

## LESSON 12



## PROBATION AND THE FALL OF MAN

*Scripture Texts: Genesis 2:16-17; Genesis 3:6; Genesis 3:17-19*

Some educators teach that man has had a history of consistent upward progress, slow indeed, but ever upward. This view starts with the assumption that primitive man was a base savage and that through slow processes of evolution he has passed through the various stages of civilization to his present high position near the pinnacle of human perfection. Such theories are at variance with the Bible and the Christian religion.

Obvious facts furnish abundance of evidence that there is something fundamentally wrong with human nature that education and culture have not corrected and show no evidence of ability to correct. Either man as he came from the hand of God was defective or a terrible calamity has befallen him. The Bible declares the latter. The dispute is between the biblical doctrine of the fall of man and the need of redemption. And the theory that man is essentially good and can by his own effort bring himself to a high plane of perfection.

**MEMORY VERSE:** *"Wherefore, 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."*

*Romans 5:12*

### Man Was Placed Under Probation

We must take the essential teachings of Genesis 2:16-17 as literal lessons to us from God, or we will miss the significance of the whole story.

God gave to man a definite command that he should not partake of a certain tree. This command placed man under direct responsibility concerning a certain act. His response to this command would prove his loyalty to God or his lack of it. Adam was told plainly the consequence of disobedience.

Man was created with a moral constitution, which includes the power of moral choice and the exercise of free will. The man whom He had created God declared to be very good. There was nothing about his nature that led toward sin. He was created pure and upright. God was to Adam a loving companion who offered him every incentive to do right. He promised blessings for obedience and warned of the effects of sin. The responsibility for obedience remained with man.

Love for God can be proved only through obedience voluntarily given. For this reason the first man was placed under probation, and likewise all men must pass through a period of probation to develop character. Character is developed by making decisions for right or for wrong.

### Man Yielding to Temptation Caused the Fall

The tempter, in the form of a serpent, began to question God's Word. First a doubt is hurled at God's command. Next he boldly challenged the truthfulness of God's statement, and after calling God a liar, he tried to attack God's

motive. He broke down Eve's resistance and persuaded her to disobey God. Adam and Eve's eyes were opened as the serpent had promised, and they experienced the pangs of a guilty conscience. They had come to know evil. This is seen in Adam's effort to evade God and His attempt to excuse his sin by placing the blame on Eve. Adam experienced spiritual death. He lost fellowship with God, and no more did he walk with God in the cool of the day. He had been cut off from the Tree of Life of the soul.

Adam immediately became enslaved to sin. He found he was no longer the master he had been. Suffering and sorrow were increased.

Eve conversed with the serpent, yielded to his temptation, made her decision, and disobeyed God. Then she induced Adam to join her in her sin. Now judgment was pronounced on their disobedience. The result of his sin was death.

### **JUST A THOUGHT**

**A lot of people need to give their minds a bath.**