

20th Century Bible Course

Dear Bible Student:

In a recent demonstration of remote control by the United States Air Force, a pilotless jet aircraft wheeled onto the runway of an airport, taxied to a predetermined spot, turned into the wind, and took off. The plane went through a number of maneuvers, circled the field several times, and made an almost perfect landing.

Those invited to view this demonstration looked on with admiration. Not one spectator thought that the plane was flying by itself. They knew that there was a master intelligence behind the maneuvers of that craft.

As one views the daily sinister events of death, terror, and violence reported by television, radio, and newspaper, it is evident that a master intelligence is operating in this world. He is at war, not only with God, but with all that is just and good. While nations talk about peace, they prepare for war! While man plans for a world without crime, lawlessness skyrockets. While he searches for the means of stamping out death, new diseases and problems arise. More than one statesman has remarked, "There is something devilish at work in the world today."

The Bible tells us there was a time when the Creator of this planet surveyed His work and called it good. But what does He think of it now? Does He ever take time to look this way? Or is He perhaps planning a new world somewhere? Or surveying the corridors of Orion?

Or catching up on a backlog of prayers?

Have you ever wondered what God's thoughts and attitudes must be about this world. Perhaps some of your feelings are expressed here?

- ☐ It seems to me God must have walked out on this planet.
- ☐ If I were God, I would have written it off long ago.
- ☐ I don't see how a God of love can see all the suffering and heartache and let it continue.
- ☐ I doubt if God ever bothers to look this way?
- ☐ Sometimes I wonder if God really cares.
- ☐ It doesn't seem fair to put us in a world like this without asking us.
- ☐ I think one of these days technology will find a way to get us off this planet.
- ☐ I don't dare think about it.

If once this earth was good, it certainly isn't now. What has gotten us into the mess we are in? That is the subject of our study today.

May God bless,

Your Bible Instructor

LESSON 7

THE ORIGIN OF SIN

EZEKIEL 28:12-17; REVELATION 12:7-9

In our last study we read of Satan and the recently resurrected wicked surrounding the New Jerusalem, at which time they were destroyed in the lake of fire. We also learned that not until the close of the millennium is this earth finally rid of sin and sinners.

In many circles today the devil has been voted out of existence. Satan is equated with evil thoughts or some superstitious carry-over from a medieval fable (you know-a hideous looking creature with hoofs and horns and a pitchfork!). Today we will learn that Christ and the prophets believed in the existence of an evil being. In the Bible he is called the devil, Satan, the prince of this world, the deceiver, or the serpent. You may have wondered how the devil originated and why God hasn't destroyed him? The Word of God

tells the truth about Satan.

Part 1-- THE ORIGIN OF SIN

1. With whom did sin originate? 1 John 3:8 _____

When Adam and Eve sinned, it was the beginning of trouble for this planet. The real "beginning" mentioned in this verse, however, was sometime prior to our first parents' encounter with evil, and took place in heaven.

2. Who was the enemy that sowed evil where God had sown only good seed? Matthew 13:24-30, 37-40 _____

All of the discord, sadness, sickness, death, and sin are the result of the work of the enemy of God. God does not tempt anyone. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (James 1:13)

3. Where did Satan come from? Luke 10:18 _____

4. What kind of being was he? Ezekiel 28:14,15

"Thou art the _____." "Thou wast _____ in thy ways from the day that thou wast _____, till iniquity was found in thee."

The "cherub that covereth" is a description of the angel that stood next to the throne of God in heaven (Psalm 80:1) We can only conclude that this angel was one of the most honored of all created beings.

5. What led to Lucifer's sin and rebellion? Ezekiel 28:17 _____

Lucifer was Satan's name before he rebelled. Little by little he began to indulge the desire for greatness. Although all his glory was from God, this mighty angel began to give himself credit for it. Not content with his position-probably the highest one in all heaven except for God Himself-he soon found himself coveting homage due alone to the Creator. The high honors God had conferred upon him were not appreciated. He began to glory in his own brightness and beauty, and aspired to be as great as God.

6. What goal did Satan set for himself? Isaiah 14:12-14 _____

Lucifer actually had the audacity to challenge God's government itself, reflecting on the motives and character of God! In effect, he was plotting to take over the reigns of the universe, to usurp the powers of the Almighty God.

Part 2-- WAR IN HEAVEN

1. When the rebellion led by Satan reached a crisis, what happened? Revelation 12:7-9 _____

War in heaven! All the peace and harmony gone! Certainly it must have been most unpleasant. Had God permitted Satan and the angels who sympathized with him to continue their rebellion, peace could never again have been possible-not only in heaven, but also throughout the entire universe. At this juncture God could easily have eliminated Satan and all his rebellious angels in one blinding flash. Had He done this, however, the other angels, as well as all the inhabitants of other worlds, would have served and obeyed Him out of fear-only because they were afraid they, too, would be destroyed if they did not obey. God wants our allegiance because we love Him. For this reason He allowed sin to run its course, to demonstrate to the whole universe the consequences of rebellion and disobedience, and to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt God's unchanging character and the nature of love.

2. After he was expelled from heaven, whom did Satan seek to deceive? Genesis 3:1-6 _____

No longer free to stir up rebellion in heaven, Satan's hatred against God found a new field of operation in plotting the ruin of the human race. God had seen fit to lay upon Adam and Eve but one prohibition as a test of their loyalty and obedience. Satan waited for an opportunity to plant in their minds seeds of doubt about their Creator. Although Satan had done nothing for their happiness and well being, while God had

given them everything that was good for food and pleasant to the sight, Adam and Eve chose to believe the words of a serpent (or so they believed him to be), rather than those of their Creator. Everywhere the eye rested was abundance and beauty. Yet in the midst of this natural affluence, they began to wonder if God was holding out on them.

In the story of how Adam and Eve were persuaded to change their loyalties from their Creator to the side of God's enemy, some of Satan's methods are unmasked. First and foremost, he never works openly. He used a snake to deceive Eve, and through her he reached Adam. Now anxiety and toil would be their lot. Now they would experience disappointment, grief, pain, and finally death.

3. As a result of man's fall, what does Satan claim as his? Luke 4:5, 6

God Himself had appointed Adam the governor of this world-its king, its ruler (Genesis 1:28). As soon as Adam was overcome, the dominion of this planet was claimed by the deceiver. Read of the council held in heaven and Satan's claim that he was in charge of this world (Job 1:6-8). The sons of God mentioned here must be the representatives of other inhabited worlds. Adam, too, was called a "son of God" (Luke 3:38). Had he remained loyal, no doubt he would have represented this planet in heaven's councils, but when he sold his allegiance to Satan, he also lost his kingship.

4. Who brings suffering and trouble upon mankind? Job 2:7; Luke 13:16

In the next lesson we will study further the problem of sin and suffering.

5. Why does the devil work so viciously now? Revelation 12:12

6. How will Satan finally be dealt with by God? Ezekiel 28:16-19 "I will _____ thee, O covering cherub" (verse 16). "Never shalt thou _____" (verse 19).

In Lesson 6 we learned that at the end of the millennium, when Satan rallies the wicked people to attack the Holy City, fire comes down from God out of heaven, and devours them. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone" (Revelation 20:9).

Let us recapitulate the twelve great facts we have learned about Satan, the devil:

1. We are dealing with an intelligent being who was once in heaven.
2. His name was Lucifer.
3. He held what was probably the highest position an angel could hold in heaven.
4. He was perfect until he rebelled.
5. He was not satisfied with his status and position.
6. He wanted the position that belonged to God.
7. Pride was the spark that ignited his spirit of rebellion.
8. War broke out in heaven and Lucifer and his angels were expelled.
9. This same Lucifer-now called Satan-transferred his field of operations to our planet-to the Garden of Eden.
10. It was to him Adam and Eve sold out when they disobeyed God.
11. Satan is still working against God-in fact, with more determination than ever.
12. This wicked being will one day be completely destroyed.

Part 3-- HOW SATAN WORKS NOW

1. How does Satan now attempt to disguise himself and his activities? 2 Corinthians 11:13-15

What a sacrilege! What does Satan have to do with religion? The truth is, he has become a master at counterfeiting everything that God has commanded or made. We have already seen how he has subtly counterfeited the great truth of Christ's second coming. It matters not to him *how* man is deceived; as long as Satan can prevent him from knowing truth, it serves his purposes. He mixes in just enough deception to get men to worship him while thinking they are worshipping God.

2. What is man's only defense against the devil's deceptions? Ephesians 6:11-17

What a God we have to provide such abundant means for successful warfare against the evil one. The Bible is the armory where we may equip ourselves for the struggle. Note the six essential parts of this armor: (1) our loins must be girt about with *truth*; (2) our breastplate is *righteousness*; (3) in our hand must be the shield of *faith*; (4) on our brow must rest the *helmet of salvation*; (5) our feet must be shod with the *gospel of peace*; and (6) with the *sword of the spirit*, which is the Word of God, we are to cut our way through the obstructions and entanglements of sin.

3. How only can we gain the victory over this evil angel? Revelation 12:10,11

This great imposter who swayed a third of the angels of heaven by his false logic and cunning sophistry, is certainly more than a match for us. We are safe only as we trust in God's power, which we may receive through Jesus Christ. In all of Satan's ranks there is not enough power to overcome one soul who casts himself in simple trust at the feet of Jesus. Isaiah 40:29 says, "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength."

4. How did Christ earn the right to finally destroy the devil? Hebrews 2:14; 1John3:8

During His ministry on this earth, Christ was constantly harassed by the devil. Satan dogged His footsteps, continually trying to destroy the Saviour before He accomplished His mission. When Jesus was but a babe, Satan-through Herod-had all the male children under the age of two years put to death in a frantic effort to get rid of the Saviour. But God warned Joseph, who took Mary and Jesus to Egypt until the danger was over.

After His baptism Christ was led into the wilderness for a time to be tempted by Satan. Here the devil tempted Jesus on the very points which Adam and Eve had failed. Each temptation was met with a quotation from the Scriptures. Satan finally fled at the command of the Lord.

On several other occasions Satan tried to kill Christ by inciting a riot on the part of the Jewish rulers, but each time Jesus was protected. Finally, however, Satan managed to still the voice of truth and life and love by having Jesus put to death by crucifixion. How he must have exulted when he saw Jesus draw His last labored breath there on the cross. Then Satan tried to keep our Lord in the tomb forever. A guard was stationed at the entrance. A Roman seal was placed upon it to keep anyone from opening it. But Roman guards and Roman seals were powerless to confine the Lord of life within the tomb!

When Satan saw that the Lord had taken up His life again, he knew that his doom was sealed. Since that time, furious with defeat, he has zeroed in on Christ's followers in an all-out effort to keep Christ from the rightful fruits of His victory. No longer can he influence any of the faithful angels, so he goes about as a "roaring lion" seeking to destroy as many of God's children as possible (1 Peter 5:8. This is the only way that he can now bring pain to the heart of God.

Part 4-- A HIJACKED PLANET

The truth is, Planet Earth has been hijacked, and every man, woman and child on it is held hostage. Relentlessly the head terrorist and his co-laborers have pursued every possible advantage. But one day soon there will be a confrontation in the cockpit, and every hostage willing to be released will be rescued.

The conflict is not yet over. Every day individuals are choosing sides. But one of these days-very soon now-the Commander-in-Chief of the loyal ones will descend the blazing skies in His great rescue operation. Will He find us with arms outstretched to meet Him, or will we be flying the hijacker's flag? Wouldn't it be a tragedy to become comfortable with the hijacker or identify with his cause in an hour so critical as this?

Oh, may we keep our powers of discernment keen, refusing to compromise with the clever disguises and ruses of Satan, or be allured by his false promises, and fiercely maintaining to the very end our loyalty to our Maker.

Thought question: How do you feel about this? Is it your desire to declare unyielding loyalty to God in this great battle that is being waged on this earth?
