



“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” Romans 3:23.

Satan and the Fall of Man

Lesson Aim: The study of Articles 4, 5.

4. The personality of Satan. 5. Hereditary and total depravity of man in his natural state involving his fall in Adam.

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Topic: Adam; Depravity: Of Man; Satan.

INTRODUCTION—Every person must face up to the problem of sin. His conclusion may be either of the following. First, he may deny the reality of sin. He may close his eyes or make excuse to cover up the reality of sin, sickness, and death. However, this does not solve the problem for they still exist. Second, he may minimize the seriousness and effects of sin. Sin is thus viewed as a “mistake” which doing the right thing will quickly erase. This person no longer sees sin as crookedness and rebellion. To him, sin is essentially against the laws of society. Third, he may admit the seriousness of sin and accept what the Bible says about it. This is the only wise course. The study today will show that sin is transgression, missing the mark, crookedness, rebellion. It is against God first and against man secondly. He sees sin as blighting peace of conscience, disturbing fellowship with God and sending the souls of the impenitent to hell. The honest person has to admit that this is the Biblical doctrine of sin.

Just as the forces of righteousness are headed up in a Being of supreme good, known as God, so the forces of evil are headed up in a Being of supreme Evil, known as Satan. The Bible teaches Satan is a person who is super-human in knowledge and power. He is the god of this present world system, II Corinthians 4:4. He is the one whose spirit prompts disobedience against God, Ephesians 2:2. The reality of his being is attested by all who have had to seriously combat him in temptations.

This is the subject of our study today. It is not pleasant to study, for we

thereby have to admit ourselves sinners and under Satan's control. We are required to come to God in humble repentance for redemption from sin. But praise God, we always find Him sufficient!

EXPOSITION

I. Satan Is a Person, Romans 16:20.

Many people deny that there is a personal devil. Their view of a “scientific world” prohibits it. Others feel that to place the responsibility of sin on a devil would be to lessen man’s responsibility. This is not true. The existence, power, and persistence of moral evil in the world is evidence that there is a personal devil. The Bible unquestionably teaches that there is a kingdom of evil with Satan at its head. One who believes the Bible cannot deny this.

1. The origin of Satan is shrouded in mystery. W. T. Conner has pointed out two basic facts about this origin. First, Satan is a created being. The Scriptures teach that God made all things visible and invisible, Colossians 1:16. Besides this, God is the only self-existent being. If Satan is not created, he must have existed eternally with God. We are sure this is not the case. Second, God did not make Satan a sinful being. Satan doubtless made himself a devil by rebellion against God and then by giving himself to the work of enticing others to sin. As to exactly how or when this happened we have no information. The Bible does not give us an account of the origin of sin in the universe. It gives only the origin of sin among men, tracing it back to Satanic temptation. His original position and fall may be inferred from these scriptures: Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:1-19; Colossians 1:16; I Timothy 3:16; II Peter 2:4; Jude 6, 9. (Some hold Ezekiel 28:1-19 as an exact description. This interpretation is not so definite as to be unquestioned.)

2. The names commonly attributed to Satan in the Bible are many. He is called Abaddon and Apollyon, Revelation 9:11; Beelzebub, prince of demons, Matthew 12:24-27; Belial, vileness, II Corinthians 6:15; devil, slanderer, Matthew 4:1; Satan, adversary, Zechariah 3:1, I Peter 5:8; Great Dragon, Revelation 12:9; God of this world (age), II Corinthians 4:4; Liar and murderer, John 8:44; Lucifer, light-bearer, Isaiah 14:12; Prince of this world, John 12:31; Prince of the power of the air, Ephesians 2:2; Old Serpent, Revelation 12:9; Tempter, I Thessalonians 3:5; and the Wicked One, Matthew 13:19.

3. In his abode, Satan is not restricted to any one place. He has access

to heaven, Job 1:6; Zechariah 3:1; Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:7-12. He has access to the “heavenlies,” Ephesians 6:11-12. He walks up and down in the earth, Job 1:7; 2:2; I Peter 5:8. His proper place and eventual end is hell, Revelation 9:11; Matthew 25:41.

4. The power and work of Satan are clearly defined. He is the author of sin, Genesis 3:1-6; sickness, Luke 13:16; and death, Hebrews 2:14. He enters into men, John 13:27, blinding their hearts, II Corinthians 4:4, and putting wicked purposes in them, John 13:2; Acts 5:3. He tempts men to sin, Matthew 4. He opposes the influence of the Gospel, Mark 4:15. He seeks to infiltrate good with evil, Matthew 13:25. He transforms himself and his ministers into an angel of light, II Corinthians 11:14-15, and will give power to the Antichrist, II Thessalonians 2:9-10. He harasses and resists God's servants, Daniel 10:13, II Corinthians 12:7; hindering them, I Thessalonians 2:18; sifting them, Luke 22:31; and accusing them, Revelation 12:9-10. Without doubt, he has great power.

It must be remembered that Satan is limited. Most of our temptations come through his emissaries—evil angels or demons. His power is exercised by God's permissive will. George Pardington points out: He cannot tempt a believer except by God's permission, Matthew 4:1. He cannot inflict sickness except by God's permission, Job 1:10, 12. He cannot inflict death except by God's permission, Job 2:6; Hebrews 2:14. He cannot even touch us without God's permission, Job 1:10-12; 2:6; Luke 22:31; I John 5:18. He flees when resisted, James 4:7.

5. The defeat of Satan is inevitable. It was first promised in Genesis 3:15. His overthrow was partially accomplished by Christ on the Cross, John 12:31; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14; I John 3:8. During the present age he is restricted. He will be confined to the abyss during the millennium, Revelation 20:1-3. After a brief release, Revelation 20:3b, 7-9, he will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, there to be tormented forever and ever, Revelation 20:10.

6. In view of the reality of a personal devil, the Christian has certain duties pressing upon him. He must be sober and watchful, I Peter 5:8. He must not be ignorant of the devices Satan uses, II Corinthians 2:11. No place must be given him, Ephesians 4:27, but he must be firmly resisted, James 4:7; I John 2:13. Victory over Satan will come only as one is fully dressed in the armour which God provides, Ephesians 6:13-18.

II. Man Suffers Under a Hereditary and Total Depravity, Romans 3:9-20.

To say that man suffers from “total depravity” does not mean he is as bad as he can be. It simply means his entire nature, mental, moral, spiritual, physical, is sadly affected by sin. A. H. Strong observes: It does not mean the entire absence of conscience (John 8:9); nor of all moral qualities (Mark 10:21); nor that men are prone to every kind of sin (for some sins exclude others). It does mean, however, that man is totally destitute of love to God; that the natural man has an aversion to God (Romans 8:7); that man is in possession of a nature that is constantly on the downgrade, and from the dominion of which he is totally unable to free himself (Romans 7:18, 23).

1. Depravity comes through the fall of man. Every religion has a doctrine of the fall of man. The scriptural account is found in Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-19; I Timothy 2:14; Genesis 6:5; 8:21; Psalm 14; Romans 3:10-23. Sin was already in the world and Genesis 3 seeks only to show how it came into the human race. Only before the Fall does man appear perfect and upright. His attitude after the Fall, is that of rebellion against God, of deepening and awful corruption. The Fall involved a sin which was purely volitional—a voluntary act of the will. It was an elevation of the will of man over the will of God. It was a deliberate transgression of a divinely marked boundary. This brought a fallen state.

2. The effects of sin were both immediate and delayed. The immediate effects of sin (Genesis 3:7-13) were six-fold: Conscience was awakened and a sense of shame resulted; a covering of fig leaves was attempted; guilty conscience produce a feeling of fear; and attempt was made at concealment as Adam and Eve sought to side; self-vindication was attempted as each tried to justify self; an attempt to shift the blame was proven useless. The more remote effects of the sin were: a curse upon the serpent, the woman, the man, and the ground; banishment from the garden; institution of sacrificial worship; promise of a redeemer; and birth of children sharing in the depravity of their parents. Beside that, mankind was separated from the tree of life, the Garden of Eden, and the personal, visible presence of God. Death was the most dread penalty, for it was death physical, spiritual and eternal. According to Paul's teachings in Romans 5, we still suffer the effects of the original sin of Adam and Eve. The human race has fallen and those born into a fallen race share its fallen condition.

3. Depravity does not mean that infants who die are lost in hell. It is generally agreed among evangelical theologians that those who die in infancy are saved. There is no specific scripture which says so, but the general principles of God's Word teaches us so. The child that has not reached the age of responsibility can have no personal guilt. He is unable to identify himself with right or wrong. So long as there is no positive

identification of oneself with right or wrong there can be no condemnation because of sin. The grace of God cares for the child who, in the innocence of infancy, dies and never grows to exercise faith.

4. Depravity is inherited and universal among men. The Scripture bears witness that depravity is inherited, Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Ephesians 2:3. Men are by nature children of wrath in the sense that their lives of sin, which incur the wrath of God, are the natural outgrowth of their native dispositions. There is no question but that sin is universal, Psalm 14:1; Luke 11:13; Matthew 6:12. Paul is very explicit to observe “*all have sinned,*” Romans 3:9. Experience, observation, and human history show us that sin is universal. No honest man will say he lives above moral and spiritual blame.

Thus “hereditary and total depravity” means man is helpless, because of his natural inheritance, outside the provisions of God's saving grace. Man's whole nature, body, soul, and spirit, have been weakened and depraved by sin. On this point, William Evans insists, “The understanding is darkened (Ephesians 4:18; I Corinthians 2:14); the heart is deceitful and wicked (Jeremiah 17:9-10); the mind and conscience are defiled (Genesis 6:5; Titus 1:15); the flesh and spirit are defiled (II Corinthians 7:5); the will is enfeebled (Romans 7:18); and we are utterly destitute of any Godlike qualities which meet the requirements of God's holiness (Romans 7:18).” Without divine help man becomes worse and worse. Total depravity, instead of meaning man is as bad as he can be, means that without God's grace in redemption, he will forever sink deeper into sin.

5. The results of sin reveal the seriousness of its nature. (1) Sin alienates from God, producing a spirit of hostility toward Him. Thus the carnal mind of man is enmity against God and cannot be subject to the law of God, Romans 8:7. Only divine grace can change this. (2) Sin degrades the sinner. When fellowship with God is broken a man's personality will die. Thus all forms of sin are degrading to the personality. Note the disintegration and degradation that comes to personality as set out in Ephesians 4:17-19. W. T. Conner correctly observes, “Indulging in sin does not give wisdom; it only generates folly. It does not open one's eyes to truth; it blinds so that one cannot see the truth.” (3) Sin disrupts social relations. While sin is primarily against God, it also disrupts relations between men. If a man is not right with God he cannot be right anywhere. Again, Conner suggests, “Man cannot be right with man without being right with God, and getting right with God includes getting right with man.” Read I John 3:17; 4:20-21. (4) Sin causes suffering. Much human suffering is due to man's sin. Sometimes it is the guilty and sometimes the innocent who suffer. Examine Exodus 10:12; Proverbs 3:1; 10:27. Though all suffering is not due to the sin

of the sufferer, we are sure man thrusts himself through with many sorrows because of his sin. (5) Sin brings death, Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23; James 1:15. This death which sin brings is both physical and spiritual.

QUESTIONS

1. Give three attitudes toward sin.
2. Discuss the origin of the devil.
3. List by memory some names used of the devil.
4. What is the work of Satan today?
5. Discuss the defeat of Satan.
6. Define "total depravity."
7. Why are men depraved?
8. What were the effects of the fall of man?