

## Lesson 2 Commentary

### What Is Sin?

Review/ What did we learn about God in the first study?

**God is holy and just, so he must judge sin, but he also loves those whom he made and sent his Son to die in their place for their sins.**

1. **Genesis 1:27** What is the basic relationship of man and woman to God?

**All human beings relate to God as creatures to their Creator.**

Humans are the only creatures God made in his image. This means that we have qualities of personality in common with God, such as mind, will and emotions, but not uniquely divine attributes, such as omniscience (knowing everything) and omnipotence (having all power). Being created in God's image also means that we were created with the ability to display the holy character of God.

2. **1:26-31** What did God think of them in the beginning?

**God declared that the man and woman he had made were “very good.”**

One evidence of God's high regard for man and woman was that he blessed them and gave them dominion over all that he had made. Psalm 8 describes humans as “a little lower than God and crowned with glory (God's holiness)...(and) ruler over the works of your (God's) hands.” Because of our sin, we lost our position as ruler, but the writer of Hebrews reminds us that we do see Jesus “crowned with glory and honor” (2:9). Those who put their faith in him will be brought to glory (2:10) and restored at the end of history to their place of dominion over creation.

3. **6:5-7** By the time of this passage, what did God think of the people he had made?

**“The LORD was grieved that he had made man.”**

This does not mean that God thought he had made a mistake but that he was filled with sadness at how wicked people had become.

4. Why did he want to destroy them? Also see **Romans 3:23**.

**People had become wicked. They had fallen from the holy image (glory) of God in which they were created.**

What God had made very good had become very bad; what he had made holy had become sinful. The three superlatives - *every, only, all* - leave no doubt about the hopeless and helpless depth of depravity to which humanity had fallen.

5. **2:15-17, 3:1-11** What had happened to change people and God's thinking about them?

**They disobeyed God by eating fruit off the tree from which God commanded them not to eat.**

6. What attitude is the basic offense against God that leads to the act of disobeying him?

**The basic offense against God is the attitude of rebellion, choosing to do what we want rather than what God says.**

Sin is rebellion against God, but active defiance is not the only form it takes. Passive indifference is also rebellious. God is just as offended by those who disregard him as he is by those who disobey him. “In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God” (Psalm 10:4). Ignoring God, leaving him out of our lives, is as much evidence of rebellion as

deliberately violating his commands. Rebellion also has as much to do with the purposes for which we live as it does the principles by which we live. God is as grieved by our failure to pursue his purposes as he is by our failure to practice his principles.

7. Who else was involved in this situation?

**The serpent - an animal through which Satan, the enemy of God, spoke.**

Serpents may have been very attractive animals before they were cursed. Satan, or the devil, was originally an angel, a spiritual being created by God. He rebelled against God and was thrown out of heaven and down to earth, where he continues to oppose God and his people. The origin of the devil is explained in Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:12-19, where he is portrayed as embodied in wicked kings.

Satan's strength is greater than ours but less than God's (1 John 4:4), and his efforts to oppose God are limited to those allowed by God (Job 1). He is described by Jesus as the "father of lies" (John 8:44), and he is destined to eternal punishment (Revelation 20:7-10).

8. What did the serpent say about God's command and warning?

**Satan distorted God's word that Adam and Eve were not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and he denied God's warning that they would die if they did eat its fruit.**

Satan's tactics have not changed. First, he asked Eve if God had said that she and Adam were not to eat from "any" tree in the garden. He still tries to turn us away from God's will by distorting his word, especially by suggesting that God's way is too narrow and that we will miss the best in life if we submit to it. Eve recognized Satan's deception but seems to have accepted Satan's implication that God is too restrictive and falsely attributed to him a prohibition against even touching the fruit.

Satan not only distorts God's word, he tries to raise doubt in our minds about the consequences of disobeying it. In the case of Adam and Eve, he contradicted God's warning that they would "surely die" (Genesis 2:17) with the blatant assertion that they would "not surely die" (3:4).

9. Did Adam and Eve believe God or Satan?

**They believed Satan.**

Men and women still believe the lies of Satan rather than the word of God.

10. Why did Adam and Eve disobey God?

**They desired equality with God and doubted the word of God, wanting to decide for themselves what was right and best for them. The fruit looked good to them, and they trusted their own judgment more than God's word.**

Behind all sin is the failure to believe God's warning of consequences if we do not obey him and the promise of contentment if we do. "No good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless" (Psalms 84:11). "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6). The challenge is the same today: do we believe God or not.