

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 probably experienced it first hand. But what was the origin of evil - where did it come from? Most people would say that it comes from the Devil, but where did the Devil come from? Did God create the Devil and his demons to torment us? Will evil and all the pain and heartbreak it brings ever end? The Bible will help us find the answer. We begin our study 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 deceived the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."*

As a result of this war the Devil / Satan was cast out of heaven to the earth. Jesus spoke of this to his disciples 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 the war that resulted in Satan having been cast out of heaven took place before Jesus came to earth. But we can go back even further; there is another reference to this 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 from heaven was once called "Lucifer" a name 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 Satan never comes in his own "name," but always comes in disguise, or in someone else's "name" as we find in the following passage:

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. In this passage the king of Tyre is addressed, but it becomes obvious the Lord is really speaking to the one who is behind the evil king of Tyre – Satan himself.

So our question - Did God create the devil? is answered here. According to this passage in Ezekiel, God did not create a devil, but the most beautiful, glorious, powerful angel of all. Lucifer was the *"seal of perfection,"* in other words he had all that God could bestow upon a created being. Lucifer was said to be *"perfect in your ways from the day you were created."* But unfortunately he didn't remain in that state of perfection because later *"iniquity was found in him."* After a time as a light bearer, Lucifer began to develop a rebellious, sinful nature and was no longer called Lucifer, but is now called Satan.

Lucifer is now called by a different name because in the biblical accounts when someone's character changes their name changes. Lucifer has "fallen" from his high position as *"the anointed cherub;"* therefore his name has been 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.

But what led up to Lucifer's fall? What would possibly cause a perfect being in a perfect world to become discontented and rebel against his Maker? 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 other angels were and that he was 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 realize 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 Satan, disguised as a serpent, was insinuating that God has lied to them and therefore cannot be trusted to tell them the truth. More than that, Satan insinuates that God is being arbitrary in order to keep them in subjection to Him. That God knows if they eat of this tree they will become as "gods," and will be equal to Him. It becomes obvious that the war that began in heaven was not about who is the most powerful, God or Satan, the fact that Satan and his followers were cast out of heaven is evidence that God is more powerful. But from this exchange between the serpent and Eve, it becomes clear that the real issue in the war that began in heaven is about God's character, whether or not He can be trusted and whether one can safely follow His word.

Genesis 3:8 - 10 *"And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."*

Clearly 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. After they had eaten of the tree, something drastically changed in their hearts and minds that caused guilt, fear and separation between them and God. Because man has now corrupted himself he can no longer stand in God's actual presence without being consumed. To preserve man God now remains in heaven and without His life giving presence on earth everything begins to die. Now that Adam and Eve have joined Satan's side, the planet earth is now the battleground for this conflict and this world begins to be filled with suffering, pain, disease and death.

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 ever started? Didn't He see all the suffering that would result? Yes He did, and He also 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 with man since the very first sin.

Isaiah 63:9 *"In all their afflictions 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 He created the entire universe to operate on the principle of love. But you can't make someone love you, love must be given freely; there can be no love where there is no freedom. That's the only way Lucifer could have rebelled in heaven itself. Because of God's high regard for individual freedom, God must allow sin to run its course, as painful as it is.

When someone does something terribly wrong – someone will ask, "Why did God let that happen?" But think, 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 deadly and dangerous place where evil reigns and good people and even innocent children get hurt.

Another reason that God didn't "nip this in the bud" is that 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 punishment.

God does not ask angels or men 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, that the entire universe see for itself the answers to Satan's charges. Then, with that first hand knowledge, everyone can freely and confidently 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 become clear that sin and rebellion against God's way of love is the cause of all suffering, disease, death and every kind of evil! And 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."*

After this conflict is over 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 because we are afraid 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.

The truth is that 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 trust God's word and follow Him or place our trust in man as our guide as to what we believe and how we live. Will we place our eternal future in the hands of 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? Are you prepared to join the fight against evil in this world?

Ephesians 6:10 - 12 *"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."*

Remember this is not a war between God and man! It is a spiritual war between God and Satan but we are caught up in it. Satan planted the seed of evil in the mind of man 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 poor condition, our gracious, all-powerful God has a plan to save us and 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 more than that, the Lord will one day ultimately restore perfect peace, not just in this world, but in 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."*

The angels in heaven know about war, remember that's where it all started, but as we will see in a later lesson, the Lord restores peace to the heart of the angels by His demonstration of God's love for not only man, but for them as well by His death on the cross.

Today, the angels are at peace, but the battle still rages here on earth and you and I must choose whose side we will be on, Christ or Satan. God calls us in freedom to make that 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, and completing this set of Bible studies will greatly help with that. This is also important because the closer we get to the end of this world 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 us. Therefore we must be careful that we do not rely on miracles, or the cunning craftiness of men, but trust only in 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.

Finally the answer to 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.*"

One basic definition of the word "father" is "source." Jesus tells us that 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 unfortunately most of the world believes. That being the case, in the next study we will take a closer look at God and what He is really like and begin to dispel the lies of Satan.

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 ___