

ANTHROPOLOGY (26)

- (Fact #1) - A believer's conscience should be freed from all guilt. Heb. 10:2
(Fact #2) - A believer's conscience will promote a righteous testimony. I Pet. 3:16
(Fact #3) - A believer's conscience may promote a confident prayer life. I John 3:20-22
(Fact #4) - A believer's conscience may work in perfect harmony with the Holy Spirit.
Rom. 9:1
(Fact #5) - A believer's actions can influence another believer's conscience for the better or worse. I Cor. 8:8-10
(Fact #6) - A believer's conscience promotes submission to God-ordained authority.
Rom. 13:5
(Fact #7) - A believer's conscience prompts him to patiently endure hostile environments and hostile people. I Pet. 2:19
(Fact #8) - A believer's conscience is able to testify of a godly life and testimony. II Cor. 1:12
(Fact #9) - A believer's conscience can sense that there is an accurate handling of the Word of God. II Cor. 4:2

The conscience of the believer has far greater potential than the unbeliever. However, as Dr. Ryrie stated, "Conscience may be likened to unreliable brakes on an automobile. They may do their job at times, but they cannot be counted on" (*Basic Theology*, p. 199).

The one element that will constantly keep check of our conscience is continual exposure to the Word of God. It must always be remembered that the Word of God is our authority; not our intellect, our emotions, our will or our conscience. In making decisions, we must forever be concerned with "What saith the Scriptures," not "What saith our conscience!"

QUESTION #20 – What was the environment of the first man like?

We may clearly and categorically state that the environment of the first man was perfect. The reason this question is significant to theology is because there are some modern-day anthropologists and psychologists who postulate the belief that it is possible to produce perfect behavior by designing a perfect environment. John B. Watson and B.F. Skinner are two noted behaviorists who suggest that if one can create a perfect environment, one can produce a perfect behavior.

We will certainly admit that to some extent a positive environment can positively influence people in positive ways. For example, it is far better to place a person in an environment where people fear God and His Word than to place them in an environment of degenerate heathens. Solomon continually challenged his own son to stay far away from evil people and places (i.e. Prov. 1:10, 15; 7:24-25). There is truth to the concept that ones' environment may influence ones' behavior.

However, the big problem is when it comes to God's perspective of man. Man has a major problem in that he is a sinner and no positive, environmental existence can change this reality. One may attempt to create a wonderful environment and culture, but that will not change the fact that man has a rebellious sin nature that does and says things against God.

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There was no greater environment better than Eden:

- (Observation #1) - Genesis 1:31 –Everything in the environment, from God’s classification, was “very good.” There can be no improvements.
- (Observation #2) - Genesis 1:28 –Man had complete rule over creation. He had a positive ability to work, to govern and to achieve. His authority and ability was given to him by God.
- (Observation #3) - Genesis 2:25 –Man had a perfect relationship with his mate, both emotionally and physically.
- (Observation #4) - Genesis 3:8 –Man had a perfect relationship with God. The communion and fellowship was constant and consistent.
- (Observation #5) - Genesis 2:17 –Man had only one restriction in the whole environment.

We cannot help but be impressed with the environment of the first man. It was a place of positive stimuli, the likes of which none else in this world has ever seen or experienced. We cannot blame man’s poor behavior on his environment in this instance because his environment was, by God’s classification, “very good!” Furthermore, it is clear that Adam was also created with a fully developed intelligence. It was not a lack of education which was his problem:

- 1) He named the animals. Gen. 2:19-10
- 2) He talked with God. Gen. 2:16-17
- 3) He could subdue all the earth. Gen. 1:28

We cannot blame a lack in the environment nor in the educational system for man’s failure, for everything was perfect. It is very clear that Adam and Eve had everything they needed to completely and perfectly do the will of God. However, in spite of the beautiful environment and in spite of the great educational level, they disobeyed God (Gen. 3:6).

No perfect environment, no perfect educational system, no perfect stimuli can ever produce a perfect person. Man, in and of himself, is not naturally good, nor will he volitionally choose good. There is not a positive environment anywhere in the world and there is not any amount of education that can change the reality that man is a sinner (i.e. Rom. 3:10-12).

These realities lead us to consider other important doctrinal matters pertaining to the fall.

QUESTION #21 – What were Adam and Eve like before the fall?

As we just learned, we cannot blame the environment or the educational system for the fall of man, so we must look at man himself to determine our conclusions:

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(Conclusion #1) - They were innocent .

Before the fall, Adam and Eve were completely free from any knowledge of sin.

(Conclusion #2) - They were holy .

Before the fall, Adam and Eve were completely free from any contamination of sin.

(Conclusion #3) - They were pleasing .

Genesis 1:31 informs us that God was pleased with their original condition and classified them as being “very good.”

The fall cannot be explained or understood as something God neglected to do when He created man because man was created innocent, holy and pleasing to Him.

QUESTION #22 – What are the two different types of holiness?

There are two different types of holiness found in the Bible:

(Type #1) - There is passive holiness.

This is the type of holiness Adam and Eve had when they were originally created. It is a passive holiness in that they were the recipients of it and it had never been tested. Passive holiness is a holiness that has not actively been tested and therefore the character has not been proved.

(Type #2) - There is active holiness.

This is the type of holiness that is actively tested and establishes holy, moral character.

Holy character is developed by active testing (i.e. James 1:2-4). When one is actively tested in some area and remains faithful, holy character is developed. **Passive holiness makes holy character possible, but active holiness makes holy character personal.**

Prior to God giving Adam and Eve a command “not to eat,” they had a passive holiness which had not been actively tested. Once God put Adam and Eve to an active test of obedience, their character did not stand and they fell.

Every N.T. believer has tremendous potential for developing an active holiness. When we are being tested or tempted, we may choose the reaction of the first Adam or the last Adam. If we choose the route of the first Adam, our character is weakened. If we choose the route of the last Adam, our character is strengthened. God develops holy character through active testing. The N.T. believer has great potential for becoming very holy. We should view temptation as a wonderful opportunity to develop an active holiness. By yielding to God’s Spirit, we become holy and we become strong in our character.

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QUESTION #23 – Did man originate sin?

The answer to this question is no. Man did not originate sin, but he was penalized for his sin. Man became a sinner as a result of satanic influence (Gen. 3:4-7). What this immediately tells us is that the possibility for man living out a perfect, active holiness cannot exist until Satan is non-existent in this world. Adam and Eve were not created with a sin nature and Satan was able to originate the fall. We, who are born with a sin nature, will never be perfectly holy until Satan is removed.

It is possible to develop an active holiness that is dominated by righteousness, but it is not possible to develop a perfect holiness that is developed into sinlessness. It is clear that for perfection to be a possibility, Satan cannot be in the society.

QUESTION #24 – What was the tempter like?

When we first meet Satan in Genesis, there are certain facts we may observe:

(Fact #1) - He came in the form of a serpent. Gen. 3:1; Rev. 12:9

(Fact #2) - He apparently had some type of legs. Gen. 3:14

(Fact #3) - He was very crafty. Gen. 3:1

(Fact #4) - He was able to speak. Gen. 3:1

The fact that the serpent is able to speak shows the amazing power of Satan in being able to possess something and do the miraculous with it. He has tremendous, deceptive power.

QUESTION #25 – What was Satan's method of temptation?

The passage which shows us where Satan conducted his temptation is Gen. 2:16-17. The test or temptation came down to an issue of one tree versus all the other trees in Eden. The deceptive tactics of Satan are as follows:

(**Tactic #1**) - Satan magnified the one prohibition given by God and minimized the many blessings . Gen. 1:28-30; 2:16-17; 3:1.

Satan is basically promoting a no-restriction lifestyle. God had given only one restriction, whereas Satan did not want any restrictions and he promoted this concept to Eve. It is not surprising that Satanism is nonrestrictive in that it promotes an anything goes philosophy.