

Satan the Serpent

Lesson for May 1, 2022

INTRODUCTION:

- One of the major questions of life has to do with evil. It can sound like this:
 - Why does evil exist?
 - Why do bad things happen to good people? (*According to surveys, this is the #1 question asked by BOTH lost and saved people.*)
 - If God is so powerful, why does He allow evil to exist?
- DISCUSSION/GROUP WORK: How would you answer these questions?
- Throughout Genesis 1-2 everything has been good. In fact, in 1:31, God declared all of His creation “very good.”
- In Genesis 3, everything changed, and nothing has ever been the same.

BIBLE STUDY:

1. Introducing the Serpent (Genesis 3:1)
 - a. His description:
 - i. “More subtle than any beast...” He was more cunning, wise, and intelligent than anything else in creation.
 - ii. The Hebrew seems to indicate a shining, upright creature. (Remember that when God cursed him later it was to include crawling on his belly.)
 - b. His declaration:
 - i. “Hath God said...” This has been his pattern for his temptations ever since.
 - ii. The root of all sin is doubting God’s Word.
2. Introducing Satan (GROUP WORK?)
 - a. Satan is a real being.
 - i. He has the traits of personality (2 Corinthians 11:3 – intelligence; Revelation 12:17, Luke 22:31 – emotions such as anger and desire; 2 Timothy 2:26 – he has a will).
 - ii. He has the pronouns of personality. In both the OT (Job 1) and NT (Matthew 4:1-12) he is referred to as a person
 - iii. He has the moral responsibility of personality. He is held accountable by the Lord in Matthew 25:41.
 - b. Satan was created. We learn much about Satan in Ezekiel 28.
 - i. Satan had unparalleled wisdom and beauty (vs. 12). He was filled with wisdom and perfect in beauty.
 - ii. Satan had an unparalleled habitation (vs. 13). This seems to refer to being placed in Eden during creation week.
 - iii. Satan had an unparalleled covering (vs. 13). The dazzling description of his robe indicates something of the glory bestowed upon him.
 - iv. Satan had an unparalleled function (vs. 14). He belonged to the order of angels that are associated with guarding the holiness of God.
 - v. Satan had unparalleled perfection (vs. 15). It seems that Satan was in every way the epitome of God’s original creation.
 - c. Satan has limitations.
 - i. Ezekiel 28:15 clearly states that Satan was created.

- ii. That means he does not have attributes that belong to God such as omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience.
 - iii. Though he is a mighty being, he has creaturely imitations and he is accountable to God.
 - d. Satan has many names. Here are a few:
 - i. Satan: Used 52 times and means adversary or opposer.
 - ii. Devil: Used 35 times and means slanderer.
 - iii. Serpent: In Genesis 3, Revelation 12:9 and 20:2.
 - iv. The Great Red Dragon: Revelation 12:3, 7, 9
 - v. The Tempter: Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5.
 - vi. Names often reveal the character and aspects of their work. So with Satan: his background (adversary, accuser, tempter), looks (dragon, serpent), characteristics (liar, murderer, ruler), and activities (accuser, tempter).
- 3. The Fall of Satan (Ezekiel 28:15)
 - a. Where does evil come from? This verse says clearly that iniquity (sin) was found in him (Satan). This teaches us the origin of sin.
 - b. Consider the nature of Satan's sin:
 - i. 1 Timothy 3:6 pinpoints Satan's particular sin as arrogance, conceit, or being puffed up.
 - ii. Ezekiel 28:16 assigns the cause of Satan's downfall to him using his position for personal profit – to traffic in his own self-promotion.
 - c. Isaiah 14:12-17 outlines Satan's plan with five "I will" statements:
 - i. I will ascend into heaven (vs. 13). This is an expressed desire to occupy and settle in heaven on an equality with God.
 - ii. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God (vs. 13). He wished to rule over the heavens and angelic beings.
 - iii. I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation (vs. 13). This speaks to Satan's ambition to govern the universe.
 - iv. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds (vs. 14). He wanted the glory that belonged to God.
 - v. I will be like the most High (vs. 14). Satan wanted to be like God. He wanted to be as powerful as God and to exercise the authority that only belongs to God.

CONCLUSION/APPLICATION: Why is it important for us to understand Satan?

- Satan's methods haven't changed since the Garden of Eden.
- Satan tempted Jesus to independence from God, to indulgence and to idolatry.
- Summarized: Satan still tempts Christ's followers today to take things into their own hands rather than yielding to the Father's will.
- Key to victorious living:
 - Understand how Satan works so you can recognize temptations...
 - BUT keep your eyes on Jesus. Focus on Him.