

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Lesson One: The Origin of the Devil

So much about the devil is not known. This is something we may add to the list of “secret things” that “belong to the Lord our God” (Deuteronomy 29:29). However, this does not prevent speculation.

Some confusion about the devil is a result of the misapplication of Bible passages. For example, the name “Lucifer” is taken from the King James Version of the Bible and often applied to the devil. The original Hebrew of Isaiah 14:12 should be rendered, “O Day Star” (cf. ESV), and it is used in reference to the king of Babylon (Isa. 14:4). Moreover, Ezekiel 28 does not address the devil when it says, “You were in Eden, the garden of God” (v. 13), for this passage is discussing the downfall of the king of Tyre (cf. vv. 11-19).

From where did the devil come?

First, it is certain that Satan is not of the nature of deity. He is not divine. He is not God. Deity cannot be restrained. Job was right when he said to God, “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted” (Job 42:2). God is indeed all-powerful, thus He wears the name God Almighty (cf. Gen. 17:1). But the devil is clearly not omnipotent (cf. Job 1:12; 2:6).

Second, since the devil is not of the nature of deity, it is obvious that he is a created being, for all things and beings that are not God were created by God. Of Christ Colossians 1:16 declares, “For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.” Though we can be certain that

The Devil, Sin and Hell

God created all spiritual beings as well as all the physical ones, we cannot be certain as to when He created them. From a question He asked of Job it seems that the spiritual creatures were made before the earth was created. God asked, “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?...when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (cf. Job 38:4-7; Job 1:6; 2:1).

Third, the Bible reveals that all things, as they were originally created, were good. When God “saw everything that he had made,...it was very good” (Gen. 1:31). The word translated “good” is the one used in the widest sense, therefore, the creation of anything evil is absolutely denied.¹

So, by way of definition, the devil may be said to be “a created but superhuman, personal, evil, world-power, represented in Scripture as the adversary both of God and man.”²

What is the devil called?

Satan means “adversary” and, by implication, the enemy of God. This word or name for the devil is used some thirty-five times in the New Testament and at least seventeen times in the Old Testament where it is related to the verb that suggests “lying in wait.”

Beelzebub is used seven times in the New Testament (cf. Matt. 12:24). It means “lord of dung” or of filth, which is a reference to idolatry.

¹ ***Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament***, Vol. 1, R. Laird Harris, editor (Chicago, IL: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1980), p. 345.

² “Satan,” ***International Standard Bible Encyclopedia***, 4:2693.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

The devil is called *the prince of this world* some three times in the New Testament because of the influence he has in life on the earth, and because so many serve him, knowingly or unwittingly, he is the ruler of the world.

“*Serpent*” as used in reference to the devil is found nine times in the Bible. This term is used to emphasize his cunning and deadly nature (cf. Rev. 12:9).

First Peter 5:8 calls him the *adversary* to identify him as the opponent of God and man.

The devil is also called *Abaddon* or *Apollyon* (Rev. 9:11), *the great dragon...the deceiver of the whole world, the accuser of our brethren* (Rev. 12:9, 10), *Belial* (2 Cor. 6:15), an *enemy* (Matt. 13:28), *the evil one* (Matt. 13:19), *the father of lies, a liar, a murderer* (John 8:44), *the god of this world* (2 Cor. 4:4), *the ruler of this world* (John 12:31), *the prince of the power of the air* (Eph. 2:2), and *the tempter* (Matt. 4:4).

Guy N. Woods wrote,

Quaint old Alexander Cruden, who though mentally depressed and under the heavy burden of mental illness much of his life nevertheless gave the world an invaluable tool of Bible study which has been a blessing to millions penned the following excellent, and in my view, correct summary of biblical teaching regarding the evil one:

“By collecting the passages where Satan, or the devil is mentioned, it may be observed that he fell from Heaven with all his company; that God cast him down from thence for the punishment of his pride; that, by his envy, and malice, sin, death, and all other evils came into the world; that, by the permission of God,

The Devil, Sin and Hell

he exercises a sort of government in the world over his subordinates, over apostate angels like himself; that God makes use of him to prove good men, and chastise bad ones; that he is a lying spirit in the mouth of false prophets, seducers, and heretics; that it is he, or some of his, that torment or possess men; that inspire them with evil designs, as he did David, when he suggested to him to number his people; to Judas, to betray the Lord and Master; and to Ananias and Sapphira, to conceal the price of their field. That he roves full of rage like a roaring lion, to tempt, to betray, to destroy, and to involve us in guilt and wickedness; that his power and malice are restrained within certain limits, and controlled by the will of God. In a word, that he is an enemy of God and man, and uses his utmost endeavors to rob God of his glory, and men of the souls.”³

With most of what Mr. Crudens wrote we might agree. However, after a careful and complete study of what the Bible says about the devil we might understand some things even better. For example, the Bible does not teach that he fell from heaven. When Jesus said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18), He was talking about the loss of power and influence the devil suffered when seventy-two disciples could cast out demons in the name of Jesus. In the simile that Jesus used, it was lightning that fell from heaven. The reason for his fall is tenuously⁴ gathered from a warning to those who would be elders and

³ Guy N. Woods, ***Questions and Answers Open Forum Freed-Hardeman College Lectures*** (Henderson, TN: Freed-Hardeman College, 1976), p. 335.

⁴ That which is “tenuous” is lacking in sound basis and is largely unsubstantiated.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

statements by Peter and Jude concerning punishment of the disobedient.⁵

After the rest of this study has been conducted, we may be able to say even more about the origin of the devil, why God created him and how God created him, that is, concerning his nature.

⁵ Paul wrote to Timothy about an elder: “He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil” (1 Tim. 3:6). Peter said, “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until judgment...” (2 Pet. 2:4). On the same subject, Jude added, “And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6).

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Questions to Stimulate Thought and Aid Learning

1. What do we know for certain about the origin of the devil? _____
2. Was the devil created good or evil? _____
3. Why do you think the devil became so evil? _____

4. What are some names used for the devil in the Bible? _____

5. What is a name often used for the devil that is *not* used in the Bible to refer specifically to him? _____
6. Why do you think the devil hates man so much? _____

7. Why do you think the devil hates God so much? _____

8. How do we know the devil is the enemy of God? _____

9. Why do some think the devil's sin was/is pride? _____

10. If the devil is "kept in eternal chains," how does he have so much power?

Lesson Two: Satan's Appearances

The devil's first appearance is recorded in Genesis 3:1-6 where we find the entrance of evil into this world. Very simply, the facts are...

1. Adam and Eve were created holy and happy, and they were furnished with all the things pertaining to life and godliness.
2. They were separated from God because of their disobedience.
3. They were led to disobey God by the seducing power and influence of the serpent that was being used by the devil.
4. Through some means that serpent had, at the time of the temptation, the gift of speech.

Now that we have reviewed those few facts of the case, we should consider their meaning.

How was it that the serpent had the gift of speech? Evidently, the serpent was only the instrument through which a far more diabolical and cunning agent spoke and acted. To find out who the principal agent was, we must consider the following particulars:

1. He was the first of all liars.
2. He was the first of all murderers.
3. John 8:44 reveals that Satan is both the first liar and the first murderer.
4. It clearly follows that Satan himself was the power that used the serpent as the mere instrument of his power in this sad and eventful tragedy. This may be why he is called the old serpent in Revelation 12:9 and 20:2.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Take a closer look at the devil in serpent's clothing. Observe his diabolical malice. He wanted to hurt the innocent pair. Notice his diabolical cunning. He deceived. When Paul wrote to Timothy about the role of women, he mentioned the fall of the first pair in 1 Timothy 2:14 saying, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor." This tells us of his attitude and disposition. It seems his first and chief aim was to weaken the woman's faith in the word of God (cf. Gen. 3:1-5). Though Genesis 3:6 says that Eve "gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate," the first of the chapter seems to indicate that the woman was alone and vulnerable when the adversary approached her.⁶

A murderer is one who takes another's life. The devil introduced spiritual death to man which occurred when he influenced him to disobey God. Sin is the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4). When Adam and Eve transgressed God's law concerning the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17), they died spiritually being separated from God Who gives life (cf. Isa. 59:1, 2; Eph. 2:1; 1 John 5:11; Rev. 2:10). They also began to die physically that day, for God prevented them from eating of the tree of life (Gen. 3:22, 23).

The first liar lied about God (Gen. 3:4, 5), about man, and about sin.

1. About God, he misrepresented His word.
2. About man, he said he would not die.
3. About sin, he said disobedience would not kill.

⁶ When Satan said, "You will not surely die" (Gen. 3:4), he used the singular.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

He is the tempter. He appeared to the first pair to tempt them to disobey God. He appeared even to the Son of Man to tempt Him (Matt. 4:1; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:1-13) and provided three different avenues through which sin could have been committed.

1. The desires of the flesh. Satan begged Jesus to turn stones to bread that could be eaten to satisfy His hunger (Luke 4:2, 3).
2. The desires of the eyes. Showing him all the kingdoms of the world, the devil told Jesus that it could all be His, but Jesus resisted (Luke 4:5-6).
3. The pride of life. The tempter tried to fill Jesus with a sinful pride when he talked about angels bearing Him up (Luke 4:10, 11).

The devil made the same approach to Eve (Gen. 3:6).

1. The desires of the flesh. Eve “saw that the tree was good for food.”
2. The desires of the eyes. Also, she saw “that it was a delight to the eyes.”
3. The pride of life. She saw “that the tree was to be desired to make one wise.”

He tempts us in the same ways (1 John 2:15-17).

1. “The desires of the flesh”
2. “The desires of the eyes”
3. “Pride in possessions”

The devil is also a thief. He steals the word of God from men’s hearts. Mark 4 and Luke 8 give the parable of the sower (or parable of the soils) to describe the work of Satan. As the birds remove the seed, so Satan removes the word of

The Devil, Sin and Hell

God from before men and from their hearts. Before the Word can take root, Satan comes immediately to steal it away. This he does to keep men in bondage to him and his way. If they know the truth and obey it, they will be freed from bondage (cf. John 8:31, 32; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 5:1).

A roaring lion is a fearful thing. What could be more fearful than the combination of a deadly serpent and a roaring lion? Our enemy is not only cunning like a serpent (cf. 2 Cor. 11:3), but he also seeks to swallow us up through persecution. We should have the same fear of the devil that we might have of a roaring lion. At one time in Peter's life, he failed to recognize this principle and denied Christ because of his own fear of persecution (cf. Luke 22:31-34). Thankfully, Peter came to realize just how dangerous the devil is and said, "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him..." (1 Pet. 5:8, 9). He is restless and relentless. "The Lord said to Satan, 'From where have you come?' Satan answered the Lord and said, 'From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it'" (Job 1:7).

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Questions to Stimulate Thought and Aid Learning

1. Where did Satan first appear? _____
2. Concerning invention (or origin), what terrible things are credited to the devil? _____
3. What was the devil called when he approached Jesus in the wilderness? _____
4. Was Eve alone when the devil first approached her?

5. Through what avenues did the tempter approach Eve and Jesus? _____

6. How do we determine who was the principal agent behind the serpent's tempting words? _____

7. How would you describe the devil? _____

8. Why does the devil steal the word of God from men's hearts? _____
9. Why is the accuser likened to a roaring lion? _____

10. What happened when Peter took his eyes away from Jesus? _____

Lesson Three: Temptations

The details of Cain's temptation and fall are found in Genesis 4. His sin progressed from improper worship (substituting manmade ideas or failing to completely worship God in faith) to jealousy to wrath to murder to lying to a curse from God. 1 John 3:12 contrasts those who are "of God" (cf. vv. 9, 10) with those who are "of the evil one" and uses Cain as an illustration.

Details of Job's temptation are found in Job 1 and 2. Before Job's trials, he was the greatest of all the men of the east. Satan accused Job of being faithful only because he had God's blessings. "Stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face," was the challenge he issued to God (Job 1:11). God didn't do that, but he allowed the devil to do it. Satan took away Job's wealth (7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 1,000 oxen, 500 female donkeys, a great household, and ten children) and his health (striking him with runny sores from the top of his head to the sole of his foot). Unlike Cain, Job withstood the devil's temptation (cf. Job 1:22; 42:7).

When Jesus was tempted, He overcame temptation and sin by using the Bible. Each time, He came back to the devil with, "It is written" (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10). Moreover, He said to the devil when the devil tried to make Him fall, "Be gone, Satan!" (Matt. 4:10). "Then the devil left him" (Matt. 4:11). James admonishes us, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

As in the case with Jesus, God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear (cf. 1 Cor. 10:13).

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Questions to Stimulate Thought and Aid Learning

1. What caused Cain to kill his brother and how did it cause him to do that? _____

2. How could Cain have overcome the devil? _____

3. How did the devil accuse Job before God? _____

4. What did the devil do to Job? _____

5. What was Job's response to the devil's temptations?

6. How did the Lord resist the devil? _____

7. What is our hope in resisting the devil? _____

8. How did Jesus get the devil to leave Him? _____

9. What does God do to keep us from being tempted beyond what we are able to bear? _____

10. Who is not tempted by the devil? _____

Lesson Four: Sin

Satan is mentioned several times in connection with Judas' sin. "Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve" (Luke 22:3). The word translated "entered into" may also mean, "take possession of."⁷ We cannot be sure why Judas betrayed the Lord to his enemies. Many speculators have given various reasons. However, it seems that Judas had taken offense at the rebuke of Jesus, and he yielded to the temptation of the devil who worked on avaricious dispositions. John wrote,

But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?' He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it (John 12:4-6).

Even before that, Jesus had said concerning Judas, "...one of you is a devil." John didn't know it at the time it was spoken, but he later wrote, "He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the Twelve, was going to betray him" (John 6:70, 71). Jesus spoke in prospect, meaning Judas would fail and would fall.

By the time Jesus and the apostles had assembled to eat the Jewish Passover feast, Judas had met with the chief priests and elders on the previous day. He bargained with them to betray Jesus (Matt. 26:14-25). "During supper," John said,

⁷ εἰσερχομαι, "to enter into or take possession of, Lu. 22.3...."
The Analytical Greek Lexicon.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

“the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him” (John 13:2). The fact that the devil put into Judas’ heart to betray Jesus does not excuse him. That is temptation. It is true that Satan throws darts of temptation into our hearts, but we need not let them cause inflammation that festers and becomes deadly (cf. James 1:12-15). Up until the time that Jesus gave to Judas a morsel of bread, Judas had doubts and impulses to do better, but at that time he gave himself up wholly and completely to do Satan’s work. He was already under the devil’s influence, but at that time he plunged headlong into the bottomless pit. Satan entered Judas more than once. He came at him time and again until he wore him down (cf. Luke 22:3; John 13:2, 27).

Although Judas is best known for his betrayal of Jesus, he had many weaknesses. Covetousness (Matt. 26:14, 15), hypocrisy (Matt. 26:47-49), stealing (John 12:6), and deception (John 12:4-6) were a few of them. Judas’ sin caused him to forfeit his position of honor (that of apostleship) and be remembered as the “greatest” traitor who ever lived.

Other sins compare to that of Judas’ when we see the consequences of them.

The first recorded sin in the church is given in Acts 5. After the church began, many Christians sold their possessions to give to those who had needs (cf. Acts 2:45). This was not necessarily required for salvation and citizenship in the kingdom (cf. Acts 5:4). However, the desire for man’s favor (the pride of life) caused Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the Holy Spirit (God) and to lose their lives and souls (Acts 5:1-6).

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Satan caused the first recorded sin in God's physical creation and also the first recorded sin in God's spiritual creation.

The parable of the weeds is a story about sin. It is recorded in Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43. Both God's children and Satan's

children are living in the same world. The weeds (sons of the evil one) that are sown by the enemy (the devil) look like wheat (the children of the kingdom) for a short period of time, so the sons of the evil one can appear to be God's children. "The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers" (Matt. 13:41). Just as weeds are burned at the time of harvest, so will the law-breakers be thrown into the "fiery furnace." "In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:42). That must be a reference to hell (cf. Matt. 8:11, 12; Luke 13:22-30).

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Questions to Stimulate Thought and Aid Learning

1. What role did Judas fill in the apostleship? _____
2. How early did Jesus know that Judas would betray Him?

3. What did Luke mean when he said that Satan entered into Judas? _____
4. Why did the devil have to “enter” Judas often? _____

5. When the devil “entered” Judas, was he still free to choose? _____
6. What was involved in the temptation of Judas to betray Jesus? _____
7. What were some of the problems Judas had? _____

8. What was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira? _____
9. Against Whom did they sin? _____
10. What do you think Ananias and Sapphira hoped to gain by their sin? _____
11. Why is the parable of the weeds about sin? _____

12. What made “weeds” out of some in the kingdom?

13. What will be the end of the “sons of the evil one”? _____

Lesson Five: Righteousness

From the very beginning, the devil was a sinner, and those who carry on sinful lives today are considered to be of the devil. First John 3:7 declares, “Whoever practices righteousness is righteous.” But, “Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning” (1 John 3:8).

What is righteousness?

In the sayings of Jesus...

- Righteousness is what is right and just in and of itself, or whatever conforms to the revealed will of God (cf. Matt. 5:6, 10, 20; John 16:8, 10).
- It is whatever has been appointed by God to be acknowledged and obeyed by man (cf. Matt. 3:15; 21:32).
- It is the sum total of all of the requirements of God (Matt. 6:33).
- Righteousness involves religious duties...
 - o To one’s neighbor (Matt. 6:1-4),
 - o To God (Matt. 6:5-15), and
 - o To one’s self (Matt. 6:16-18).

In Paul’s writings, right action (or action in harmony with the will of God) is meant five times (cf. Eph. 6:14; et. al.).

First John 3:7 says, “Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.” The original Greek language uses the form of a participle to mean, “Righteousness is doing (i.e., making, forming, or constructing) righteousness.” First John 3:9 adds that the one who is practicing righteousness does not keep on sinning.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Why was Jesus baptized? “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15). The man/woman who *does* righteousness is righteous, and the one who does not *do* righteousness is not righteous.

Cain “was of the evil one” (1 John 3:12) and killed his brother, Abel. All others who practice sin are like Cain, i.e., of the devil. Practicing sin may be done in many ways, i.e., by omission as well as by stealing or murdering.

Those who do not practice sin and perform righteousness are “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4; cf. 1 John 3:9). The word for “partakers” is literally “sharers,” or “partners.” It points to the relationship that Christians sustain to the Lord. By availing themselves of these “precious and very great promises,” God’s children are privileged to share in the divine nature, i.e., the holy character that God possesses. Hebrews 12:10 declares that God “disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.”

On the other hand, those who practice sin belong to their father, the devil (John 8:44).

Satan is the greatest deceiver. He began his deception in the garden in Eden where “the woman was deceived” (1 Tim. 2:14), and he has attempted to deceive all who have lived since then. The fact that “all have sinned” (Rom. 6:23) shows how successful he has been. Although the devil may disguise himself as “an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14), he is still that same old serpent and is still deceiving men.

Satan appeared to be giving “more light” to Eve. “Your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil,” he said (Gen. 3:5). He attempts to do the same today. There are false teachers on televisions, radios, and in books

The Devil, Sin and Hell

who are promising “light.” Satan has great power to deceive, and his power is such that most are unaware that they are being deceived. Not only does Satan appear as light, but so do his servants also, e.g., false teachers in the church, false teachers out of the church, false churches, schools and other human governments and organizations.

On Paul’s first missionary journey, he taught Sergius Paulus at Paphos (cf. Acts 13:4-12). There is where Paul met a man named Bar-Jesus who was called “Elymas” (meaning, “magician”). This man was described by Luke as a false prophet, a sorcerer or magician, full of all deceit and villainy, son of the devil, an enemy of righteousness, and one who made crooked the straight paths of the Lord. Here is yet another example of false teachers that may appear to be righteous, but are completely different behind the façade.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Questions to Stimulate Thought and Aid Learning

1. Quote from memory 1 John 3:8. _____

2. Whom does Satan deceive (cf. 1 John 5:19)? _____

3. How is Satan so skillful in his deception (2 Cor. 11:14)?

4. As what do Satan's servants sometimes appear?

5. According to what Paul called Bar-Jesus Elymas, what are those who pervert the truth? _____
6. What is righteousness? _____
7. Why was Jesus baptized? _____
8. Why was Cain "of the evil one"? _____

9. Examine the sinners of John 8.
10. What did Satan pretend to be giving to Eve? _____

Lesson Six: Jesus and the Devil

We must give no place (opportunity) to the devil (Eph. 4:27). Resist him (James 4:7). Ephesians 4 discusses our relationship with one another. In it God forbids lying, anger that leads to sin, and continued wrath. To have such sins in our lives allows Satan a place to dwell (or an opportunity to destroy).

The proper attitude toward the devil is to resist him (cf. James 4:7), and we have some good examples of just how to do that.

- Joseph resisted the devil when he daily refused to be intimate with Potiphar's wife and finally ran away from her (Gen. 39:6-12).
- With the power of God's word, Jesus resisted the devil when He was driven out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted (Mark 1:12, 13; Matt. 4:1-11). When Jesus resisted the devil, the devil left Him.

James 4:7, 8 show us that we can better resist the devil when we...

- Submit ourselves to God,
- Draw near to God,
- Cleanse our hands, and
- Purify our hearts.

First Corinthians 5 discusses what the church in Corinth was to do with an immoral brother. From this account we learn many important things not the least of which is that we must deal with sin wherever and whenever we find it.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

The Lord's church was instructed to cut this brother out, to withdraw from him, "not even to eat with such a one" (1 Cor. 5:11). He was to be delivered "to Satan for the destruction of the flesh" (1 Cor. 5:5). At one time (before he became a Christian) he had belonged to Satan. Being "among" the saints in Corinth (1 Cor. 5:1), however, he had been delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of the Son of God (Col. 1:13). Yet, because of his sin of sexual immorality, he was again under the power of Satan (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1, 5). The act of discipline by the church was intended "so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord" (1 Cor. 5:5).

Satan introduced death into the world and prior to the coming of Christ, he had all men, through the fear of death, enslaved (cf. Heb. 2:14, 15). Jesus entered Satan's realm, death (Acts 2:31), and returned victorious, having the keys to Hades and death (cf. Rev. 1:8). And now, the shed blood of Jesus allows man to overcome death also (cf. John 6:54).

The ultimate victory over the devil will be when the devil is cast into hell on the Judgment Day (cf. Rev. 20:10). Hell has been prepared for him and his angels (Matt. 25:41).

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Questions to Stimulate Thought and Aid Learning

1. What does it mean to “give place” to the devil? _____

2. What can we expect to happen if we strive continually to resist the devil? _____
3. Who should be delivered to Satan according to the book of First Corinthians? _____
4. Why is it said in Hebrews 2 that the devil has the power of death? _____
5. For whom was hell prepared? _____
6. How can we better resist the devil? _____

7. What is the proper attitude to have toward the devil?

8. What are some examples of successful resistance to the devil? _____

Lesson Seven: Description of Sin

The simplest definition of sin is given as a transgression of God's law. However, that may not give an entire description of sin. Transgressing God's law has been done in every age of man.

Certainly, one can sin by committing acts that are unlawful, but, also, omitting the things required by the law of God is a sinful thing. The most commonly used word for sin in the New Testament means literally to miss the mark or to be in error.⁸

Sin originates in man's heart. The body is only the instrument that is used to carry it out (cf. Matt. 12:34, 35).

For more on what sin is, Romans 14 shows that one might do something that is lawful or right in and of itself (e.g., eating the meat of animals that had been sacrificed in the worship of idols) and still be guilty of sin because he doubts whether he should do it or not. When he violates his conscience, he sins.

Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). God's word authorizes. Therefore, we must have authority from God that is given through His word for all that we say and do (cf. Col. 3:17). Paul said to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 10:23; cf. 1 Cor. 6:12) that before a thing can be used or done...

- It must be lawful.
- It must be expedient.
- It must be done to edification or building up.

⁸ ἁμαρτία, *The Analytical Greek Lexicon*.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

We should try always to do good. Good works are “good” from at least three standpoints.

- They are in accordance with the right standard (i.e., the Bible; cf. Psa. 119:39).
- They are for the right motive (i.e., love and gratitude; cf. 1 Thes. 1:3).
- They have the right aim (i.e., God’s glory; cf. Matt. 5:16).

The standard of righteousness is the Bible (Psa. 119:172). To go against the Bible is unrighteousness, and *all* unrighteousness is sin (1 John 5:17).

Men tend to look upon some sins as more condemning than others. Different sins do have different consequences, and those consequences make some sins greater than others. However, is one more lost because he is a murderer than the one who is an adulterer? Such thinking may cause one to continue in sin thinking lying and indifference are not as bad as drunkenness and theft. Revelation 21:8 warns: “But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

We must be careful. Not every sin will condemn us if we “walk in the light, as he is in the light” (1 John 1:7). Sins of ignorance and weakness are not necessarily condemning of the child of God who is trying to live according to the word of God with a humble and submissive heart.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Questions to Stimulate Thought and Aid Learning

1. Give a definition of sin. _____

2. What is a good test for whether a thing is right or wrong and can be done or should not be done? _____

3. What is meant by Paul's statement: "But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23)? _____

4. For which sins not covered by the blood of Jesus will one be lost? _____
5. How can we know what things are "good" things?

6. What does it mean to "walk in the light"? _____

7. From where does authority for our words and actions come? _____

Lesson Eight: Satan, not God, Tempts

God is never the source of temptation. Satan is. James spoke emphatically on this point: “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one” (James 1:13).

The beginning place of sin is lust (or desire) in man’s heart, but it is not necessarily wrong to have desire.

But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully-grown brings forth death (James 1:14, 15).

Desires can be satisfied without sin. When one is thirsty and desires drink to quench his thirst, he can quench that thirst with water and should not quench it with an alcoholic beverage. When one desires to own a car, he may work to earn money to pay for it and should not steal it. Satan attacks man in those desires (or lusts).

In James’ letter, the word “entice” means to lure by the use of bait. The devil uses the bait that relates to each desire to get us to sin. The fruit of yielding to that bait is sin, and the fruit of sin is death. Every accountable person who has ever lived on this earth (including Jesus) has been tempted to sin. And every accountable person who has ever lived (except Jesus) has taken the bait at one time or another and in one way or another and has sinned. Romans 3 says, “None is righteous, no, not one...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (vv. 10, 23).

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Though Jesus was “tempted as we are” (Heb. 4:15), He overcame temptation and the devil with the power of God’s word (cf. Matt. 4:1-11). Remembering the Scriptures (i.e., what “is written”) when tempted will help us to overcome sin and temptation. David said, “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you” (Psa. 119:11). Since the heart is where sin starts, it can be immediately overcome when God’s word is there also (cf. Matt. 12:33-37). To desire heaven above everything else prevents us from being enticed and drawn away from God by the devil. When the greatest commandment (i.e., to love God with all our being; Matt. 22:37, 38) is followed, sin loses its power of enticement.

Sin is something one does, not something one is given or something one inherits (cf. 1 John 3:4; Ezek. 18:20) though the physical consequences of sin do often influence following generations. All men die physically today because of the sin committed by Adam and Eve in the garden in Eden (cf. Gen. 3:22). Infants died in the flood because of their parents’ sins (cf. Gen. 7:21-24). Innocent children today suffer physically because of their parents’ sins, i.e., through child abuse, drug abuse, and abandonment.

Children *are* innocent before reaching that point in their lives when they can know what is right and what is wrong and how God feels about their doing what is wrong. Innocence prevails as long as children are lacking in the knowledge of spiritual things and cannot know them. In fact, Jesus said that we must “turn and become like children” before we can ever “enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3). In Matthew 19:14, He added, “...for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.”

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Every man is individually responsible for his own actions. One will not have to answer for the sins of another. For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” So then each of us will give an account of himself to God (Rom. 14:11, 12).

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Questions to Stimulate Thought and Aid Learning

1. Whom does Satan tempt? _____
2. Who tempts no man? _____
3. Who sins? _____
4. How does that sin come about? _____

5. Who is the only person who never sinned? _____
6. How do we know that sin is not inherited? _____

7. What is of help in avoiding sin? _____

8. Describe the people who make up the kingdom of God.

9. Why may children suffer because of their parents' sins?

10. Describe the process of lust, sin and death. _____

Lesson Nine: Searing the Conscience

The way of the transgressor (sinner) is hard both in this life on earth and, certainly, in the next. Proverbs 13:15 declares, “Good sense wins favor, but the way of the treacherous is their ruin.”⁹

Solomon also wrote, “Thorns and snares are in the way of the crooked...” (Prov. 22:5). As thorns bring pain so does sin. The sin one allows to enter his life presents a snare that entraps him. Paul referred to such a trap when he encouraged the Galatian saints to restore one “caught in any transgression” (Gal. 6:1). When one is trapped in sin, he becomes a slave to sin, i.e., Satan becomes his master. Jesus warned, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin” (John 8:34). The English verb “commits” is from a present tense Greek verb meaning “keeps on doing sin.”¹⁰

Sin promises freedom, but it delivers bondage. Describing false teachers, Peter said of them, “They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved” (2 Pet. 2:19). The so-called “good life” the devil promises is a life of bondage that includes, among other things, an endless seeking after “new thrills.” Look at what the devil promised Eve compared to what she actually received (Gen. 3).

It might be a relatively gradual and simple thing for our conscience to become useless to us. It could become so hardened or “seared” that it is not affected by God’s word or the pleas of those who love us. One can reject the truth, or

⁹ A footnote on this verse in the **English Standard Version** adds, “Hebrew, *is rugged, or is an enduring rut.*”

¹⁰ $\pi\omicron\lambda\omega\nu$, **The Analytical Greek Lexicon.**

The Devil, Sin and Hell

fail to listen, or refuse to respond so many times that, finally, the struggle ceases. Paul foretold that some with seared consciences would make laws that God did not make (2 Tim. 4:1, 2). When one continually rejects God, his conscience is scarred, unable to receive instructions or to have a godly response to wrongdoing. This could happen even to Christians who have fallen away from the Lord (cf. Heb. 6:45-8). The word “scar” literally means to brand, as in the case of animals, slaves, and criminals. When the Jews seared their conscience they came under the wrath of God.

They made their hearts diamond-hard lest they should hear the law and the words that the Lord of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore great anger came from the Lord of hosts (Zech. 7:12).

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Questions to Stimulate Thought and Aid Learning

1. What does one who would not do God's will find in his way? _____
2. What do we become when we keep on living in sin?

3. Who is the master of the sinner? _____
4. To what does Paul compare some sins? _____
5. What does the word "sear" mean? _____
6. What part of man can become so hardened by sin that he can no longer respond favorably to God? _____
7. What response does God have to one who continually rejects Him? _____

Lesson Ten: Results of Sin

The very first sin on record and all subsequent sins committed have brought death. This began in accordance with the first promise God made: “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen. 2:17). Physical death is the separation of the body from the soul (cf. James 2:26), and spiritual death is the separation of man from God (cf. Isa. 59:1, 2; Eph. 2:1). That separation happens because of sin.

Death is separation. It is not annihilation or nonexistence, because that which dies still exists. Because of dry weather, my grass is dead. There it is, brown and dead, but I still see it. Spiritually speaking, one can be dead while alive. In his dissertation on widows, Paul said of some young widows, “She who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives” (1 Tim. 5:6). Hell is described as “the second death” yet it is eternal death because it is everlasting separation from God (cf. Rev. 20:10-15). In this life on earth, one in sin is *now* separated from God and lost (cf. Isa. 59:1, 2).

To practice sin causes one to forfeit the right to inherit eternal life with God. Sin pays its wages to every man, every time. When one gets the death that is a result of sin, he gets what he earns. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death...” The sinner gets what he deserves (cf. Heb. 2:2). The nature of God Who is holy demands that every unforgiven sin be punished. Remember, God will not be mocked, “...for whatever one sows, that will he also reap” (Gal. 6:7).

Reexamine the sin of Adam and Eve. Their disobedience brought to them both spiritual and physical death. They

The Devil, Sin and Hell

were separated from God and from the tree of life (Gen. 3:22). Adam traded eternal communion with God for a world of sorrow, pain, sickness and death.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Questions to Stimulate Thought and Aid Learning

1. Define death. _____
2. How (why) does man die physically? _____

3. How (when) does one die spiritually? _____

4. What are the wages (payment) of sin? _____
5. How can we know that death is not annihilation? _____

6. What was the first promise God made? _____

7. What comes between man and God to separate man
from God? _____
8. What was the tragic deal that Adam made? _____

Lesson Eleven: Individual Sinners

Cain

The first mention of worship in the Bible shows that God can only be worshiped according to His instructions. The missing element in Cain's worship was faith. Abel's offering was acceptable because it was given "by faith" (Heb. 11:4). Failing to obey God's instructions, Cain was rejected (Rom. 10:17; cf. Gen. 4:1-7). Cain's sin not only separated him from God. It also separated him from his family (cf. Gen. 4:11-16). When we sin we are separated from God and from our spiritual family, the church, the body of Christ.

The Antediluvians

In the great, worldwide flood of Genesis 6-9, the waters covered the highest mountains of Earth. All of mankind was destroyed except for those who were inside the ark. That flood was caused by the sins of mankind. In those days, "every intention of the thoughts" of man "was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). This account of sin teaches us that sin will bring punishment.

Jacob

Jacob and Esau were twin brothers. When they were forty years old (Gen. 26:34), Jacob deceived his father with his mother's help. "What goes around comes around." Later, Jacob reaped what he had sown when his father-in-law deceived him (Gen. 29).

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Nadab and Abihu

Nadab and Abihu were two of the sons of Aaron, the brother of Moses. Aaron's descendents were to lead Israel in the worship of God (cf. Ex. 28:1). They were in that very act when they attempted to offer up in worship to God something that God had not authorized (Lev. 10:1). That was a sin the result of which was death (Lev. 10:2). Aaron was told not to mourn greatly over his sons because they had received a just reward for their sin (Lev. 10:6).

The Disobedient in the Wilderness

The total number of men of war who left Egypt was 603,550 (Num. 1:45, 46). Not one of them, except Joshua and Caleb, entered the Promised Land of Canaan. They died in the wilderness wanderings. God said that it would happen because of their failure to trust Him and obey His wishes (Num. 14:29, 30). Unbelief is disobedience and disobedience is unbelief.

And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief (Heb. 3:19).

Before crossing the Jordan River to enter Canaan, the people were numbered again and all had perished except Joshua and Caleb (cf. Num. 26:64).

Saul

According to Exodus 17, the Amalekites attacked the Israelites shortly after they left Egypt. Though the Amalekites were defeated at Rephidim, years later God

The Devil, Sin and Hell

instructed then king Saul to punish them further. In fact, God's instructions were to destroy utterly the Amalekites for their sin (cf. 1 Sam. 15:2, 3). However, Saul spared the king, Agag, and the best of his animals. He sought to excuse his disobedience by blaming his people and offering the animals as sacrifices in worship of Jehovah (cf. 1 Sam. 15:20, 21). Good intentions are never a substitute for obedience. Samuel explained, "To obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Sam. 15:22). Saul's sin is called rebellion and rejection of the word of God. It cost him the kingdom (1 Sam. 15:23).

Jeroboam, the son of Nebat

When the kingdom of God was divided after the death of Solomon, Jeroboam became king of the ten northern tribes of Israel and immediately changed the worship of Jehovah God. What he did was create a perverted worship. He changed...

- The object of worship (1 Kings 12:28),
- The place of worship (1 Kings 12:29),
- The priesthood (1 Kings 12:31), and
- The time of worship (1 Kings 12:33).

From that time on, he was known as "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin."

Jezebel

Jezebel was the wife of Ahab, the king of Israel, who did more to provoke the Lord to anger than all the kings before him (cf. 1 Kings 16:29-33). Her sins include...

- The killing of the prophets of the Lord (1 Kings 18:4, 13),

The Devil, Sin and Hell

- The feeding of the prophets of Baal during a time of famine (1 Kings 18:19),
- Trying to kill Elijah (1 Kings 19:1, 2), and
- Causing Naboth's death (1 Kings 21:1-13).

Elijah foretold the death of Jezebel in 1 Kings 21:23. His prophecy was fulfilled as recorded in 2 Kings 9:30-37.

The Mocking Young Men

Following the ascension of Elijah, Elisha was mocked by a group of men called "small boys" (2 Kings 2:23). This term, however, does not signify "very young children." The Hebrew from which "small boys" is translated means "a boy from the age of infancy to adolescence." An adjective from that word is used in reference to Joseph when he was about thirty years old (cf. Gen. 41:12, 46). These young men were being insolent toward Elisha. They sarcastically urged him to follow in the glorious career of Elijah. "Baldhead" was an epithet of contempt in the East and might have sometimes been applied even to a person with a bushy head of hair. Their scoffing revealed a spirit of hatred and opposition to that which was good.

One of Jeroboam's false gods was set up at Bethel (1 Kings 12:29). Idolatry is a great evil that produces a race of scoffers at the true God. The scoffer is hardened against ordinary rebukes. Such sin will receive a just punishment. These young men were not killed, but forty-two of them were greatly damaged by the two female bears.

Scoffing is too common a sight among youth. It is a sign of depraved youth. To scoff at a servant of God is an insult to God.

Gehazi

After Naaman was cleansed of his leprosy, he offered money to Elisha, but the prophet refused it. Gehazi, Elisha's servant, ran to Naaman, lied to him and asked for money (cf. 2 Kings 5:15-27). Then he lied again to his master and said that he had received no money. Gehazi was stricken with Naaman's leprosy because of his sin.

The sin of avarice (i.e., too much desire to get and keep money) leads to other sins, e.g., lying. "He who tells a lie," said Pope, "is not sensible how great a task he undertakes; for he must be forced to invent twenty more to maintain one."¹¹ The spirit of avarice does not hesitate to employ falsehood to attain its purposes. However, it is unexpectedly exposed, faithfully warned, and cursed with a terrible doom. Love of money is a root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:10). The avaricious spirit is even ready to take advantage of the generous.

What a woeful exchange Gehazi made. Naaman came a leper and returned a disciple. Gehazi came a disciple and returned a leper. Naaman left behind both his disease and his money. Gehazi took up both Naaman's money and his disease.

Haman

Matthew Henry wrote, "I wonder what the king saw in Haman that was commendable or meritorious; it is plain that he was not a man of honor or justice, of any true courage or steady conduct, but proud, and passionate, and

¹¹ Alexander Pope, The Quotations Page, www.quotationspage.com.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

revengeful; yet was he promoted and caressed, and there was none so great as he. Princes' darlings are not always worthies."¹²

Haman hated the Jews and Mordecai was the worst, because he would not bow down before him (Esther 3:1-5). He built a gallows seventy-five feet high on which to hang Mordecai (Esther 5:14), but when he lost the king's favor, the king ordered that Haman be hanged on that very same gallows (Esther 7:9, 10).

The prosperous wicked man often unwittingly plots his own downfall. Haman's wrath led him to dangerous extremes. Prosperity has its drawbacks, for the triumphing of the wicked will be cut short. Solomon wrote, "It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud" (Prov. 16:19). Haman and his followers were dividing the spoil, but they were not happy. Mordecai was of a humble spirit and enjoyed the peace of mind. Our greatest troubles often come from our own depraved natures. Haman's depravity worked him misery and ruin in the end.

Ananias and Sapphira

When the church was being so generous to help those who were in need, Ananias and Sapphira got caught up in the giving spirit (Acts 5:1-6). However, for some reason, they lied about what they were giving. God does not consider lying to be a small matter (cf. Rev. 21:8).

¹² W. Burrows, *Esther* in *The Preacher's Homiletic Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1974 reprint), p. 80.

Simon

Before becoming a Christian, Simon was a well known, even famous, magician in Samaria (Acts 8:9, 10). The original language tells us that he practiced the “magical arts.” His greatness was self-proclaimed. Simon believed and was baptized as were many others in Samaria, therefore, he was saved as were they (Acts 8:12, 13), but he soon fell away (Acts 8:21-23). Every Christian should be aware of this possibility (cf. Gal. 5:4; 6:1; 2 Pet. 2:20-22; 3:17; 1 Cor. 10:12; et. al.). Simon was told to repent and pray that he might not be lost (Acts 8:24; cf. 1 John 1:9; James 5:16).

Herod

This Herod (Acts 12:20-23) was the grandson of the Herod who tried to kill the infant Jesus (Matt. 2:16-18). This was Herod Agrippa I whose power was from A.D. 41-44. Through the favor of the Emperor Caligula, all of Palestine was under his rule. He was the one who killed James and imprisoned Peter (Acts 12:1-5).

Josephus¹³ says of the “royal robes” in which Herod was arrayed (Acts 12:21) that they were woven completely of silver threads, the glittering of which, in the morning sun, suggested the idolatrous exclamation of the multitude: “The voice of a god and not of a man!” (Acts 12:22). His sin in this case was that he did not sanctify God when he allowed men to call him a god (cf. Acts 12:23).

Josephus also tells us that Herod was seized with pains in the bowels. The pain was so violent that he had to be

¹³ ***The Works of Falvius Josephus*** in Four Volumes, Vol. IV, “Antiquities of the Jews,” Books XVIII – XX (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1974 reprint), pp. 106-108.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

carried into the palace where he lingered for five days in excruciating torment from the worms Luke mentioned (Acts 12:23). The word translated “worms” is from a Greek word for “intestinal worms.” Luke does not tell us if the angel through whom the punishment came was visible, but his record does imply that Herod’s death was a judgment from God, for he failed to give God the praise due Him.

The righteous judgment of God which is chiefly reserved for the future state, was displayed even in this world. Contrast Herod with Paul and Barnabas when they would not allow others to call them gods (cf. Acts 14:11-15).

Felix

Felix was the Roman governor when Paul was tried in Caesarea. When Paul preached to him, he discussed three things: righteousness, self-control (temperance), and the judgment to come (Acts 24:24-26). Though Felix trembled, his love of money and his desire to please the Jews kept him from hearing Paul and obeying the gospel of Christ.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Questions to Stimulate Thought and Aid Learning

1. Who committed sin by worshiping God the wrong way?

2. What was the main reason for the flood that destroyed the earth in the days of Noah? _____
3. What was the sin of Jacob? _____
4. What was the sin of Nadab and Abihu? _____
5. Why was their (Nadab and Abihu) fire called “strange” fire? _____
6. Why were the 603,548 men of war punished in the wilderness? _____
7. What was King Saul’s sin? _____

8. What were the results of Jezebel’s sins? _____

9. How were the young men who mocked Elisha punished?

10. Why were the young men so punished? _____

11. Who was Gehazi? _____
12. Why was Gehazi smitten with leprosy? _____

13. Who was hanged for his sin? _____

The Devil, Sin and Hell

14. What was the nature of the hanged man's sin? _____

15. What was the irony of his death? _____

16. Who were the first sinners to be identified in the church? _____
17. What was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira? _____

18. What did Simon of Samaria do for a living? _____
19. How do we know a child of God can fall away from the Lord and be lost? _____

20. What was the result of Herod's sin? _____
21. What was the nature of Herod's sin? _____

22. What caused Felix to delay obedience? _____

Lesson Twelve: Kinds of Sin

Secret Sins

Secret sins are those known only to the individual and are hidden from others. God knows all things (Heb. 4:13). He knows our hearts (Acts 1:24). Moses said your secret sins will be made known (Num. 32:23), and Solomon added that God will bring every secret thing into judgment (Eccle. 12:14).

Presumptuous Sins

Presumptuous sins are sins that we commit even when we know they are wrong. Moses and Aaron acted presumptuously in Numbers 20:8-13. Israel also sinned presumptuously (cf. Num. 14:44; Deut. 1:43). King David prayed that God would keep him from such things (Psa. 19:13). The word “presumptuous” means, “going beyond what is right or proper, excessively forward.”¹⁴

Willful sins

Willful sins are deliberate acts of disobedience (cf. Heb. 10:26). Peter wrote of some skeptics who deliberately overlooked the truth (2 Pet. 3:5). However, God will show no mercy to the arrogant sinner who spitefully disobeys Him (cf. 1 John 5:16, 17).

¹⁴ presumptuous. (n.d.). *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*. Retrieved May 15, 2007, from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/presumptuous>

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Open Sins

Open sins are contrasted with secret sins in that they are openly known.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Questions to Stimulate Thought and Aid Learning

1. Name four different kinds of sins.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
2. What is meant by “presumption”? _____

3. What might be some “open sins”? _____

4. What are “willful sins”? _____
5. What is the difference between willful sins and presumptuous sins? _____

Lesson Thirteen: Overcoming Sin

The Bible is the only spiritual food that will fortify us against the temptation to sin. A sick physical body can be overcome by disease, and the same is true of a spiritually sick man or woman. Jesus fought off temptation by quoting Scripture (Matt. 4:1-11). It would be good to recall yet again, the words of David in Psalm 119:11: “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”

The tongue is involved in many sins. A “religious” man with an unbridled tongue has a vain religion according to James (James 1:26). Because the tongue is an avenue to sin it must be restrained. It was also David who wrote, “I said, ‘I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue; I will guard my mouth with a muzzle, so long as the wicked are in my presence’” (Psa. 39:1).

Evil companions are a source of sin. Peter’s denial of Christ came about because he was with the wrong people. Psalm 1:1 pronounces a blessing on the man who does not walk with the wicked. Jesus resisted Satan, and Satan departed from Him. Jesus would not be in the company of the devil (cf. Matt. 4:11).

The model prayer says, “Lead us not into temptation” (Matt. 6:13), and Jesus instructed the disciples to pray for deliverance from temptation (cf. Luke 22:40). Prayer is a part of the Christian’s armor that is often overlooked. Yet Ephesians 6:18 says, “(Pray) at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.”

God has given us a plan for dealing with sin and overcoming it.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Remember as you study any given subject in the Bible that one must study all the Bible says about that subject. Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4; cf. Deut. 8:3). That is why Paul was careful to declare “the whole counsel of God” wherever he went (cf. Acts 20:27). We must never tamper with God’s word, but always take it as it is (cf. 1 Thes. 2:13). One must never add anything to it or take anything away from it (cf. Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18, 19).

The book of Acts in the New Testament is a book of conversions, i.e., it shows how people were converted to the Lord and added to the Lord’s church, the body of the saved (cf. Eph. 5:23). If we can put all of those accounts of conversion together, we can find what one must do to be saved. The chart below should give us the whole picture of salvation.

Case	Hearing	Faith	Repentance	Confession	Baptism
Jews Acts 2	✓		✓		✓
Samaritans Acts 8	✓	✓			✓
Eucuch Acts 8		✓		✓	✓
Saul Acts 9, 22	✓				✓
Cornelius Acts 10	✓	✓			✓
Lydia Acts 16	✓				✓
Jailer Acts 16		✓			✓
Corinthians Acts 18	✓	✓			✓

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Hearing the gospel is necessary for salvation (Rom. 10:14), but hearing is not mentioned in two of the conversion accounts. That does not mean it was not necessary in those two cases. One cannot be saved without faith (Heb. 11:6), but faith is mentioned in only five of the eight accounts. Repentance is also necessary (Luke 13:3-5; Acts 17:30), but repentance is mentioned only one time. With the mouth, confession is made unto salvation (Rom. 10:10), but only the Ethiopian is said to have confessed. We believe all the others did as well because of its requirement (cf. Matt. 10:32, 33). Please notice that in every account of conversion given in the book of Acts, baptism is mentioned. Thus, it is clear that Jesus is the Source of salvation to all those who obey Him (Heb. 5:8, 9), and a part of that obedience required is baptism. That is why Peter said, "Baptism saves you" (cf. 1 Pet. 3:21), but, as the conversion accounts show, not baptism alone, nor faith alone, nor repentance alone, nor confession alone.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Questions to Stimulate Thought and Aid Learning

1. What is the greatest tool man can use to overcome sin?

2. What is a source of sin that can and should be avoided?

3. How can prayer help to overcome sin? _____

4. What does it mean to “bridle the tongue”? _____

5. How is one saved from sin? _____

Lesson Fourteen: Individual Sins

Fornication

The general word for sexual immorality is fornication. This includes adultery, homosexuality, sexual perversion, bestiality, and such like. It involves the sexual act with someone or something with whom or with which one is not authorized to engage in such an act. We are told to flee from fornication (1 Cor. 6:18), to abstain from it (1 Thes. 4:3), and to avoid it (1 Cor. 7:2). Because of fornication, the judgment of God comes on this world (Col. 3:5, 6).

Wickedness

Lawlessness is wickedness. The world of Noah's day is an example of it (cf. Gen. 6:5). Other examples would be Sodom and Gomorrah and any man with no self-restraint. The Greek word sometimes refers to badness, a bad condition, or an evil disposition of mind.

Covetousness

The Greek word translated "covetousness" means also, "an inordinate desire for riches" (cf. Luke 12:15). Many examples of covetousness and the dangers of it are seen in the Scriptures.

- Concerning the cloak, the silver, and the gold, Achan said, "Truly I have sinned...when I saw...then I coveted them and took them" (Josh. 7:21).
- David coveted his neighbor's wife (2 Sam. 11:1-5) in violation of the law under which he lived (cf. Ex. 20:17).
- Judas coveted money (cf. Matt. 26:14, 15; John 12:6).

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Some members of the church today covet money and withhold from God what they should give to the Lord on the first day of every week (cf. 1 Cor. 16:1, 2).

Maliciousness

Malice, a vicious desire to harm others, is also condemned. Examples of maliciousness were given by Haman (Esther 3), Demetrius (Acts 19:24-29), and gossips.

Envy

Jealousy is ill will toward the success of others. The Jewish leaders seemed to be very envious of Jesus (Mark 15:10). Joseph's brothers were wrong for being so jealous of Joseph (Gen. 37:5, 11).

Murder

Murder is the killing of a human being specifically forbidden by law. Not all killing is murder. For example, God declared, "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image" (Gen. 9:6). When such a sentence is carried out, the killing, in this case, is not murder. Murder is willingly and maliciously killing another. Cain maliciously killed his brother and was condemned for it (Gen. 4). Herod maliciously killed James and was wrong (Acts 12:1, 2).

Strife

One with a contentious disposition is found guilty of strife. He/she will be often seen in a quarrel. One of the many problems of the Corinthian saints was their "quarreling" (1 Cor. 1:11).

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Note: Romans 1:28-32 says,

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

Deceit

Those who practice deceit give false impressions. Because of guile (i.e., insidious cunning in attaining a goal), there is fraud. Identities are stolen today by deceit. This sin often appears in the Bible. The chief priests, elders and high priest “plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him” (Matt. 26:4). The King James Version translates the word “stealth” as “subtilty” (or “subtlety”) and the Greek Interlinear gives it as “guile.” The original word was a reference to bait for entrapping. In Mark 7:22, Jesus declares that deceit comes from the heart of man to defile him.

Of all people, Abraham was guilty of deceit. Twice, he deceived strangers about his wife, Sarah, whom he claimed was his sister rather than his wife (cf. Gen. 12:17-20; 20:1-7). Ananias and Sapphira worked together to deceive others about their gift (Acts 5:1-6). Peter called that deception a “lie.”

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Malignity

Rather than “malignity” as in the King James Version, the English Standard Version calls this sin, “maliciousness” (Rom. 1:29). It is a disposition for mischief that thinks the worst of others. This sin is very prevalent in our day when it should never be, especially not in those who would be disciples of Christ. Disciples are characterized by love, and love “thinketh no evil” (1 Cor. 13:5, KJV). The adjective form of the original word means tending to produce death as a malignancy (cf. cancer).

Gossip

When Paul mentioned this sin in Romans 1:29, he spoke of one full of tricks, a swindler, one who is slanderous. One described by such a term wants to remain anonymous, thus he “whispers,” but he tells something that is not true. “Slanderer” is closely associated with this word. Solomon said, “A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends” (Prov. 16:28). Slander involves speaking against others which is condemned by God’s word.

Do not speak against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge (James 4:11).

Slanderers may speak evil more openly than gossips, but, still, they do not usually have the courage to face their accused with their slander.

Hating God

One cannot be neutral in his relationship with God. Either he loves God or hates Him. To love God is to obey Him (John 14:15). To disobey God is to hate Him. Jesus said that we are either with Him or against Him (Matt. 12:30).

God-haters are well represented by one of their champions, Richard Dawkins, a “Professor of the Public Understanding of Science” at Oxford University in England. His main passion, it seems, is spitting venom toward the God he believes does not exist. The God Delusion, by Dawkins, promotes “atheist pride” and challenges religion. He says the time has come for citizens to protest, and governments to prevent, the passing on of religious faith to children by their parents. He has much too much support from the so-called “scientists” of the world. He is lauded as the one who has “finally marshaled a lifetime’s arguments against believing in God.”¹⁵ His major points against God are:¹⁶

1. “Who made God?”
2. Religion is a virus of the mind.
3. There is no knowledge beyond scientific knowledge.

Paul wrote,

...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the

¹⁵ “Misbegotten Sons,” *The Economist* (September 23, 2006), p. pp. 93, 94.

¹⁶ Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Houghton Mifflin, 2006).

The Devil, Sin and Hell

presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might (2 Thes. 1:7-9).

Dawkins may be thinking that he would be glad to see the day that he is separated from anything having to do with God, but God doesn't seem to think so.

Despiteness

Rather than “despiteful,” the English Standard Version says, “insolent” in Romans 1:30. The Greek refers to an overbearing person who is grossly disrespectful because of a feeling of superiority. The apostle Paul was once that way (cf. 1 Tim. 1:13). Though “Job’s three friends” (Job 2:11) came to him “to show him sympathy and comfort him,” they upset him greatly. He said of them,

But now they laugh at me, men who are younger than I, whose fathers I would have disdained to set with the dogs of my flock....And now I have become their song; I am a byword to them. They abhor me; they keep aloof from me; they do not hesitate to spit at the sight of me (Job 30:1, 9, 10).

Pride

Though it might be right to be proud of some things, it is never right to be arrogant. Paul was proud in a good way. “In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God,” he said in Romans 15:17; but in Romans 11:20 he said, “So do not become proud, but stand in awe.” Paul used two different words. In his caution he said, “Do not be highminded” (cf. KJV), but his “glory” or “boasting” was in the work for God. Paul also referred to his glory in Philippians 2:16: “Holding fast to the word of life, so that in

The Devil, Sin and Hell

the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.” The word Paul used here and in Romans 15:17 means “rejoicing.” It is not wrong to rejoice over good things.

However, James wrote, “God opposes the proud” (James 4:6) using a different word for “proud.” His word means “arrogant ones” (cf. 1 Pet. 5:5). The original Greek literally refers to the assuming, haughty, and arrogant. God hates “haughty eyes” (Prov. 6:16, 17).

Boasting

Yet another word is seen in Romans 1:30. “Boasters” (KJV) or “boastful” (ESV) is from the Greek for “ostentatious.” This is characterized by a pretentious and conspicuous display meant to impress others. The attitude is very different from what Paul was saying about himself in Romans 15:17. We might say the Pharisee in Jesus’ story in Luke 18 was ostentatious when he prayed, “God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get” (vv. 10-12).

Inventing Evil

Inventors of evil are those who attempt to find a new way to do something that is wrong, e.g., how to steal your identity. “Inventor” is from the root word that means, “to come upon, find, or discover.” Since the pleasures of sin last only for a season (Heb. 11:25), the wicked are constantly looking for a new pleasure.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

The people of Noah's day were destroyed because, "every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5).

Disobedience to Parents

Being disobedient to parents is also a sin. God's word instructs, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Eph. 6:1), but some do not. To be disobedient is to be noncompliant; therefore, those who are disobedient to their parents do not comply with their parents' wishes. Paul warned that this would happen "in the last days" (2 Tim. 3:1, 2).

"Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord" (Col. 3:20).

Foolishness

The fool is without understanding. He is reckless and perverse. The Gentiles had become such in the days of Paul.

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened (Rom. 1:21).

Everyone is obligated to know God and to obey Him (cf. Rom. 1:20). It is the height of folly not to do that (cf. Ps. 14:1).

Faithlessness

The King James Version calls them "covenant breakers" (Rom. 1:31). The word translated "faithless" in the English

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Standard Version does mean deliberately faithless and treacherous. The faithless are undependable and will not keep their word and do what they say they will do. They will not be bound even by a contract.

Heartlessness

The original word translated “heartless” means “devoid of natural or instinctive affection” or “without affection to kindred.” It is hard to understand how someone can fail to have a natural love for his father or mother or son or daughter, yet there have been more than forty million precious, unborn children aborted even in America since 1973. Evidently, some must be taught to be husband-lovers and children-lovers (cf. Tit. 2:3, 4).

Joseph’s brothers didn’t seem to care much for Joseph when they threw him in a pit, planned to kill him, and, finally, sold him to slave traders (cf. Gen. 37:12-28). Some Jews were cold hearted who rejected the command of God to “honor your father and your mother” (cf. Mark 7:9-13).

Ruthlessness

What the ESV calls “ruthless” the KJV calls “unmerciful” (Rom. 1:31). The original word refers to one who is without compassion and cruel. It speaks of one who will not be appeased or pacified. This is the highest degree of an unforgiving spirit. Such an attitude will not come to terms with God or man. Jesus told of such a person in Matthew 18:23-30. Though a particular servant had found mercy and had been forgiven much, he refused to forgive one who owed him little. His end: His master delivered the wicked servant to the jailers until he paid all of his debt, which he, himself, could never possibly pay.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Taking Pleasure in the Sins of Others

This is actually enjoying others' disobeying God.

Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them (Rom. 1:32).

They refuse to be governed by the knowledge of God's will. Was this not what Paul was doing as Stephen was being stoned to death (cf. Acts 7:54-60)? Moreover, the Corinthians were guilty of the same sin when they tolerated among them a man who had his father's wife (1 Cor. 5:1, 2).

Adultery

Adultery is the "voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than his or her lawful spouse,"¹⁷ but it may involve even more than that. Adultery may also be a lifestyle. It is one of the sins in the general category of "fornication," and Paul said that it is possible to "walk" in it and to "live" in it (cf. Col. 3:5-7). Jesus said that when one divorces a spouse and marries another, he is committing adultery unless he/she divorces that spouse for the reason of fornication on his/her part (cf. Matt. 19:9). "God will judge the sexual immoral and adulterous," says Hebrews 13:4. Revelation 21:8 says that the sexually immoral will have their part in "the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

¹⁷ "adultery." *Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1)*. Random House, Inc. 16 May. 2007. <Dictionary.com
<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/adultery>>.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

In Biblical usage, adultery is entering a second covenant relationship with one when already in a covenant relationship with another (cf. Rom. 7:1). Therefore, Herod was in adultery when he took Herodias for a wife who was still the wife of his brother Philip (Matthew 14:1-4).

Uncleanness

Uncleanness (or impurity, NASV) is the word often associated with sensuality or unnatural and immoral lusts. It is the very opposite of purity and must not even be named among God's people (cf. Eph. 5:3). It is not proper for saints. Lewdness must never be seen in a child of God. It is a "work of the flesh" that will keep one from inheriting the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21).

Lasciviousness

Lasciviousness is the outrageous behavior that is also a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19). Such shameless conduct, Jesus says, comes from the heart of man (Mark 7:21, 22). It seems to have been as widespread in New Testament times as it is now. Paul feared that some Corinthians had not repented of the "impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced" (2 Cor. 12:21).

It is also given among the sins of the callous who were past feeling (Eph. 4:19).

Indecent stories (jokes), provocative apparel, dirty dancing, and unchaste handling of the opposite sex characterize those who are lascivious.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Idolatry

The Greek of Galatians 5:20 is “worship of idols.” To love anything more than God is a sin. Therefore, 1 Corinthians 10:14 demands, “Flee from idolatry.” It does not have to be a graven image that one worships. It can be many things that come between man and God. In Colossians 3:5, covetousness is identified as idolatry.

False gods and graven images have been substituted for God. Solomon built “high places” for the idols of his many wives (1 Kings 11:6-8). This was evil in the sight of the Lord.

Some modern day examples of idols may be: prestige, sports and recreation, or material possessions. If we care more for them than we do for God, then we are idolaters.

Witchcraft

Witchcraft involves the use of drugs and spells to appeal to occult powers. The Greek word translated “witchcraft” (“sorcery,” ESV) is the word from which our English word “pharmacy” comes. The lexicon defines it as, “employment of drugs for any purpose; sorcery, magic, enchantment.”¹⁸ Sorcerers often used drugs.

This sin today takes on many forms: devil worship, séances, horoscope dependence, fortunetellers, etc.

Sorcerers were to be killed in Old Testament times (cf. Ex. 22:18). Yet, King Saul sought to use one when God had left him and he was so desperate for help (cf. 1 Sam. 28).

¹⁸ φαρμακεια, *The Analytical Greek Lexicon*.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Hate

In Galatians 5:20, “hatred” in the King James Version is called “enmity” in the English Standard Bible. It refers to discord. The same word is used to describe the relationship of Herod and Pilate in the days before they teamed up to mock Jesus (cf. Luke 23:12). To hate someone is to dislike strongly another or to detest him. Such an attitude toward one who is your brother is likened by God to murder (1 John 3:15).

Cain hated his brother, Abel, and killed him (Gen. 4).

We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother’s righteous (1 John 3:12).

Esau hated his brother, Jacob. “Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, ‘The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob’” (Gen. 27:41).

Herodias, the adulterous wife of Herod, hated John the Baptist.

For John had been saying to Herod, ‘It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.’ And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death (Mark 6:18, 19).

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Jealousy

In the sense of generous rivalry, noble aspirations, and zeal, jealousy may be good. When Jesus cleansed the temple in Jerusalem, He fulfilled the Scripture that said, “Zeal for your house will consume me” (cf. Psa. 69:9; John 2:13-17). The word translated “zeal” may also be translated “jealousy.”

In the bad sense, there is jealousy with malice and envy. This is an uncontrolled desire to have what others have. Wicked King Ahab is a perfect example. He wanted the vineyard of Naboth that joined his palace compound. When he tried to buy the vineyard, Naboth refused to sell.

And Ahab went into his house vexed and sullen because of what Naboth the Jezreelite had said to him, for he had said, ‘I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.’ And he lay down on his bed and turned away his face and would eat no food (1 Kings 21:4).

What a child!

Wrath

Anger is a problem. It will get you into trouble. The anger that is condemned is that strong passion or emotion of the mind that lashes out at others in a harmful way. It is a violent anger. The Lord’s fellow townspeople became so angry with Him that they “drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff” (Luke 4:29). This was because of what Jesus had taught. The anger of the Ephesians created a mob scene (Acts 19:28). The people were enraged. “Road rage” is an anger that is just as wrong, for it is just as dangerous.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus condemned the anger that may lead to murder (Matt. 5:21, 22).

Not all anger is sinful. Jesus never sinned (Heb. 4:15), yet He was sometimes angry with the Pharisees (cf. Mark 3:1-6). “Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil” (Eph. 4:26, 27).

Sedition or Heresy

God hates division (cf. Prov. 6:16-19). The church of God in Corinth had serious problems because of division and God inspired two letters to try to correct them (cf. 1 Cor. 1:10-17; 2 Cor. 12:20). The Lord’s body was divided into several little pieces, and that was wrong.

Divisions often come as results of self-willed opinions. When God’s will rules, men will not be so divided. Seditions, heresies, and rivalries are divisions. We must avoid “standing apart” in ourselves and rid it from others. These sins can be a major problem for the Lord’s church. Petty differences among brethren often result in division in a congregation. Cliques in the church ought to be avoided for the way they ostracize others, or, at least, make others feel ostracized. In the Lord’s body everyone is included. An individual’s desires placed above God’s way will always result in bad things, even to the splitting of a congregation of the church.

While unity is always to be desired and encouraged (cf. Eph. 4:3), there are some brethren who need to be “cut away” from the body. We must avoid those who “cause divisions” (Rom. 16:17). We must not associate with brethren who are “guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler” (1 Cor. 5:11). Also, Paul wrote

The Devil, Sin and Hell

to preacher Titus, “As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned” (Tit. 3:10, 11).

Drunkenness

“Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy” (Rom. 13:13). Paul’s word for “drunkenness” means to be led astray morally by drinking intoxicating beverages. Because drinking alcoholic beverages lowers one’s defenses, it often leads to other sins, e.g., lasciviousness, fornication, filthy talking, and divorce. It is no wonder that God warned, “Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul” (1 Pet. 2:11). Just examine the fruits of alcohol abuse.

Dr. Isadore Rosenfeld tells what many have known about alcohol abuse for years.

It is a sedative-hypnotic with a tranquilizing effect....it has no significant nutrients, vitamins or minerals. Alcohol is mainly empty calories—and its abuse can cause big trouble....According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), alcohol use is implicated in 50% of all homicides, 50% of all fatal car accidents, 41% of all crimes, 33% of all suicides and a large portion of drowning, boating, and aviation deaths. It also contributes to the risk of serious diseases such as cancer, heart disease...brain damage and cirrhosis of the liver.¹⁹

¹⁹ Dr. Isadore Rosenfeld, “Think Before You Drink,” **Parade Magazine**, April 6, 2003, pp. 8, 9.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

The latest research tells us that drinking may trigger irregular heart rhythm²⁰ and that it shrinks the brain.²¹

Some argue that drinking red wine in moderation increases longevity. However,

(S)ince alcohol slows down the brain's activity to function properly, grape juice may be a smarter beverage choice. New research from James Joseph shows that concord grape juice significantly improves short-term memory and motor skills. It's not just the heavy dose of antioxidants. Joseph believes that grape juice increases production of the neurotransmitter dopamine. Concord grape juice has the highest total antioxidant level of any fruit, vegetable or juice tested.²²

Carousing

The King James Version calls carousing, "revellings," and the English Standard Version has, "orgies" (Gal. 5:21). Peter said,

The time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but they will give account to him

²⁰ Amanda Gardner, "Heavy Drinking May Trigger Irregular Heart Rhythm," **HealthDay**.

²¹ Steven Reinberg, "Drinking Alcohol Shrinks the Brain," **HealthDay**.

²² "Top Ten Smart Foods," **Psychology Today**,
<http://articles.health.msn>.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

who is ready to judge the living and the dead (1 Pet. 4:3-5).

To “revel” is to make merry or be noisily festive. Thayer says this word is usually connected with drinking alcoholic beverages.²³ Since it is not a sin to be happy or to have a wholesome good time, there must be something more to this revelry that makes it evil. To understand better, look at the party described in Daniel 5:1-4.

Other language scholars note that the word translated “carousing” or “orgies” has a close relationship with music and dancing and that such activities often followed victory at the public games. Today we call them “Victory Parties” or “Homecoming Dances.” The world knows what revelry is. Newspapers often refer to partygoers as revelers.

Now we have two words listed under “works of the flesh” that condemn the modern dance as we know it: lasciviousness and carousing.

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before,

that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21).

²³ Joseph Henry Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977 reprint).

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Stealing

Stealing is taking another's possessions without permission. The word translated "thieves" in 1 Corinthians 6:10 comes from the Greek word from which we get our English word, "kleptomaniac." "Theft" is an act of stealing.

Jesus told of wicked men who robbed a man and left him for dead on the side of a road (Luke 10:30). When Rachel stole her father's household idols, we have another Bible example of stealing (cf. Gen. 31:17-20). Some would even take from God (cf. Mal. 3:8)! What kind of heart do they have?

Reviling

Here is a word we do not use often: revile. 1 Corinthians 6:10 says revilers will not inherit the kingdom of God. Yet, while Jesus was dying on the cross, "those who passed by derided him" (Matt. 27:39). To revile is to use abusive or contemptuous language in speaking to someone or about someone. Sometimes it involves calling others bad names. The Pharisees were reviling Jesus when they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons" (Matt. 12:24).

Extortion

Where the King James Version has "extortioners," the English Standard Version says, "swindlers" (1 Cor. 6:10). The original language is more literally translated, "rapacious persons." "Rapacious" means inordinately greedy, even

The Devil, Sin and Hell

predatory. First century tax collectors were notorious for their extortion. John told them to repent and “Collect no more than you are authorized to do” (Luke 3:13).

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:10).

The Result of Sin

Those who practice sin and continually live in them cannot inherit the kingdom of God, i.e., they cannot go to heaven neither are they allowed to continue in the church. In fact, “The soul who sins shall die” (Ezek. 18:20; cf. Rom. 6:23). Every unforgiven sin will cause one to be separated from God eternally (cf. Rev. 21:22-27).

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Questions to Stimulate Thought and Aid Learning

1. What does fornication include? _____

2. What is the result of fornication? _____

3. Generally speaking, how is wickedness to be understood? _____
4. How may members of the Lord's church today be guilty of covetousness? _____
5. Give an example of maliciousness. _____

6. What is the difference, if there is any difference, between killing and murder? _____

7. Define strife. _____
8. What is a synonym for "deceit"? _____
9. How was Abraham guilty of deceit? _____

10. What does the English Standard Version call the sin of malignity? _____
11. What is another sin that is closely associated with gossip? _____

The Devil, Sin and Hell

12. What does the Bible say is one's attitude toward God when he does not obey Him? _____
13. What did Richard Dawkins call religion? _____
14. What will happen to those who do not know God when the Lord returns? _____

15. What is an insolent person like? _____
16. Is there any sense in which pride could be a good thing?

17. What is the difference between the pride that condemns and the pride that can be good? _____

18. How do you describe the Pharisee who stood and prayed, thanking God that he was not like other men?

19. Who are "inventors of evil"? _____
20. How can one be disobedient to parents? _____

21. How does the Bible describe a fool? _____

22. What is "the height of folly"? _____
23. What does it mean to be "faithless"? _____

The Devil, Sin and Hell

24. What does it mean to be “heartless”? _____

25. What does it mean to be “ruthless”? _____
26. Where does the Bible say it is wrong to take pleasure in the sin of others? _____
27. Define “adultery.” _____

28. What is another word for “uncleanness”? _____
29. What is the meaning of lasciviousness? _____

30. How is idolatry practiced in our day? _____

31. Define “witchcraft.” _____
32. To what does God compare the hatred of one for his brother? _____
33. Is there ever a time when jealousy (i.e., zeal) can be a good thing? _____
34. When is jealousy wrong? _____
35. Why is anger such a problem? _____

36. Is all anger sin? _____
37. What is the problem with division in the Lord’s body?

The Devil, Sin and Hell

38. Is there ever a time when cutting someone out of the body is a good thing? _____
39. To what other sins might drunkenness lead?

40. What does the research of James Joseph affirm?

41. With what is revelry usually connected? _____
42. What are two designations of sin that may describe the modern dance? _____
43. What English word do we get from the Greek word that is translated “thieves”? _____
44. What is “theft”? _____
45. What does it mean to revile? _____

46. What is the more literal translation of the Greek word translated “extortioner”? _____
47. What will be the result of living in sin? _____

Lesson Fifteen: Hell

The Word for Hell

The proper understanding of what the Bible teaches about hell demands a careful study of some Greek and Hebrew words that are translated “hell.” The Old Testament word “sheol” and the New Testament word “hades” literally mean “unseen.” These words are used to describe the place of departed spirits (cf. Luke 16:23; Acts 2:31). When Jesus died, He went to the part of hades described as “paradise” (cf. Luke 23:43; Acts 2:31). In hades, there is an impassable gulf or chasm that stood between the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:26). At the second coming of Christ, hades will give up the dead for judgment (cf. Rev. 20:13).

The word “gehenna” (transliteration of a Greek word) is used twelve times in the Bible, in eleven of those times, Jesus used it to refer to the final abode of the wicked. The term was taken from the Valley of Hinnom, a burning garbage dump near Jerusalem.

Another Greek word, “tartarus,” is used to describe the place where the angels that sinned are kept. This word appears only one time in the New Testament, 2 Peter 2:4. Since the eternal abode of the sinful is referred to as gehenna and this place also is a place of punishment, then it must be the place of torment that is in hades (cf. Luke 16:19-31). Some in hades will be delivered up to judgment and then “thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:11-15).

The Devil, Sin and Hell

The Description of Hell

Hell is real! Jesus says it will last just as long as will heaven for the righteous, i.e., eternally (cf. Matt. 25:46). It will be a place of everlasting destruction, fire and punishment. Jesus called it “the hell of fire” (Matt. 5:22; 18:9), “the furnace of fire” (Matt. 13:42, 50), and “unquenchable fire” (Mark 9:43, 47, 48). It will be a place of fire and brimstone (i.e., burning sulfur; Rev. 19:20; 20:15). That fire will never be quenched (cf. Mark 9:48). Hell will be a place of eternal suffering. The smoke of torment will go upward, day and night, forever and ever (cf. Rev. 14:11).

The Occupants of Hell

Jesus said “eternal fire” was prepared for “the devil and his angels,” and He said that the lost would be sent to the same place (Matt. 25:41). Imagine being imprisoned with the most evil men and women of all time with no relief or hope of escape!

Jesus also said the following would live eternally in hell:

- Self-righteous, egotistic children of God who think of others as lower and less worthy than themselves (Matt. 5:22),
- Those who are unwilling to give up whatever causes them to sin (Matt. 5:27-30),
- Those who confess Jesus as the Christ, but do not respect God’s authority (Matt. 7:21-23),
- Those who reject the messengers and the message of Christ (Matt. 10:14, 15),
- Those who persist in unbelief (Matt. 11:20-24),

The Devil, Sin and Hell

- Hypocrites who profess one thing and practice another (Matt. 23:13-36),
- Wicked, wasteful, murmuring, blaspheming, lazy servants of Christ (Matt. 25:14-30),
- Selfish, stingy, cold, unkind, uncompassionate, unsympathetic servants of Christ (Matt. 25:41-46), and
- False teachers (Matt. 15:13, 14).

Man's only hope is to hear the gospel and obey it while on this earth (cf. Heb. 5:8, 9). It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:30, 31).

The Second Death of Hell

One death is physical. It happens when the soul leaves the body (cf. James 2:26). However, the Bible speaks of another death that takes place in this life which is a spiritual death.

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience (Eph. 2:1, 2).

That may be the "first death."

At any rate, the Bible speaks of a second death which is also spiritual. This occurs when the body and soul are cast into hell (cf. Matt. 10:28). It is called "death," because death is a separation. Hell is eternal existence, separated from God Who gives life; therefore, it is an eternal death. "Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:14; cf. Rev. 21:8).

The Devil, Sin and Hell

The Choice of Hell

Everyone has a choice to make. As Joshua said, “Choose this day whom you will serve” (Josh. 24:15), Jesus said to choose the narrow gate that leads to life (Matt. 7:13, 14).

Atheists, agnostics, skeptics, and other unbelievers choose to ignore the evidence and deny God’s existence. The pagan chooses a god of stone rather than a living God. Many religious people choose to follow man’s teaching rather than to follow God’s word in the Bible. Many Christians choose a life of ease over a life of sacrifice and service. These are, in reality, choosing eternal destruction. Concerning those “under the power of sin,” “ ‘...in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known.’ There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Rom. 3:18).

All men choose. There is no neutral ground (cf. Matt. 6:24; 12:30). Choose a life of obedience to God, and when you do, you are choosing to have eternal life with God.

The Devil, Sin and Hell

Questions to Stimulate Thought and Aid Learning

1. What do the words “sheol” and “hades” literally mean?

2. Where did Jesus go when He died? _____
3. What will happen to all those who are in hades when the Lord returns? _____
4. From where did the word “gehenna” come? _____
5. How is the word “gehenna” most often translated in the Bible? _____
6. To what does the word “tartarus” refer? _____
7. For how long will hell last? _____
8. What is the nature of the fire in hell? _____
9. Concerning fire, how did Jesus describe hell? _____

10. According to Jesus, who will live eternally in hell?

11. Why is the “lake of fire” called “the second death”?

12. What choice are you making? _____

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