

The Sure Word Bible Studies

Lesson 2

The Origin of Evil

All of us are aware of the existence of evil in the world. All of us have experienced it first hand. But where did it come from? Most people would say that the Devil is behind it all. OK, but then where did the Devil come from? Did God create the Devil and his demons to torment and punish us? The Bible will help us find the answer to our questions. We begin in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 12:7 - 9 *"And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."*

As a result of this war in heaven Satan or the Devil was cast out. Note the words of Jesus long ago -

Luke 10:17,18 *"Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."*

Jesus said He witnessed Satan's fall from heaven. This means that Satan would have been cast out of heaven before Jesus came to earth. But we can go back even further; there is another reference to a fall from heaven in the Old Testament book of Isaiah.

Isaiah 14:12 *"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!"*

Here we find that the one fallen or cast out of heaven was called “Lucifer” which means the “shining one” or “light bearer.” This fallen angel was once an angel of light in heaven!

But titles and names can be deceiving and the devil never comes in his own “name,” he always comes in disguise, or in someone else’s “name.” In the following passage the King of Tyrus is addressed, but it becomes obvious the Lord is really speaking to the one who is behind the evil King of Tyre – Satan himself.

Ezekiel 28:12 - 15 *"Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "You were the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created. "You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you."*

The king of Tyre was not in the Garden of Eden. There were only three persons in Eden, Adam and Eve and Satan disguised as a serpent.

Our question - Did God create the devil? is answered here. According to the passage in Ezekiel, God did not create a devil, but the most beautiful, glorious, powerful angel of all. Lucifer “*sealest up the sum,*” in other words he had it all. He was said to be “*perfect in thy ways from the day thou wast created.*” But unfortunately he didn’t remain in that state because “*iniquity was found in him.*” After a time as a light bearer, Lucifer began to develop a rebellious, sinful nature and is no longer called Lucifer, but is now called Satan.

He is now called by a different name because in the biblical accounts when someone's character changes they are many times given another name. Lucifer has "fallen" from his high position; therefore his name has changed from "light bearer" to Satan which means "accuser" and "Devil" which means "deceiver." In Revelation he is called the "Dragon," which means a "fiery serpent," a deadly poisonous snake.

What led up to Lucifer's fall? That is a question the Bible does not specifically answer. A thoughtful suggestion is that Lucifer was probably the first angel God created. As such, Lucifer would not have witnessed his own creation, but he likely would have witnessed the creation of all the other angels. Thus the possibility that Lucifer may have begun to think that he was not a created being as the angels were and that he was somehow equal with God and that God was not being truthful with him about that in order to keep him in subjection. If Satan thought himself to be equal with God, he would also have thought he should be worshipped as God. This would explain why he asked Jesus to fall down and worship him.

Matthew 4:8 - 10 *"Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"*

At this point it is important that we understand that God's character and trustworthiness is the central issue in the war that began in heaven. That can be clearly seen when that *"old serpent, the devil and satan,"* spoke to Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 3:1 - 6 *"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which*

is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' " Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."

Clearly the serpent, or Satan, is insinuating that God is selfish and arbitrary and that He has lied to them and therefore cannot be trusted to tell them the truth. It is obvious that the war that began in heaven was not about God's power, the fact that Satan and his followers (angels who sided with him now known as demons) were cast out of heaven is evidence that God is more powerful. But from this exchange between the serpent and Eve, we can see the key issue in the war is God's character and whether He can be trusted, and whether one can safely follow His word.

Eve knew what God had said about eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but as she listened to the serpent, she came to believe him and willfully ate of the tree, as did her husband. Now that they had joined Satan's side in the conflict the earth was soon filled with suffering, pain, disease and death as the result.

The Bible says that God knows the future.

Isaiah 46:9,10 *"Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,"*

This being the case many have asked, why didn't God destroy Satan before the war started? Didn't He see all the suffering that would result? Yes He did, and He saw that He would suffer far more than anyone else.

That's why Revelation 13:18 describes Him as "*The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*" God has been suffering since the very first sin.

Isaiah 63:9 *"In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them All the days of old."*

God has not changed, He is still afflicted and grieved with His wayward children and He still carries them in His heart of love.

God is love and created the entire universe to operate on the principle of love. But there can be no love where there is no freedom; you can't make someone love you, love must be given freely. And because of God's high regard for individual freedom, He must allow sin to run its course, as painful as it is. That's the only way Lucifer could have rebelled in heaven itself!

When someone does something terribly wrong – we ask, "Why did God let that happen?" But where would our personal freedom be if God stopped us dead in our tracks every time we started to do something wrong? God's insistence on our freedom is so absolute that He has granted us the power to live as though He did not exist if we so choose! Unfortunately most choose to live that way and thus this earth is now a dangerous place where even good people get hurt.

You may ask, why didn't God "nip this in the bud"? Why has He let it go this far? The angels, although they are supernatural beings, are not all-knowing as God is.

Therefore the destruction of Satan in the beginning of the war in heaven would have been misunderstood and seen as arbitrary and unfair. The consequences of sin would have remained unknown. As the result, in heaven, instead of peace and freedom, there would have been fear, doubt, and unanswered questions. The angels would be saying, "You had better be careful, remember

what God did to Lucifer!” Angels would not be freely serving God from love and admiration of His character, but from fear of His punishment.

God does not ask men or angels to take His word alone for His love and trustworthiness or for the nature of sin and death. Rather, God’s plan is that through demonstration, the entire universe sees for itself the answers to Satan’s charges. Then, with that first hand knowledge, everyone can freely make their own decision about who has the truth – God or Satan.

The way God has chosen to handle this conflict, when it is over, the result of *“eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”* will be clear to the entire universe. It will have become very clear that sin and rebellion against God’s way of love is the cause of suffering, disease, death and every kind of evil! When this war between God and Satan is over, no one will choose to go down that deadly path again.

Nahum 1:9 says *“What do you conspire against the LORD? He will make an utter end of it. Affliction will not rise up a second time.”*

Rebellion and controversy will never rise again and yet the universe will still be free. We will be just as free to rebel against God as Lucifer was in the beginning but we won’t! Not for fear of what God will do to us, but because we all will have learned from demonstration and experience, the pain, the suffering and death that is caused by sin! It will be understood that this is the reason sin is wrong, and we will want nothing to do with it ever again.

Even today, every human being, just as Adam and Eve in the beginning, must make a personal decision about God’s trustworthiness. We must decide whether we will follow God’s word or trust in man as our guide as to what we believe and how we live. Will we place our eternal future in the Creator or the creature?

What about you? Have you seen enough pain, sickness, hatred, cruelty and death? Have you seen enough to realize that God's way of love and peace is the best way to live?

This is not a war between God and man! It is a war between God and Satan. Yet, man has been caught up in it with the seed of evil being planted and taken root in his mind long ago.

Mark 7:21 - 23 *"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man."*

In spite of our condition, our gracious, all-powerful God has a plan to restore us to His likeness -

II Corinthians 3:18 *"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."*

And then ultimately to restore peace, not just to earth, but to the entire universe.

Colossians 1:20 *"By Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross."*

Today, the battle still rages here on earth and you and I must choose whose side we are on, Christ or Satan. God calls us in freedom to make our choice.

Deuteronomy 30:19 *"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;"*

In this conflict we cannot remain neutral. To refuse to make a choice is to side with the devil. Note the words of Jesus –

Matthew 12:30 *"He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad."*

It is important that we be well informed so that we are able to make the right choices, because the closer we get to the end the greater the deceptions of Satan will be! Note the following texts:

II Thessalonians 2:9,10 *"The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved."*

Revelation 16:13,14 *"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."*

God is not the source of all miracles. Satan and his demons can perform miracles too. Satan works with power and signs and lying wonders to deceive. Therefore we must be careful that we do not rely on miracles, but trust only the Word of God as our guide in the last days.

Remember **II Corinthians 11:14,15** *"And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works."*

As mentioned previously, we may not be able to trust every preacher or teacher who claims to speak for God therefore we

must learn to study for ourselves that God may speak directly to us through His word.

In conclusion, the answer our first question: What is the origin of evil? is answered in Jesus' words to the Pharisees -

John 8:44 *"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it."*

"A liar and the father of it." The word "father" is defined as "source" and thus Satan is the source of the lie and thus the origin of evil. And since the beginning his most damaging lies have been about God, which, to this day most of the world still believe.

Response questions:

1. Is it clear to you that there is a "spiritual war" being waged in the universe and this world is the battleground?

Yes ___ No ___

2. Is it clear to you that we must choose which side of this conflict we will be on and to make no decision is to be on the devils side?

Yes ___ No ___

3. Is it clear to you that we cannot trust miracles or preachers in the last days, but only the Word of God?

Yes ___ No ___

4. If you have not already - will you make the decision today to be on God's side in this conflict – to be a soldier of Jesus Christ?

Yes ___ No ___

It may be you need more answers before you make a decision. You may find the answers in the next lesson – "What is God Like?"

