



## The Devil and Sin

READING FOR THIS LESSON:– Hebrews 2.

### Why do we sin?

We do not like to admit when we have done something wrong. We like to blame someone else. But the apostle James tells us in James 1:14,

*"But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed."*

We have to admit, if we are honest, that it is the evil thoughts in our own mind that make us do and say evil things. We cannot lay the blame for our sins on anyone else.

Jesus told us of the origins of our sin in Mark 7:21-23,



*"For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man unclean."*

These evil things are not only in the hearts of bad people; even the best of us have evil thoughts in our hearts at times. Even the great Apostle Paul found it hard to do good and easy to do wrong. In Romans 7:18 he shows that in his flesh dwelt no good thing.

He also writes in Romans 3:23, that

*"....all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

James writes that the temptation to sin is in ourselves and not from some outside power,

*"But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death." (James 1:14-15).*

Neither Jesus nor James mentions anything about the devil in these verses – everyone is tempted by their **own** evil thoughts.



### The devil and sin

There is one simple way of showing that sin and the devil are the same thing. What the Bible says about the devil, it also says about sin. For example: -

- The devil is the enemy of God – so is sin.
- The devil is the tempter of man – so is sin.
- The devil is deceitful – so is sin.

The devil causes death (Hebrews 2:14) – so does sin (Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:56).  
The devil was destroyed by the death of Christ – so was sin.

From these comparisons we can see that the devil and sin must be the same thing.

## What, then, is the devil?

Let us see if we can find out from the Bible. We will look at 1 John 3:8, which tells us why Jesus was sent.

*"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's works."*

We have the same idea taken a little further in Hebrews 2:14, where we read about Jesus,

*"Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil."*

This verse tells us that Jesus came to destroy the devil, and it explains how he did it. He came as a human being, and **through his death** destroyed the devil.

How very strange! If the devil was a very powerful and deceitful monster, that would have been impossible.

The devil of the Bible – the devil that Jesus destroyed by dying on a cross, was the power of sin, which was in him as a human being. Sin, also called the devil, has the power of death, for

*"The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:26).*

We also read in Hebrews 9:26,

*"But now he has appeared.....to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself."*



We have shown in an earlier lesson ("The Death of Jesus") that Jesus had a nature like ours. Therefore he could be tempted by sin. Jesus fought temptation and sin all his life; and finally destroyed the power of sin completely in destroying, through his death, the very nature that could be tempted. It was because of this that God raised him from the dead and gave him an immortal and glorified body, free from all sin.

## What does the word "devil" really mean?

The word "devil" really means "slanderer", or "false accuser". In 1 Timothy 3:11, we read,

*"In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers."*

The word translated "malicious talkers" here is the same word that is translated "devil" in other places.



## The one all-powerful Creator

Belief in an evil being, who is God's great rival, is not new. In the days of Isaiah the prophet, the Persians believed in two great powers similar to God and the devil. The first was supposed to be the creator of light and goodness, and the second the creator of darkness and all that is evil.

In answer to this wrong belief, God sent a message through the prophet Isaiah. We can read it for ourselves, in Isaiah 45:5-7,

*"I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things."*

In some translations of the Bible, the word "disaster" is translated "evil". This must not be confused with sin. It means "trouble" – that God brings upon sinners.

This passage proves to us finally that there is one great power in the universe, controlling all things – one great Creator, the LORD God Almighty. There is no creature that can challenge His power, and therefore there is no powerful and deceitful monster, called the devil, or Satan, who can dare to oppose Him. The only thing that is against God is from sin, in the hearts and lives of men and women.

## **We cannot help ourselves**

In Romans 3:23, Paul wrote these words,

*"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

Once we have seen sin in **ourselves**, we must turn away from it – this is the meaning of repentance. This is something we cannot do without God's help and the teaching of His Word, the Bible. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we can come to God and find forgiveness and have a hope of eternal life.

We need to follow the example of Jesus Christ, as Peter wrote,

*"...Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps" (1 Peter 2:21).*



Paul also wrote in Romans 6:12,

*"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires."*

One thing is certain, we shall not win the battle against sin in this life. If it were not for the forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ, which is there for us every day of our lives, we would no be able to overcome temptation and sin.

But when Jesus Christ comes back again, those who have been his faithful disciples will be given immortality – and sin will no longer have any power over them!

We read about this in 1 Corinthians 15:51-57.



## Summary

1. The devil is not a great evil spirit.
2. The devil is a Bible word for what we now call "*human nature*", which is sinful.
3. Temptation comes from within our own sinful, human nature.
4. Jesus overcame sin in himself, and therefore "*destroyed the devil*".
5. Sin is evil and unacceptable to God and all, except Jesus, have sinned.
6. We must repent and be truly sorry for our sins, trusting that God will forgive us, even when we sin after being baptized.