

WHAT WENT WRONG?

“And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die’.” —GENESIS 2:16-17

As we were created in the image of God, which is His moral character, then something has gone drastically wrong in our world. Were we to arrive on planet earth as complete strangers, knowing only that God had placed on earth a creature called ‘man’, which He had made in His own image, we would be in for a startling shock.

Being very keen to discover what God is like, we would watch people in action. We would walk their streets, go into their homes, read their newspapers, watch their televisions, and become increasingly disillusioned. What we would discover is that God is often greedy, full of anger, hatred, envy and jealousy. He sometimes rapes, kills, lies, steals and fights. He is proud, often prejudiced, and His first concern always seems for Himself. Why such a distorted picture? Was this not supposed to be a God of love, kindness and compassion? Why does man’s attitude and behaviour bear a consistently false witness about God?

The answer lies in a missing ingredient, which is God Himself. This goes right back to the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve chose to eat of the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They chose disobedience rather than obedience and independence rather

than dependence on God. As a result, “in Adam all die” (1 Corinthians 15:22). God was not speaking of physical death alone, but of spiritual death. He withdrew His Spirit from man, and while remaining physically alive, man would be spiritually dead. This death is what Paul describes as “the wages of sin” (Romans 6:23).

The entire human race died in Adam, and all born ever since have been born in a state of being spiritually dead, separated from the life of God. It is not correct to speak of people having to die for their sin as some future event, because death for sin took place in Adam. However, it is true to say that although we cannot die for sin, we can die in sin. That is we remain in our condition of alienation from God, and suffer the eternal consequences.

The only alternative to remaining spiritually dead is to come alive in Jesus Christ. This is the Gospel invitation; to exchange death for life and sin for righteousness. With the indwelling Spirit of Christ, we are enabled to live the way God intended, and that paints an entirely different picture. God is love. It’s His core, His very being, and when His presence is restored in active union with Him, He begins to spread His love abroad in our hearts. And through Jesus Christ we are empowered to show what God is like.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, I pray for your love to fill my life, and to help me portray to others what You are like. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: How can I better demonstrate the love of God in my heart?