

What's the Message – Lesson Four

STANDARD OPENING

New Text

ANNCR: 1. Today's study is Lesson Four – Man, the Rebel.

Music concludes

NARATR: 2. Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Savior. May the Lord bless you through this study, and enable you to understand more fully what it means to rebel against God, and the consequences of that action. Amen.

3. In our last lesson we saw that a right relationship with God was the starting point for a life of perfection in God's garden, walking and talking with Him daily.

4. God had, however, placed one limitation on Adam and Eve. Not ten commandments. Just one. In chapter 2, verses 16 and 17, we read:

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat of it you shall die."

5. That was all God asked. Obedience was all that was required.

6. Now in chapter three, a new character is introduced. It is Satan, the Devil, the great deceiver. Back in lesson two we referred to the Devil and his technique of creating doubt about anything God has said.

7. Now we see him apply this approach to Eve. In the very first verse of chapter three of Genesis, Satan had entered or assumed the form of a serpent, and he spoke to Eve, asking: *Did God say . . . ?* To get a better idea of the sense of this, let's add one word to that phrase, as follows: Did God really say . . .? Now, do you better see the viciousness of Satan's question and its purpose? It was to create doubt in Eve's mind. And how does she respond? She not only repeats back what God had said about not eating the fruit, but she adds another restriction to it with the phrase, *neither shall we touch it*.

8. She had bitten on Satan's bait, and now he started to reel her in. Satan replied, *You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God . . .*

9. There it was. The temptation is now in full bloom, striking at the weakest point in the human psyche. Being what I was created to be is not enough. I want to be the equal of God. I want to be the one that is in charge.

10. And so Eve begins to rationalize. Verse 6 tells us: *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate . . .* But she didn't stop there. She also gave some to her husband, and he ate of it, too.

11. They had both done it. They had rebelled. Willfully and knowingly they had disobeyed the one command God had given them. And the consequences of this action soon came crashing down on them.

12. Verse 8 tells us that their initial action was to try and cover themselves, and to hide from God. But note God's first words to Adam. In verse 9 God calls out and says, "*Where are you?*" As if to say, "why aren't you here walking beside me, where you belong?" Then Adam admits he was trying to hide, and realizes that God knows precisely what he has done.

13. Now the blame game starts. Adam says, the woman that I did not even ask for in the first place, the one that You gave me anyway . . . she ate of the forbidden tree, and then gave some to me to eat. Of course, Eve points to the serpent as the one who beguiled her. It was his fault. And so it has continued ever since.

14. We always look for someone whom we can unload our guilt onto, rather than admit our failure and our sin.

15. So God placed a curse on Satan and pronounced the future of Adam and Eve and what their lives would be like from then on. Verse 19 gives the painful finality of it all . . . *In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.* And then God cast them out of the garden and from His presence, and they were incapable – acting on their own – to ever re-enter that garden again.

16. Now, Teacher, what is the message for us today in this ancient story?

TEACHR: 17. First, that God is the Creator and Supreme Ruler, not us. He is the One who sets the rules and conditions, and it is our duty to obey. Throughout all recorded history we see the story of Eden repeated . . . again and again. Man was created in the image of God, to walk by the heavenly Father's side . . . but that wasn't enough for Adam. He wanted to be like God . . . and to assume the role of God, to be the one in charge. But we are never up to the task; it is far beyond our capabilities. And when we fail, for we most certainly will fail, we are the ones who will suffer the consequences.

18. Second. But even in the midst of this original sin, and the pronouncement of judgment . . . judgment that has subsequently been passed down from generation to generation . . . God is making a promise of One who will come from the seed of the woman . . . One who will conquer Satan.

Music up, then fade behind . . .

NARATR: 19. We will learn more about this promise in forthcoming lessons. Next time we will see more sin, as it multiplies.

STANDARD CLOSE

Study Aids

Discussion Questions and Suggested Readings for “What’s the Message?” Lessons

Lesson Four

Questions:

This lesson speaks of the Devil’s favorite trick, to get you to doubt something God has said or done. Have you experienced him trying this trick on you? Can you share an example?

We often speak of “free will”. Did Adam have the free will, or capability, of choosing not to sin?

Is it accurate to call Adam and Eve rebels? Did they truly realize what they were doing? How does the “image of God” play into your answer?

Do you ever try to run away from God and hide? Do you know anyone who does?

We call Adam’s sin the original sin, and teach that it was then handed down from generation to generation as our natural condition. Luther called it our “old Adam” that must daily be drowned and died. How do you see it?

Suggested reading for further study:

Luther’s explanation of the Third Article of The Apostle’s Creed, and Part IV of the presentation on the Sacrament of Baptism – The Significance of Baptizing With Water, in the **Small Catechism**.

The advanced student may find the **Creation and Fall**, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer a penetrating study of Genesis, chapters 1-3.