



“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 and 5 of our Doctrinal Statement.

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

L328. Date: October 1964. **Text:** Genesis 3:1-7; Romans 5:8-15.

Topic: Adam; Depravity: Of Man; Satan.

INTRODUCTION—The man whom God created was placed in the beautiful garden of Eden to be master of all under his heavenly Father's sovereign care. He was given a companion, called woman, to share with him the joys of original human love. But a tragedy occurred! Man is suddenly thrust forth from the garden with no hope of return. He is no longer in fellowship with God. The fate of physical death hangs over him. He is a sinner condemned. What happened? Today's lesson answers the question.

Every person must face the problem of sin. He may close his eyes to its reality. He may minimize its seriousness by considering sin a mere “mistake” and a breach of the laws of society. He may admit its seriousness and accept what the Bible says about it.

The Bible says much about sin. It says sin is “transgression, missing the mark, crookedness, rebellion.” It says sin is first against God and secondly against man. It says sin blights a man's conscience, disturbs his fellowship with God, and condemns his soul to hell.

Moreover the Bible says sin is due to the evil influence of a person who heads up all evil forces. We call this person Satan, or the devil. Today's study will deal with the subject “Satan and the Fall of Man.” It will set out these basic truths: Satan is a person of supreme evil; Satan brought the fall of man and its attendant consequences; Satan's power is broken in Jesus Christ. This is the story of redemption.

EXPOSITION

I. SATAN'S PERSONALITY

Though many people deny the personality of Satan, the existence, power, and persistence of moral evil in the world is evidence that there is a personal devil. Just as all good is headed up in the person of God, so all evil is headed up in the person of Satan. One who believes the Bible cannot deny this.

1. Satan's origin. Whence came the devil? The answer to this question is shrouded in mystery. Two things may be said positively. (1) Satan is created being. God has created all things, visible and invisible, Colossians 1:16. He alone is self-existent and If Satan was not created, he would have existed eternally with God. (2) God did not create Satan an evil person. Satan became a devil by willful rebellion against God. There is little information as to when this happened. The Bible is concerned with the origin of sin among men. This is traced back to a satanic temptation in Eden. Many Bible students look to these scriptures as evidence of Satan's origin: Isaiah 11:12-17; Ezekiel 28:1-19; Colossians 1:16; I Timothy 3:16; II Peter 2:4; Jude 6, 9. Of this much we are sure: At some time in eternity an angel of light rebelled against God and became the leader of the forces of darkness.

2. Satan's names. Names given Satan help reveal his character. 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—lightbearer (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). His names show him to be a person of exceptional wickedness.

3. Satan's abode. Satan is not presently 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 destiny is hell, Revelation 9:11; Matthew 25:41.

4. Satan's power and work. Satan 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) by harassing and resisting God's servants (Daniel 10:13; II Corinthians 12:7), hindering them (1 Thessalonians 2:18), sifting them (Luke 22:31), and accusing them (Revelation 12:9-10). He seeks to infiltrate good with evil (Matthew 13:25) and transform himself and his ministers into angels of light (II Corinthians 11:14-15). Without doubt, he has great power.

5. Satan's limitations. Satan exercises his power by God's permissive will. He cannot tempt a believer (Matthew 4:1), inflict sickness (Job 1:10, 12), inflict death (Job 2:6; Hebrews 2:14), or even touch a believer (Job 1:10, 12; 2:6; Luke 22:31; I John 5:18) unless God permits it to be so! He is a coward and flees when he is resisted (James 4:7). God has not lost control of the universe to Satan.

6. Satan's defeat is first promised in the Bible in Genesis 3:15. The victory of Jesus on the cross and in His resurrection guarantees Satan's overthrow, John 13:31; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8. Satan's power is limited now. He will be confined to the abyss during the millennium, Revelation 20:1-3. After a brief release (Revelation 20:3, 7-9), he will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, there to be tormented for ever and ever, Revelation 20:10.

7. Satan's opponents. Christians are to be opposed to the work of Satan. They are to be sober and watchful, I Peter 5:8. They must not be ignorant of Satan's methods. II Corinthians 2:11. They must give him no place, Ephesians 4:27. They must firmly resist him, James 4:7; I John 2:13. They must put on the whole armour of God so as to overcome him, Ephesians 6:13-18.

II. MAN'S DEPRAVITY

We believe in the "hereditary and total depravity of man in his natural state involving his fall in Adam."

1. Meaning of depravity. "Hereditary and total depravity" means that man's entire nature—mental, moral, physical, spiritual—is sadly affected by sin. It does not mean a man is born already guilty of sin, nor already condemned to hell, nor even as bad as he can be. It does not mean he has no conscience, nor that he is prone to every kind of sin.

Hereditary and total depravity does not mean that infants who die are lost in hell. Bible believing Christians agree that a child who has not reached the age of responsibility is not guilty of personal sin. So long as there is no guilt there can be no condemnation. The grace of God keeps in peace those

who die in infancy.

“Hereditary and total depravity” means every man is helpless, by virtue of his inheritance as a human being, outside the provision of God's saving grace. His whole nature—body, soul, and spirit—are weakened and warped in the direction of sin. It is, as William Evans has written, “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).” Total depravity means all of man's faculties are weakened toward sin and without divine aid, each man will forever sink deeper into sin.

2. Beginning of depravity. Depravity came through the fall of man. The Biblical account of this fall is recorded in Genesis and interpreted in Romans 5:12-19; 3:10-23, and elsewhere. Sin was already in the devil, but when Adam and Eve yielded to Satan's enticement and ate the forbidden fruit, sin entered into human experience. Their sin was a volunteer act of the will. They exalted their will above God's will, deliberately transgressing a divinely marked boundary. By so doing, they became depraved in their own minds and unfit for fellowship with God.

Genesis 3 records the effects of the sin of the first humans. There were six immediate effects of their sin: conscience was awakened, a fig-leaf covering was attempted; shame possessed them; fear assailed them; they sought to hide; they sought to justify themselves. There were remote consequences of the sin also. These included: a curse upon the serpent, the woman, the man, and the ground; banishment of man from the garden; institution of sacrificial worship; promise of a redeemer; birth of children sharing the depravity of their parents; separation of the visible presence of God; physical and spiritual death. Through the sin of Adam and Eve, the whole human race is born depraved.

3. Scope of depravity. Since depravity is inherited, universal among men. Men are born into a sin-depraved world and are by nature children of wrath, Psalm 51:5; Ephesians 2:3. Sin is a universal experience among human beings who reach the age of responsibility, Romans 3:9. No honest man can deny that he, too, is the subject of depravity, Psalm 14:1; Luke 11:13; Matthew 6:12; Jeremiah 17:9.

Depravity (weakness in the direction of sin) results in the commission of acts of sin. The seriousness of these acts of sin is revealed in that by sin a man is alienated from God, degraded, disrupted in his social relations,

suffering in body and mind, and condemned to death. Sin is most serious. It is a problem with which all human beings must deal. If a man is naturally depraved and void of those qualities of spirit which commend him to God, where is there hope for him? The answer can lie only in Jesus Christ. Praise God, He is sufficient to save all men who believe.

III. CHRIST'S ATONEMENT

God alone fully understands the meaning of depravity and the condemnation which sin deserves. Though He is moved by divine justice, He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, Ezekiel 33:11. It is not His will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, II Peter 3:9. Therefore, He looked with merciful love upon a world of mankind condemned to eternal death by their sins and moved in grace to redeem them. Read Romans 5:8-15.

1. Man's need. Man desperately needed help. He was “ungodly” (without God's approval and help), a “sinner” (guilty of missing the mark set by God's holy law), and an “enemy” (rebellious against the known demands of God's righteousness). In such a condition he was “without hope in the world,” Ephesians 2:12. Due to his depraved condition, his eyes were blinded so that he did not realize the dread seriousness of his plight and could not perceive the glorious light of the gospel, II Corinthians 4:4. Bound helplessly in sin, he needed a Saviour.

2. God's love. **“God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,”** Romans 5:8. The motive for salvation is not found in the goodness of man but in the grace of God. God loved us first, before we even loved Him, and moved to redeem us. His love is not a weak, sentimental, selfish emotion. It is a mighty force which moved across the centuries in a redemptive plan which is effective for all who believe. His love is sacrificial, giving Jesus unto death. His love is universal, embracing all of mankind. His love is persistent, seeking out the lost sheep. His love is redemptive, reclaiming all who have departed and who will return.

3. Christ's sacrifice. The story of the cross of Jesus is so familiar that it need not be repeated here. Paul simply refers to it in such expressions as, “Christ died for us” and “we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.” It is, indeed, through the Lord Jesus Christ that we have received the atonement. The glorious truth of the matter is that Christ died for our sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, I Peter 3:18. His

sacrifice was for men, all men, depraved men, undeserving men, His sacrifice was valid for “. . . **through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all who believe are justified from all things. . .**” Acts 13:38-39. He is the Saviour of all who repent and trust Him.

4. Man's hope. Paul is careful to point out the seriousness of Adam's sin and man's condition as a consequence. Indeed, by the one man sin entered into the world and passed upon all men because all have sinned. However, in Christ Jesus man has received much more than he lost in Adam! By the offence of the first Adam, death came. By the sacrifice of the second Adam (Jesus Christ), life is available. In Jesus the believer finds deliverance over the devil and human depravity: **“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord,”** Romans 5:21.

CONCLUSION—There is a personal devil that has set his designs to ruin man eternally. He tempted our forefathers—Adam and Eve—and through their Fall the whole race of mankind suffers under a depravity toward sin. He is active in opposition to righteousness and the influence of the Gospel. By his influence and power men are blinded to God's offer of mercy and bound in the habits of sin. Their only hope is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth as the Saviour. In Christ Jesus, mankind gains much more than was lost in Adam's sin for in Christ he becomes a very child of God.

QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by, “The devil is a person”?
2. What was the origin of the devil?
3. How do his names reveal his character?
4. Wherein lies Satan's defeat?
5. What is “hereditary and total depravity”?
6. Whence came depravity upon mankind?
7. Does depravity mean infants who die are lost in hell? Explain.
8. Why did man need a Saviour?
9. How is a man saved?
10. How does a man gain more in Christ than he lost in Adam?