

CHRISTADELPHIAN BIBLE POSTAL COURSE

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Date: _____

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LESSON 11 • Bible teaching about Life and Death -1WEEKLY READINGS
READING FOR STUDY PAPERGenesis 36 - 38, James 4 - 5
Psalm 49, Genesis 2

"I can't do the things I used to when I was younger" - how often we hear those words. And how true they are! We don't have to wait until we reach our 70s to find our powers failing, either.

Even in middle age we cannot move as fast or think as quickly as we did when we were young.

We spend our life growing old, and we know for a certainty - if we stop to think about it - that one day we shall die. The words of the Psalmist are true when he says,

"The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away"

(Psalm 90, verse 10).

All men die. It has been truly said that the only certain thing about living is that one day we shall die.

The first man on the earth

Why is it that we all grow old and die? To find the answer we must turn to the first book of the Bible, and read about the very first man and woman.

God made the world as a very lovely place for men and women to live in. He created the plants and animals first, and then, when all was ready, He made a man.

It tells us in Genesis, chapter 2, verse 7 that,

"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground."

With wonderful skill a human body was formed.

We can picture that lifeless body lying on the ground. What happened next? God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis, chapter 2, verse 7).

The man began to breathe. He was alive! He could see, and hear, and think and feel - surely he was the most wonderful of the things which God had made.

Adam is lonely

Genesis, chapter 2, verse 8,

"The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed."

Adam - for that was the name which God gave to this man - looked after the garden. He was told by God that he could eat any of the fruit he likes - except for one tree, which is called "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" . God warned him,

"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"

(Genesis, chapter 2, verse 17).

Adam had only the animals for company; and they couldn't think in the same way as he could. He became lonely, and God said,

"It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis, chapter 2, verse 18).

You will read in verses 21-23 how God put Adam to sleep, took one of his ribs, and shaped it into a woman - someone to be with Adam and share his life.

Adam and Eve break God's law

Now read Genesis, chapter 3, verses 1-13 and you will see how the first woman, Eve, broke God's law by listening to the serpent, and how Adam also disobeyed God.

By breaking God's law they had sinned; and as we have already seen, the wages of sin is death. Adam and Eve knew that, too, for God had said to them,

"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"

(Genesis, chapter 2, verse 17).

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The punishment

The serpent was punished for his part in causing the trouble. Adam and Eve were condemned to death, and driven out of the garden.

Although they lived a long time after this, Adam and his wife became dying creatures - and, just like us, they would get tired and sick, and at last grow old and die. The words of God were certain -

"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis, chapter 3, verse 19).

You will remember how, when God made Adam, He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis, chapter 2, verse 7). All human beings are 'living souls', but when they stop breathing, their life has gone - they become 'dead souls'.

As the writer of the book of Ecclesiastes says,

"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun." (Ecclesiastes, chapter 9, verses 5-6).

Or, as we read in Psalm 146, verses 3-4,

"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

Sin and death in the world

The apostle Paul helps us to understand how this affects us. In Romans, chapter 5, verse 12, he says,

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

Adam and Eve became sinners. We are their children, and so we are sinners too.

Our very nature is a sinful nature; or as Paul puts it, we are by nature "children of disobedience" . Like our father, Adam, we sin, and, like him, we die.

It is not our fault that we have a sinful nature, and it certainly is not God's fault. It was Adam's fault, and our misfortune. We are being very foolish if we blame God. Instead we should thank Him. We should thank Him because He has given us a chance to live at all, which we have no right to, really; and we should especially thank Him for giving us a way of escape from our hopeless plight. We are not blamed for being born with a sinful nature, but we deserve great blame if we neglect God's offer of a way of escape.

Summary

1. God made Adam from the dust of the ground.
2. He caused him to live, by breathing into his nostrils the breath of life.
3. God gave Adam a commandment. He told him that if he broke this commandment, the punishment would be death.
4. Adam and Eve broke God's commandment. They became dying creatures.
5. All men are descended from Adam; all are sinners, and all die.
6. As we shall see in the next three lessons, Christ brought men a hope of life.