

The Origin of Evil

All of us are aware of the existence of evil in the world. All of us have experienced it first hand. But where did it come from? Most people would say the Devil is behind it all. OK, But then where did the Devil come from? Did God create the Devil and his demons to punish us? The Bible will help us find the answer to our questions. We begin in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 12:7 – 9 says, *“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the Dragon; and the Dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great Dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”*

Some teach that this war takes place in the future in spite of the fact that it is stated in past tense, *“There was war in heaven.”* Let’s use our rules of interpretation from Lesson # 1 to confirm what the Bible teaches. First we look up the key words in our concordance. In this case the words, *“Satan”* or *“devil”* and *“cast out”* or *“cast down”* should be keys in finding other references to this event. Words with similar meanings may be helpful as well, words like *“fall”* or *“fallen.”* One reference with two of these words is found in Luke.

Luke 10:17,18 *“And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.”*

Jesus said He witnessed Satan’s fall from heaven. So Satan must have been cast out before Jesus came to earth. In the Old Testament we find another reference to this fall in the book of Isaiah.

Isaiah 14:12 – 14 *“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!”*

There we find that Satan’s name before his fall was “Lucifer” which means the “shining one” or “lightbearer.”

Satan was once a “lightbearer,” an angel of light in heaven! In the Bible when someone’s character changes, their name changes also. Lucifer is now “fallen,” therefore his name is now changed from “lightbearer,” to “Satan” which means “accuser” and “Devil” which means “deceiver.” He is called the “Dragon” in Revelation, which means the “fiery serpent” that poisons and kills.

Titles or names can be deceiving. Satan never comes in his “name,” he always comes in disguise, in someone else’s “name.”

In the following passage the King of Tyrus is addressed, but the Lord is really speaking to the one who is behind the evil King of Tyrus – Satan himself.

Ezekiel 28:12-15 *“Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. **Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. **Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.**”***

There were only three persons in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve and the serpent, the fallen angel, Satan. According to this passage, God did not create the devil, but the most beautiful, glorious, powerful angel of all. There was no angel like Lucifer. He was probably the first angel God created. Being the first created being, Lucifer did not witness his own creation, but he did witness the creation of all the other angels. Lucifer may have began to

think that he was not created, but he was equal with God and should be worshipped as God too. You may remember that at one time he even asked Jesus to fall down and worship him.

Matthew 4:8-10 *“Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, **if thou wilt fall down and worship me.** Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”*

It is important that we understand that God’s character is the central issue in the war that began in heaven. That can be clearly seen when that “*old serpent, the devil,*” came to this earth and persuaded Eve to rebel against God.

Genesis 3:1-6 *“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. **And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:** For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”*

Clearly the serpent is telling Eve that God has lied to them and is therefore untrustworthy, as well as being selfish and arbitrary. The war that began in heaven is not about God’s power, but about whether God can be trusted. Can we believe His word?

All of us must make a personal decision about God’s trustworthiness and whether we will follow His word or trust in man as the guide as what we believe and how we should live.

When the war spread to earth it turned deadly and this earth was soon filled with suffering, pain, disease and death.

The Bible in the book of Isaiah says that God knows the future.
Isaiah 46:9,10 *“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,*

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.”

This being the case, many have asked, Why didn't God destroy Satan before the war started? Didn't He see all the suffering that would result? Yes He did, and He saw that He would suffer more than anyone else. That's why Revelation 13:18 describes Him as *“The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”* God has been suffering since the very first sin.

Isaiah 63:9 says, *“In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.”*

God is love and God created the universe to operate on the principle of unselfish love. There can be no love where there is no trust or freedom; you can't make someone love you. Love must be given freely.

The angels, although they are supernatural beings, are not all-knowing as God is. Therefore the destruction of Satan in the beginning of the war would have been misunderstood and seen as arbitrary and unfair. The consequences of sin would have forever remained unknown. As the result, in heaven, the place of peace and freedom, there would have been fear, doubt and unanswered questions. The angels would be saying, “You had better be careful, remember what God did to Lucifer!” Angels would have then been serving God from fear of punishment and that is bondage. They would not have been freely serving Him out of love and admiration of His character.

God does not ask the universe to take His word for this. Rather, God's plan is that the universe see for itself the nature and the end result of sin. Then, with that first hand knowledge, the universe can make its own decision about who is telling the truth – God or Satan. Therefore, God, because of His high regard for individual freedom, must allow sin to run its course, as painful as it is, because God is love and love only exists where there is freedom. That's the only way Lucifer could have rebelled in heaven itself! But yet when someone does something terribly wrong – we ask, *“Why did God let that happen?”* But where would our personal

freedom be if God stopped us dead in our tracks every time we started to do something wrong? God's insistence on our freedom is so absolute that He has granted us the power to live as though He did not exist if we so choose!

The way God has chosen to handle this conflict, when it is over, the result of *"eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil"* will be clear to the entire universe. It will have become very clear that sin and selfishness result in fear, jealousy, hatred, disease, every kind of evil and finally death! When this war between God and Satan is over, no one will choose to go down that suicidal path again.

Rebellion and controversy will never rise again and yet we will still be free. We will be just as free to rebel against God as Lucifer was in the beginning. But we won't! Not because of fear of what God will do to us, but because we all will have learned it causes too much pain and suffering! For this reason it is wrong, and we will want nothing to do with sin ever again.

Nahum 1:9 says *"What do ye imagine against the LORD? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time."*

What about you? Have you seen enough pain, sickness, hatred, murder, and cruelty? Have you seen enough to realize that God's way of love and peace is the best way to live?

The good news for us is this: This is not a war between God and man! It is a war between God and Satan. Yet, the evil seed was planted and has taken root in the mind of man long ago.

Mark 7:21 – 23 *"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."*

In spite of our condition, our gracious, all-powerful God has a plan to restore us to His likeness, and ultimately restore peace to the universe.

Colossians 1:20 – 23 *“And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight.”*

Today, the battle still rages here on earth and you and I must choose whose side we are on, Christ or the Dragon. God calls us in freedom to make our choice.

Deuteronomy 30:19 *“I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:”*

In this conflict we cannot remain neutral. To refuse to make a choice is to side with the devil. Note the words of Jesus –

Matthew 12:30 *“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”*

It is important that we be well informed so that we make the right choice because the closer we get to the end the greater the deceptions of Satan will be! Note the following texts:

II Thessalonians 2:9,10 *“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”*

Revelation 16:13,14 *“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*

All miracles do not come from God. Satan and his demons can perform miracles too. Satan will work with all power and signs to deceive. Therefore we must be careful that we do not rely on miracles, but only on the Word of God as our guide in the last days.

Remember **II Corinthians 11:14,15** *“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”*

Now we can answer our question: What is the origin of evil? It is answered by Jesus' words to the Pharisees in **John 8:44**—*“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”*

“A liar and the father of it.” The father is the source. Satan is the source of the lie, and his most damaging lies are about God and much of the world believes those lies yet today.

Response questions:

1. Is it clear to you that there is a “spiritual war” being waged in the universe and this world is the battleground? Yes ___ No ___
2. Is it clear to you that we must choose which side of this conflict we will be on and to make no decision is to be on the devils side? Yes ___ No ___
3. Is it clear to you that we cannot trust miracles or preachers in the last days, but only the Word of God? Yes ___ No ___
4. If you have not already - will you make the decision today to be on God's side – to be a soldier of Jesus Christ? Yes ___ No ___

It may be you need more answers before you make a decision. You may find the answers in the next lesson – “The Godhead”