



My Bible School Lessons

Exploring the Word of God

Lesson #19: "Sin and Satan"

SCRIPTURE READING: EZEKIEL 28:12-17 REVELATION 12

Memory Verse: "And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Luke 10:18."

Optimistic as any man may be, he still must concede to himself that this is not the kind of world he would make if he had the power to create one after his own desire. With all our churches and social organizations, we still have sin, sorrow, poverty, and woe. Despite modern medical science and innumerable hospitals, the world is a vast lazarus house of sickness, suffering, and death. Fear, hatred, and distrust within the hearts of men bring forth crime, war, and bloodshed. Storms, earthquakes, famines, and disasters multiply in these last hours of time. And so we raise our first question in this lesson about the relationship of God, sin, and suffering.

1: DID GOD CREATE AN EVIL WORLD?

The age-old, insistent, persistent question of the skeptic has always been. "Why would God create a world like this and let it continue?" This question has doubtless come to every thinking man and woman at some time. The Bible answer is that "God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good" (*Genesis 1:31*). "God is love" (*1 John 4:8*). His law is love. All His dealings with all His creatures, when properly understood, are a demonstration of unchanging love. He did not create an evil world.

2: WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF ALL OUR SUFFERING?

Sin is the obvious cause of all our ills (*Genesis 4:7; Isaiah 24:5*). Adam sinned in the beginning of our world, and the curse came upon the human race (*Genesis 3*). "The wages of sin is death" (*Romans 6:23*). In recent decades millions have been listening to spiritual deceptions. They have been told that there is nothing but God and good, that nothing is evil except as one thinks it is evil, that sin is something to be eliminated simply by believing that there is no sin, that the only real sin is believing in sin.

Modern men with ideas of inevitable progress stand aghast at the developments of these latter days and the *utter* inadequacy of their puny notions. The Spirit of God is doing His utmost to call them back to His Word, which says, "Sin is the transgression of the law." and "The wages of sin is death." There is right, and there is wrong. This we must never forget!

Harry Emerson Fosdick, noted liberal thinker, says in his book, *Living under Tension*: "Today we and our hopes and all our efforts after goodness are up against a powerful antagonism, something demonic, tragic, terrific in human nature, that turns our loveliest qualities to evil and our finest endeavors into failure. Our fathers called it sin." It is time that modern men, above the din of their own conflicts, should hear the voice of God speaking forth His holy Ten Commandments, the transgression of which is sin.

No preaching of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, no social schemes or church meddling in politics, no giant federations of religious organizations can ever save a people or a world

when the sense of sin is gone. When the spiritual sensory nerves are dead to the touch of sin, we shall burn and sear our very souls and never know it. Our God-given protection is gone.

3: WHAT IS THE BIBLE DEFINITION OF SIN?

1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."

Disobedience to God's laws and will is sin. Men may deny it, but they cannot refute its results. In God's collection of spiritual facts, sin is the transgression of the law, and the transgression of the law is sin. And this truth is timeless.

4: WHEN, AND WITH WHOM, DID SIN ORIGINATE?

It was the devil who sinned from the beginning.

1 John 3:8: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning."

He it was who abode not in the truth.

John 8:44: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him."

There can be no sin without a sinner. Sin is not an evil God created and sent forth as a foul miasma. Sin is connected with the conscience; the will of rational beings. Somebody, sometime, willed to sin. Who is he? The Bible says that Lucifer, who was chief of all the angels, sinned. He was one of the covering cherubs right at the throne of God, and doubtless held a position next to the Son of God. Yet he became a rebel. He "abode not in the truth." This indicates that he was in the truth and then left it. He was perfect in his ways till iniquity was found in him.

5: HOW DID SIN AND SATAN ORIGINATE?

Sin originated with Satan, a created being, whose original name was Lucifer and whose original home was heaven. He was cast out into this world, and he is here on earth today. Turn to your Bible and read about Him in Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:12-17. The following is the New Testament record about Satan and the origin of sin:

Revelation 12:7-9: "There was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Luke 10:18).

Lucifer was created as one of God's most glorious creatures. Ezekiel represents him as the symbol of the king of Tyre. Isaiah speaks of him as symbolized by the king of Babylon. Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, he became proud and dissatisfied. He wanted a higher position. He aspired to be like God, with all His divine prerogatives. Envy and jealousy and pride, the most subtle of all evils, took root in his soul.

And why did Lucifer sin? To give a reason would be to justify the evil deed. To offer an excuse would be inexcusable. Lucifer had everything that God could give except divinity itself. This God could not share with him; so Lucifer became Satan, the adversary. He set out to exalt himself above the Godhead. The long conflict between Christ and Satan was on. In this conflict, many angels followed Satan. They did not

keep their first estate (*Jude 6*). They transgressed (*Hebrews 2:2*). They were cast out to this world with him (*Revelation 12:9*). And so will sin make us all outcasts, unless we confess and forsake it and humbly acknowledge the sovereignty of God.

6: WHAT POSITION DOES SATAN OCCUPY ON EARTH?

1. He took over man's dominion when Adam sinned.

2 Peter 2:19: "Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."

Romans 6:16: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are?"

2. He is the god of this world.

2 Corinthians 4:4: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not."

3. He is the prince of this world

(John 12:31; 14:30) and the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2).

4. He is also called the prince of devils

(Matthew 9:34; 12:24).

By overcoming man, Satan took his place of dominion over this ear thunder God, of course, who, as Creator, is still sovereign Lord. Satan claimed this dominion when he showed Christ the kingdoms of this world, saying, "All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it" (*Luke 4:6*). Jesus did not dispute the claim, neither did He acknowledge it; for three and one-half years later He died on Calvary, to purchase the dominion back with His own precious blood.

7: HOW DOES SATAN OCCUPY HIS TIME?

1. By going to and fro in the earth.

Job 1:7: "The Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

2. By seeking whom he may devour.

1 Peter 5:8: "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

He is a restless worker intent upon gathering as many souls as he can for his kingdom of darkness.

8: WHAT METHODS DOES HE USE?

There are four principal avenues of approach by which the enemy works.

1. He works by deception.

In the Garden of Eden he took the form of a serpent and deceived Eve (Genesis 3:1).

1 Timothy 2:14: "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

2. He transforms himself into an angel of light.

"Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14). He works through sinful men, some of whom profess to be God's servants.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15: "Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness."

3. He works through some organizations.

Ephesians 6:12: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual Wickedness in high places."

4. He deceives by miracles.

Revelation 16:14: "They are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (2 Thessalonians 2:8-9).

Deception is the devil's main method-first, last, and always. He will deceive every person who does not love God and the truth supremely (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12). To be deceived means to think you are right when you are wrong. We should not blame the devil for our own doings, however. We may deceive ourselves (1 Corinthians 3:18; 1 John 1:8).

Satan wanted to control Peter (Luke 22:31-33). He did capture Judas (Luke 22:33). He got into Ananias' heart and led him to lie to the Holy Ghost (Acts 5: 1-5). Jesus warned, "Take heed that no man deceive you" (Matthew 24:4). These are the very days when we are to beware, lest any man or any miracle lead us to disbelieve or disobey God (Matthew 24:24; 2 Timothy 3:13).

Paul warned of the great falling away of the church, finally to be headed by the "man of sin." This man would claim that he was another God. Satan did not like God's laws, and he wished to exalt his own throne above God. On earth he has deceived millions with a religious system by exalting man as a god, leading him to tamper with the Ten Commandments, and trying to change them; thus he seeks to prove his claim to godship. We must not continue to be deceived by Satan, by man, by organizations, or by ourselves.

5. He works by accusation.

Revelation 12:10: "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."

Satan accused God to Eve (*Genesis 3:4-5*). He accused Job to God (*Job 1:8-11; 2:4-5*). He accused, or resisted, Joshua the high priest (*Zechariah 3:1-2*). And he will accuse, condemn, and trouble you with many evil condemnations.

He will come to you and tell you that you are unworthy to be saved, that you have failed too many times, or that you are too great a sinner. He will hold up your past sins to discourage you.

An old man was riding along in his buggy one rainy day. As he thought about his past life, the devil reminded him of his sins, and he began to feel discouraged. But he sat up straight and told the devil to go see Jesus Christ about those sins because he had turned them over to Him. Then he had peace.

6. He works by affliction.

He afflicted Job.

Job 2:7: "So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown."

He bound a woman for eighteen years.

Luke 13:16: "This woman, being a daughter of Abraham. .Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years."

He buffeted Paul's flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Satan afflicts many people, both saints and sinners. We shall touch the subject of affliction and suffering in a later study.

7. He works by persecution.

When the devil cannot bring people to believe through deception, he will seek to drive them into persecution. He is a mean and ugly master, and stirs up evil against God's people. He persecutes the church. Read Revelation 12. He makes war on commandment keepers (*Revelation 12: 17*).

John 8:44: "He was a murderer from the beginning."

In these last days he will make war upon the church, which keep the commandments of God (*Revelation 12:17*). "He was a murderer from the beginning." He sought to destroy man's love for, and obedience to, his Creator; and he has, through the ages, incited false religion to persecute the saints of God even unto death. Christ died that He might "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (*Hebrews 2:14*).

9: WHY DID GOD MAKE LUCIFER, AND WHY DOES HE NOT DESTROY HIM?

Remember, God made Lucifer, not Satan. The change from the righteous Lucifer to the sinful Satan was made by Satan himself.

God could make His creatures in either of two ways with the power of choice or without it. He created them with the power of choice. It is the only intelligent, satisfying way. His beings thus serve Him because they love Him and choose to obey.

As long as God gave the power of choice, evil might be chosen, which is the opposite of God's way. Of all God's creatures, Lucifer had the least excuse to sin because he was highest. But he deliberately chose jealousy.

Had God destroyed him at once without giving him a chance to demonstrate his program, fear and doubt would have crept into the hearts of His creatures. So time must tell the tale. Sin's sowing must

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have its harvest, that its fruit might be made manifest. Thank God the time is near when Satan and his angels will be destroyed in the lake of fire (*Revelation 20:10*). Then all will see that God is just and fair, and that His way is best.

10: HOW CAN WE OVERCOME SATAN?

Here is a description of those who are saved, those who conquer Satan:

Revelation 12:11: "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony" (James 4:7).

Jesus overcame him with the Word of God (*Matthew 4:1-11*). And so may we! When Jesus died on the cross, He gained His greatest victory over Satan. Calvary looked like a hill of defeat, but it was a mountain of victory. It proved that God's law could not be changed. It proved that God would pay any price to save man from Satan's plan of rebellion, thus vindicating not only His law but His love. And Calvary saves men—every man who will come to this mountain of love and to the fountain of Jesus' cleansing blood. We overcome through faith in Christ and His Word.

Remember, Lucifer had the power of choice. We, too, have the power of choice. Lucifer chose to disobey God. Let us choose to obey God. This is the way to victory.

If we choose to break God's commandments, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (*Hebrews 10:26*). God will forgive a deliberate sinner when he deliberately chooses to turn away from sin. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (*Joshua 24:15*). And choose God. His way is best of all!