

CHRISTADELPHIAN BIBLE POSTAL COURSE



Tutor's Name: _____

Date: _____

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LESSON 2 • God so loved the world

WEEKLY READINGS
READING FOR STUDY PAPER

Genesis 4-6, Luke 4-6
Isaiah, chapter 53

What is wrong with the world?

Something is wrong with the world we live in - on this we must all agree. Open your newspaper any day, and you will be sure to see accounts of murders, frauds, and crimes; fighting and threat of war. We are so used to these things, that we take them for granted. But if we stop to think about them, we are bound to ask, "Why?"

Surely, when God first made the world - and made it such a perfect dwelling place for men - He intended something better than the world of trouble and uncertainty that we live in today.

The beginning of the trouble

In the beginning, when God made the very first man, called Adam, He taught him His ways. He also gave Adam a simple law, and, just as a father expects obedience from his children, so God expected obedience from Adam.

God said,

"Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"

(Gen.2:16-17).

Adam disobeyed God. His disobedience led eventually to death, as God has said it would. It also made it easier for Adam to sin next time, and more than that - all his descendants were born with this tendency to sin.

In Rom.5:12, we read,

"...as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

So we see that Adam sinned, and, because he was a sinner, he died. We also sin and die. When you read in Isaiah 53, did you notice the words of verse 6? -

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way"

The prophet Jeremiah tells us the same thing, in different words, when he says,

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer.17:9).

We read these things in the Bible, and we know from our own feelings that they are true, just as the apostle Paul did when he said,

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom.7:18).

We all have to agree with Paul - somehow, we never manage to be as good as we want to be.

What is the remedy?

Before he sinned, Adam walked in friendship with God. Now that friendship was broken. Adam was a sinner, and could no longer have fellowship with his Maker.

Adam probably did not know what a lot of trouble he was starting. Ever since then, for thousands of years, every one of his descendants (including you and me!) has followed in his footsteps and sinned (every one except Jesus, of course). And because we are all sinful, we are all cut off from God. What hopeless state! Men could do nothing to save themselves.

But God, in His love and His pity, did not leave men to die in their sins. He provided a way in which they would come to Him, and have life. We read in Joh.3:16,

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life". Now it is always easier to make something if you have a good pattern to go by. A child learns to speak by imitating his parents. And so we may learn to be better men and women, by taking Jesus as our pattern, and learning all we can about Him, and trying to be like Him.

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When we look at Jesus, we see what God wants us to be.

Jesus and the cross

Jesus never sinned. He always did those things that pleased God. And yet they crucified Him!

God did not save Him from this terrible death. The verse we have already quoted from Isaiah goes on to say, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all".

The Bible teaches us plainly that through the death of Jesus on the cross, in obedience to His Father's will, we may have our sins forgiven, and may have a hope of life.

There is something very wonderful about this - the love of God in giving His only Son, and the loving obedience of that Son to His Father's will. By believing in Him, we may have life. We cannot think about this too often. We shall come back to it again and again in all our searching of the Bible, because it is at the heart of the Christian's hope.

Believing in Him

John, chapter 3, verse 16, tells us that, "Whosoever believeth in Him (Jesus) should not perish, but have everlasting life".

Does that mean that we have only believing in Jesus. If we really believe, we shall find out what He wants us to do, and do it to the best of our powers.

Only if we do this, can we hope to be among those who "will not perish, but have everlasting life".

Summary

1. Adam, the father of the human race, sinned, and so God made him die.
2. We are like him; we also sin, and therefore we die.
3. God will forgive us our sins, and give us eternal life, if we believe in Jesus.
4. If we really believe in Jesus, we shall want to do what He tells us.