



## Ministry of Reconciliation (MOR) Bible Teachings

The January 2016 article discussed the Ministry of Reconciliation we are each given. This month's focus is on why God needed to reconcile men and women back to Him. This will help you understand the purpose of the Ministry of Reconciliation we have.

This teaching will use the Word of God to show how man was formed, made and created and how man was initially a three-part being, consisting of body, soul and spirit. We will read the commandment God gave to Adam and Eve and how Eve was deceived. We will understand what died in Adam and Eve when they disobeyed God's commandment and how God restored our spiritual connection with Him through His son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Before we read God's Word on the above topics, we must be aware of two points. First, God had conferred upon Adam the original dominion, ruler-ship, and authority over His creation on the condition that Adam did not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam had the legal rights to transfer the dominion, ruler-ship, and authority to whomever he wanted. This dominion was not transferred to the devil until Adam disobeyed God. When Adam allowed the senses to rule his thinking, instead of trusting the words he had received via the spirit of God, calamity resulted. Secondly, the serpent, as Lucifer, had been the bright and morning star. When Lucifer fell from God's grace, he became a master at counterfeiting anything that had ever been exhibited on the senses' level. He knew how to disguise evil as light and lies as truth.

Let's begin by understanding how man was formed, made and created by reading Isaiah 43:7:

*Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.*

In accordance with the Word of God, man was created, formed and made by God. In Genesis 1: 26-27, we see how God initially made man a three-part being - body, soul and spirit:

*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*

So what is the image of God? These verses do not tell us what God's image is. John 4:24 tells us what the image of God is. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

The image of God is Spirit. He has no body and no soul. He is only Spirit. Since man and woman were formed, made and created in God's image, and God is spirit, what are man and woman? Genesis 2:7 gives us this information.

*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

God's Word tell us that "God formed man of the dust of the ground" which is man's body. Then God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" - this is breath life. Finally, "God created man in his own image" - this is spirit. Adam had body, soul, and spirit. According to 1 Thessalonians 5:23, every born again Christian has the spirit of God.

*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ [underlines added].*

Adam's body was formed from the dust of the ground. Breath life was made, and spirit was created in Adam. This is how man initially had body, soul, and spirit.

Once Adam is formed, made, and created, God gives him one commandment in Genesis 2: 15-17:

And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 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 [underlines added].

God commanded Adam, "*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*" [underlines added]. This commandment is pretty simple and straight forward: Yes - to all trees except one, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Once Adam accepted and obeyed God's commandment, he lived well and peaceful.

Then God made a woman for man in Genesis 2: 18, 21-23:

*And the LORD God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*

Adam and Eve lived and prospered in the Garden. They were body, soul, and spirit. They were as God intended them to be, until Eve met and had a conversation with the serpent. We turn to Genesis 3:1 to see this encounter:

*Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

Before we understand these verses, let me clarify about the word "serpent." The serpent is one of the names of the devil/diablos/Satan/adversary. Serpent is a figure of speech, and cannot be taken literally in that sense. As a figure of speech, it emphasizes the extraordinary craftiness of the devil, Lucifer, and how he performed with such subtlety, such prudence regarding evil, such unscrupulous conduct in his conversation with Eve. To keep in line with the scriptures, the word "serpent" will be used.

The purpose of the serpent's question in Genesis 3:1 was to get Eve to doubt God's Word. Eve knew God's instruction to Adam [Genesis 2:16-17] regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But the serpent said these three little words "*hath God said*" which raised in Eve's mind serious doubts about the commandment from God. Those words questioned both the origin and the accuracy of God's commandment.

Now Eve responds to the serpent's question in Genesis 3:2-3 and adds words.

*And the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, you shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.*

Eve considered the serpent's questioning of God's integrity. She gave a reply which fit both her understanding and responded to the serpent's question. As soon as a person begins to consider God's Word from their perspective AND fits that understanding to meet someone's perspective, they move further and further away from the meaning of God's Word. It is like the old "telephone" game. Eve interpreted God's Word differently based on what she heard the serpent ask. Then, she re-interpreted God's commandment to fit what she thought the serpent was asking. God never said "*neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.*" Eve added these words. God said in Genesis 2:17, "*for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*"

There is a big difference between "*lest ye die*" as Eve stated and "*surely die*" as commanded by God. The word "surely" implies it will happen, while the word "lest" implies it may happen. Eve changed the meaning, and the impact of the commandment God had given in Genesis 2:17.

In hearing Eve's response, the serpent recognized he has Eve caught in a change of God's commandment. The serpent knew what God had commanded, but he wanted Eve to doubt God's Word and twist it to her perspective (and ultimately the serpent's way of thinking). So the serpent responds to Eve in Genesis 3:4:

*And the serpent said unto the woman [Eve], you shall not surely die:*

The serpent said to Eve "*you shall not surely die.*" The serpent casts doubt on God's commandment in Eve's mind because she changed the meaning. The serpent focuses Eve on the exact opposite of what God said. The serpent is verifying, from his point of view, that there will be no consequences for disobedience. He reinforces for Eve, there will be no impact - she will not die - if she eats from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Once the serpent responds to Eve, she now has to make the decision to believe God or believe the serpent. We know, based on the Word God, Eve made the wrong choice and we all suffered the consequence.

The serpent continues to lure Eve down the path of disobedience in Genesis 3:5:

*For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

The serpent tempted Eve with to become "as gods [Elohim]" where she would know good and evil. We now know that was a lie by the serpent. God does not know evil experientially; he cannot experience evil or be tempted with evil (James 1:13). God wanted Adam and Eve to experience the good but to have knowledge of the evil.

There were five things that Eve did we can learned from: (1) Eve questions the integrity of the Word, (2) Eve responds to the serpent by considering or re-thinking God's commandment (God - ye shall surely die: Eve - lest ye die), (3) Eve omits key words, like "freely" (4) Eve adds words (neither shall ye touch it), and (5) Eve changes God's word ( surely to lest).

The consequence of Eve's interaction with the serpent occurs in Genesis 3:6:

*And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

The sin was that Eve and Adam disobeyed God's commandment and ate off the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve took the serpent at his word rather than believe God's commandment. Adam never had any direct confrontations with the serpent, never questioned Eve, but listened to her. Adam did not obey God's commandment.

So what was the consequence of this sin? Let's return back to God's commandment in Genesis 2:17:

*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.*

Once Eve and Adam ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God said they would surely die. But what died in Adam and Eve? It was not their bodies. It was not their breath life or soul. Adam lived to be 930 years old (Genesis 5:5). What died in Eve and Adam was their spirit. Adam and Eve's spiritual connection with God died. They no longer had the spirit of God in them. They became what the Word calls "natural man" - body and soul, but no spirit of God.

As a consequence of Adam and Eve's sin, all men and women are born without the spirit of God. They have body and soul, but no spirit. Let's look at 1 Corinthians 2:14 to understand about the "natural man:"

*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

So, we are born into this world as natural man - with body and soul. It is by being born-again of God's spirit that we receive the things of the Spirit of God. Without being born-again, the things

of the Spirit of God "*are foolishness unto you: neither can you know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" So now you can answer the question "Why does God need to reconcile men and women back to Him?" It is because we lost God's spirit when Adam and Eve disobeyed God's commandment. The spirit died in them, and we are born without it.

Fortunately for us, "*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16). Today, each person that confesses Jesus as Lord and believes in his or her heart that God raised Jesus from the dead shall be saved or born-again of God's spirit (see Romans 10:9). In summary, this teaching has shown you from the Word of God how man was formed, made and created and how man initially was a three-part being, consisting of body, soul and spirit. We read the commandment God gave to Adam and Eve and learned how the serpent twisted and deceived Eve. And we understand what died in Adam and Eve when they disobeyed God's commandment and why God needs to reconcile us back to Him. In losing the spirit of God, God needed to restore our spiritual connection with Him through His son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Next month's teaching will focus on the spiritual connection we have with God when we become born-again. This will continue to build our understanding about the Ministry of Reconciliation and how reconciling others back to God re-establishes the spiritual connection with God through His son the Lord Jesus Christ. Until next month, may God's grace be upon you and His blessings fill you with joy.

In the Lord,

Ministry of Reconciliation  
Son of God through Jesus Christ  
Ambassador for Christ