changing everything forever. Christians call this event, "the fall of man" or "the fall" because it is when humanity first fell into sin and guilty disobedience against God. Notice that the first thing that happened to Adam and Eve after they ate the fruit was that they had lost their innocence. Their eyes were opened and they realised they were naked. They were already feeling shame. So they made coverings for their bodies.

The second thing that we see is that Adam and Eve were afraid of God and they hid from him.

The third thing that you notice is that neither Adam nor Eve wanted to take responsibility for their actions. They had blown it and they knew it. Adam blames Eve, and Eve blames the serpent for deceiving her. No one wants to own their sin!

As a result of the Serpent's deception and mankind's disobedience, God curses the serpent, the man, the woman and even the earth itself. What are some of the curses that were put on:

- a) The serpent. (Gen. 3:14-15)

- b) Adam, the man. (Gen. 3:17-19)

- c) Eve, the woman. (Gen. 3:16)

- d) Both the man and the woman. (Gen 3:22-24)

- e) The Earth (Gen 3:17)

Sin bought death, separation, sorrow, pain and hardship to Adam and Eve – and it still does to us today. Sin brought a huge, ugly stain onto God's creation. Human's were made in God's image and were meant to reflect who He was but instead we tried to become, 'like God'. We wanted to be in charge, we wanted the control and most of all we wanted to decide for ourselves what was good and evil. And every one of us has inherited this disease of sin from Adam. Even now, from birth our natural tendency is to have it our way, to please ourselves and to disobey God's holy commands.

Can we blame Adam and Eve for the fact we too will die one day?

Read Romans 5:12 before you answer.

3. How have I sinned??

You may be asking the question, but what have I done to offend God?? How have I disobeyed Him?? God reveals His pure and perfect nature to us in the Bible. And He also clearly lays out his standards for humanity. The Bible is far from being merely a rule book which an angry God uses to make his creatures feel horrible and guilty. No, his standards are set out for our benefit too. It's the Creator's guide for how our society works best. And just like a manufacturers guide for a car or a TV, if you ignore it, sooner or later you will have serious problems and then the thing will breakdown. So, God set out laws and commands to help society work as well as to reveal His holy and perfect nature.

Read Exodus 20:1-17 and think about whether you have kept God laws. Keep in mind that coveting means being envious and greedy. False testimony is another word for lying. Then write down some of the ways you have broken God's commands.

Jesus spoke about of these commands and expressed how serious it is to break them. **Read Matthew 5:21-22, and then verses 27-30.**

- a) What do these verses say about Lust and Anger??

- b) What drastic action does Jesus talk about to illustrate the seriousness of sin??

You may be thinking, but I have only broken one or two of God's commands. How is it fair that I should face judgement and be punished?? Well, if you were to apply that same argument to a criminal who committed a crime, they could say the same thing. "I have always obeyed all the road rules, I have never stolen anything, it's not fair that I should go to jail for murdering that man!!"

James 2:10 tells us that 'whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.'

Unfortunately, this is the human condition. We have sinful and rebellious hearts which are evil. Jesus elaborated on this. **Read Jesus' words in Mark 7:20-23.**

b) Where does the evil behaviour that is mentioned there come from??

Fortunately, God has offered a remedy to this disease which we will look at in detail later. But first let us examine the consequences of sin.

4. The Results of Sin

a. Separation from God

Read Isaiah 59:2 What is the result of our sin?

This separation is the very reason that we don't see God walking around on earth today. He is repelled by sin. Sin grieves and hurts God because at its core, sin is a rejection of God and His ways.

This separation continues into the afterlife. Heaven is God's home. He doesn't welcome strangers or enemies into his glorious presence.

b. God's Righteous Judgement and Eternal Punishment

We often hear how God is loving and kind, but He is also a God of justice. Justice demands punishment for wrong. Each and every man and woman 'is destined to **die once**, and after that to face judgment' (Heb. 9:27).

'But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

God "will give to each person according to what he has done." To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.' -Romans 2:6-8

'It is a **dreadful** thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' -Heb 10:31

Some people have a relaxed attitude about hell – "so I'm separated from God, what's the big deal?" or you may hear people say something like "I don't care if I go to hell, it will just be a big party with all my mates". The Bible's description of hell contradicts this popular belief that it's all one big party. To the contrary, heaven is where the party is and hell is a place of continuous and miserable torment.

We will explore God's eternal judgement later in the course, but the good news is that hell is totally avoidable.

c. Bad consequences in this life.

Some of the more obvious consequences of sin can be observed clearly in the world we live in. You may have already experienced them in your life. When you break God's commands there is devastating consequences for you and those around you. For e.g. If you lie, people will be reluctant to believe and trust you. You may find it hard to keep friends for this very reason!!

God's way is the best way to live and when we reject his way and follow our own sinful plans then we land ourselves in trouble, even in this life!!

5. Jesus is God's solution for our sin-

Despite our sin, God still loved mankind. It was, and still is, God's ultimate desire to restore the relationship that was lost through sin. It is not God's desire for any to miss out on eternity with Him and complete fulfilment with Him in the present life.

The whole reason God came down to earth as Jesus is because he didn't want to be separated from His creation. He never intended us to die, it was *our* decision. But He loved us so much that He did something about it. His love caused Him to act in a way never seen before on earth or in heaven.

Read Romans 5:8 and 1 Peter 3:18

a). How did Jesus fix the problem of sin?

Jesus died on the cross, taking the punishment for our sin and dying on our behalf. He took our place, so that we who were guilty could be declared innocent and escape God's judgement. God decided to do this himself by sending Jesus to die for you and me. He bore our punishment that God's justice might be met.

This is a free gift for *all* men and women (and boys and girls) and yet something is required of us. Knowing that Jesus died for us is still not sufficient. God's forgiveness is a gift. Although we may be offered a gift it never becomes ours until we receive it. What does God require of us in order to receive the gift He offers? –Faith and Repentance. We'll look at this in the next chapter.

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

b) What will happen to us if we continue to reject God and disobey Him?

c) Write out and memorise Romans 5:8.

d) Do you have any more comments or questions?