

## LESSON 18 - BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT THE DEVIL (I)

*"As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14).*

THE 'Devil' is a very prominent personality in the religions of Christendom. He is perceived to be a god of evil, and of necessity one who is far more successful than God Himself, on the basis of 'souls' captured and eternally ruled over. Jesus tells us (Matthew 7:13) that -

*"Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and MANY there be which go in thereat:"*

According to the theory of traditional Christianity, this means eternal hell torture for billions of people, under the control of the Devil, with never any hope of escape; while (v. 14)...

*"Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and FEW there be that find it."*

... are those few that God is able to persuade to follow His Way.

Remember, 'hell' as taught by traditional Christianity is for ever, therefore the 'Devil' of their teaching is also for ever. This is the dismal pattern now being set for all eternity for this beautiful universe: that the vast majority of mankind are hopeless slaves of the Devil in eternal tortures: billions and billions of people tortured forever for 70 years of sins!

Is this theory scriptural? Does the Bible actually teach such a dreadful and frightful concept? Is it possible that God has created the vast majority of people to the end that, after a brief unhappy life, they may scream in torture for ever after?

While it may be true that this teaching does not receive the focus and emphasis it once did, it is just as much as ever an inescapable part of the official doctrine of traditional religion. This picture cannot be avoided. It must be faced as the inseparable consequence of the 'immortal soul', 'burning hell', 'personal devil' theories. Dislike it as they may, orthodox 'Christians' must face up to this hideous eternal nightmare as the inevitable outcome of the theories they promote and endorse.

Again, the most important question: Is it scriptural? This lesson, and the lesson following, will carefully consider what the Bible actually has to say about this subject.

### **THERE IS A BIBLE DEVIL**

To be fair, there are some points upon which the Bible is in agreement with traditional Christianity. Truly the Bible does speak of a 'devil'. Both represent the Devil as the Great Enemy of mankind: subtle, evil and powerful -- who must be faced and attacked and overcome to attain to salvation and escape eternal punishment. However, Bible teaching parts company with traditional Christianity regarding the type and duration of the 'eternal punishment' as we will observe in this lesson.

Who or what is the Bible devil? Does it even matter?

Very much so. The briefest consideration reveals that it is essential that we know who (or what) the Devil is, and how to successfully combat and overcome him (or it).

The Devil is to all practical purposes commonly perceived to be

**BibleKEY fact:**

“ *THE 'Devil'...is perceived to be a god of evil, and of necessity one who is far more successful than God Himself, on the basis of 'souls' captured and eternally ruled over.* ”

### **BibleKEY Definitions:**

**"orthodox"** - traditional or established; commonly accepted; customary, esp. in religion.

**"orthodoxy"** - the system of traditional, established, commonly accepted religion or religious teaching

**"omnipotent"** - having unlimited power, authority, or force.

**"omniscient"** - having total knowledge; knowing everything.

**BibleKEY fact:**

“ *While it may be true that this teaching does not receive the focus and emphasis it once did, it is just as much as ever an inescapable part of the official doctrine of traditional religion.* ”

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omnipotent and omniscient, for while supervising the eternal torture of billions already in hell, he is at the same time capable of simultaneously tempting the entire population currently in existence on the earth. Anyone who will be ruling increasing billions to all eternity is obviously very close to God in power.

The Devil is also commonly regarded as being immortal. Some Christian denominations actively teach this, some do not - but all logically necessitate it, for if hell and eternal torture is for ever, then the Devil has to be for ever also. Obviously hell cannot just run itself; and to think of the Devil being destroyed, and hell running right on for ever without him makes the traditional picture seem even more absurd.

But what does the Bible say?

### AN IMMORTAL SINNER IS A SCRIPTURAL IMPOSSIBILITY

If there is one thing the Scriptures make plain, it is the inseparability of Sin and Death --

*"The wages of Sin is Death" (Romans 6:23).*

*"The soul that sinneth, it shall DIE" (Ezekiel 18:4).*

*"By one man Sin entered the world, and Death by Sin" (Romans 5:12).*

*"Lust bringeth forth sin: sin bringeth forth Death" (James 1:15).*

This is God's immutable law. He is righteous and holy, and this universe is His. It has no place for immortal sinners. Immortality is related only to holiness. Immortal sinners are a pagan superstition. The myths of the heathen are full of them.

Similarly, and on the same premise, a sinning immortal is a scriptural impossibility.

The common conception that the Devil is a 'fallen angel cast out of God's holy heaven for rebellion' is a terrible, fleshly travesty of the true, beautiful Divine picture of the perfect relationship between God and the holy angels. If this conception were true (which we fervently thank God it is not!), and if rebellion of holy immortals is possible, then the present heavenly condition among the angels, and the future promised immortal condition of the Redeemed, who are to be '*equal to the angels*' (Luke 20:36), is no improvement on this present vale of evil, uncertainty and tears. If sin is possible in the eternal, immortal state, then what is it all worth? What is the purpose of striving for it?

### THE BIBLE DEVIL IS SIN PERSONIFIED

The Bible Devil is SIN: Sin in every aspect and manifestation - particularly the very root of Sin: '*Sin in the flesh*', the '*law of Sin in the members*', the inherent tendency of all human flesh (since Adam's fall and sentence) toward evil, unholiness and opposition to God and His wise, holy, life giving commands.

The Scriptures tell us that Jesus partook of human nature, and died, for the express purpose of DESTROYING THE DEVIL --

*"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14).*

He partook of weak, mortal, human flesh so that by dying he could '*destroy the devil*' **Ponder this scriptural fact long and well.** Be sure it fits your conception of what the devil is, and how the devil was destroyed by Christ. This passage contains the key to the understanding of this subject. What DID Christ overcome? What DID he nail to the cross in repudiation and condemnation?--

*"...that by death he might destroy the devil" (Hebrews 2:14).*

*"...that he might take away the Sin of the world" (John 1: 29).*

*"He put away Sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26).*

*"That the body of Sin might be destroyed" (Romans 6:6).*

It is inescapably clear from these passages that the Bible devil is not the

**BibleKEY fact:**

“God is righteous and holy, and this universe is His. It has no place for immortal sinners. Immortality is related only to holiness.”

**BibleKEY Definition:**

"personification" - the representation of a thing, concept or an inanimate object as though it were a person.

**BibleKEY fact:**

“It would be an utter absurdity to say that Christ was made of weak human nature so that 'by death' he could destroy such a powerful, immortal creature.”

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supernatural monster of Christendom. It would be an utter absurdity to say that Christ was made of weak human nature so that 'by death' he could destroy such a powerful, immortal creature.

But, by his perfect life and his voluntary, sacrificial death, he did destroy in himself the Bible 'devil' and his works. He totally overcame and held powerless the innate 'motions of Sin' -- the 'law of Sin in the members' or the 'Sin in the flesh' of which Paul speaks -- finally in triumph nailing it to the cross in total defeat and condemnation of Sin and vindication of God.

By this process he totally, eternally freed himself from the Bible devil who has all mankind in hopeless bondage, as far as their own efforts are concerned. This freedom he has personally achieved, he now offers to all who repudiate and crucify the Bible devil -- 'Sin in the flesh' -- in themselves and make themselves part of him by baptism and total loving devotion and obedience thereafter.

### THE DEVIL HAS THE POWER OF DEATH

We also learn here (Hebrews 2:14) that the devil has the power of death. This is a further positive proof that the devil is not a person. The power of death is manifestly the ultimate power. As a Person, only God has the power of death, as He has all power. The debased orthodox conception that God would give the supreme ultimate power of death to an evil creature like the orthodox Devil is an absurd and monstrous idea.

But the Bible says the devil has the power of death. Yes, that is true. SIN does have the power of death -- not in the sense of possessing an authority that only God controls, but in the sense that Sin inevitably brings Death, and all who serve Sin receive Death as his (Sin's) wages.

And, apart from this deliverance provided in Christ, Sin-in-the-flesh, the 'law of Sin in the members' inexorably takes every human being into eternal death. Here indeed is something possessing the 'power of death' that is still in full harmony with God's eternal, exclusive possession of all power.

Jesus' mission was, by death, to destroy that which has the power of death: that is, SIN. Jesus' mission is to totally destroy Sin from the earth, first in himself and then universally, and - with Sin - also Death -

*"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the Sin of the world" (John 1:29).*

*"He put away Sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26).*

### SIN IS PERSONIFIED

We find that Sin is vividly personified as a master, a destroyer, a deceiver

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*"Sin hath reigned unto Death" (Romans 5 21).*

*"Sin wrought in me" (Romans 7:8).*

*"Sin deceived me . . . Sin slew me" (Romans 7:11).*

*"To whom ye yield yourselves to obey, his servants ye are, whether of Sin ..." (Romans 6:16).*

*"Let not Sin reign in your body, that ye should obey it" (Romans 6:12).*

The Bible devil is this personification of Sin. Many things are personified in Scripture, with impressive effect and interest --

**Riches:** *"Ye cannot serve 2 masters: God and Mammon" (Matthew 6:24).*

**Wisdom:** *"Wisdom hath builded her house . . . hewn out her 7 pillars" (Proverbs 9 :1).*

**Israel:** *"I will build thee, O Virgin of Israel" (Jeremiah 31:4).*

**Jerusalem:** *"Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem" (Isaiah 52 :1).*

**The Redeemed:** *"The marriage of the Lamb ... his wife hath made herself ready" (Revelation 19:7).*

**The elements of nature:** *"Floods clap their hands, hills are joyful," (Psalm 98:8) "waste places sing", (Isaiah 52:9) etc.*

The devil, or the 'motions of Sin', 'Sin in the flesh' is also personified under the name of the 'Old Man' -

*"Put off the OLD MAN with his deeds" (Colossians 3:9).*

### **BibleKEY fact:**

“Jesus' mission was, by death, to destroy that which has the power of death: that is, SIN. Jesus' mission is to totally destroy Sin from the earth, first in himself and then universally, and -- with Sin -- also Death. ”

### **BibleKEY fact:**

“The Bible devil is a personification of Sin ”

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*"Put off the OLD MAN . . . put on the New Man" (Ephesians 4:22-24).*

*"Our OLD MAN is crucified with him" (Romans 6:6).*

This last quotation is especially notable. Christ is the Pattern and the Example. He crucified the 'Old Man' the 'Devil' in both his life and his death. So must we --

*"Crucify the FLESH with its affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24).*

*"If ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13).*

Jesus tells us to 'take up the cross' and follow him (Matthew 10:38). And so we find Paul saying that (by his self disciplined and sacrificial life) he was --

*"Crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20).*

### **WHY SO MUCH PERSONIFICATION?**

Why do the Scriptures use so much personification? Is there not a danger of it being confusing and misleading, as with the common idea of the Devil and the Holy Spirit? Not for the right people. Not for the diligent, loving student of the Word. And these are the only ones who matter to God. God deliberately confuses the shallow, the fleshly minded and the wicked --

*"God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned that believe not the Truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12).*

These are very strong words, from a loving and merciful God. We do well to heed them. God is indeed a loving Father to those who totally seek Him, but to no others.

These proofs and examples of personification furnish an answer to the question why Sin in the abstract should be personified. They show, first, that principles and things are personified in the Bible; and, second, that this is done with great advantage.

There is a warmth in such style of speech, which is wanting in expressions that conform to the strict proprieties of grammar and fact. This warmth and expressiveness are characteristic of the Bible in every part of it, and belong to the oriental languages generally. Of course it is open to abuse, like every other good, but its effectiveness is beyond question.

The subject of the devil and sin is an excellent illustration. Sin is the great slanderer of God in virtually denying His supremacy, wisdom and goodness, and it is the great ground of accusation against human beings, even unto death. How appropriate, then, to style it the 'ACCUSER, SLANDERER, LIAR.' This is accomplished with great effectiveness by the use of the term 'devil.' But through the word not being translated but merely Anglicized, the English reader -- reared with English theological prejudices -- is prevented from seeing it.

### **NO DEVIL IN 4000 YEARS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT**

The Old Testament is a record of God's intimate dealings with people for nearly 4000 years. Nowhere throughout it does the popular doctrine of a personal devil appear. The Law of Moses is a very detailed system of ordinances and religious instruction. Nowhere in it is there the slightest hint of any such thing as the orthodox Devil. God is always represented as supreme and alone in power, Himself holding the power of death. The relationship is solely between an individual and God, and it is individuals themselves that are held directly responsible by God for their own actions. It is typical behavior of human nature to try to shift the responsibility for one's actions to someone or something else. In the Old Testament, however, there is never a mention of any external, personal, supernatural tempter. Yet according to orthodoxy, this is the greatest danger people should be warned about. If there were such a thing as this Devil of orthodoxy, constantly seeking to trap people in his coils, it is impossible that God should not have constantly, urgently warned people against him.

The Bible -- Old Testament and New -- does constantly warn mankind over

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“*God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned that believe not the Truth" (2 Thess 2:11-12). These are very strong words...we do well to heed them. God is indeed a loving Father to those who totally seek Him, but to no others.*”

**BibleKEY fact:**

“*The relationship is solely between an individual and God, and it is individuals themselves that are held directly responsible by God for their own actions.*”

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and over against the evil and deceptiveness of his own heart, which is the true Bible devil.

There are a very few scattered items in the Old Testament that are twisted into some kind of support for the orthodox idea, which we plan to look at in this article or later, as the serpent in Eden, 'Azazel' (to do with the scapegoat), Job's 'satan'; the parables of the kings of Tyre (Ezekiel 28) and of Babylon (Isaiah 14), the contention for the 'body of Moses' (Zechariah 2; Jude 9). It will be seen that none of these give any support to the orthodox Devil theory, but rather against it.

### **REVELATION 12: DRAGON CAST FROM HEAVEN**

Revelation 12 is quoted to support the orthodox theory of the Devil. This, when looked at in detail and in context, is clearly seen to be part of the '*things which must be hereafter*' (that is, relative to John's day, Revelation 4:1).

With regard to the time frame of the prophecies of Revelation, some point to Revelation 1:19 which indicates that the subject matter references '*things which ARE*' rather than '*things which shall be hereafter*'. True. John does speak of '*things which ARE*' as well as of '*things which SHALL BE*'. The '*things which are*' are dealt with in chapters 2 and 3, i.e. the messages to the Ecclesias (churches) then existing in Asia Minor concerning conditions then existent. But when we come to chapter 4, we are told that NOW John is to be speaking henceforth of '*things which must be HEREAFTER*' (v 1). The Revelation is a book of symbol. It is stated to be in signs (Revelation 1:1), and it obviously is so: 7 headed beasts, composite leopard / bear / lion beasts, 6 winged creatures covered with eyes, burning mountains cast into the sea, crowned locusts with men's faces and women's hair and scorpion's tails, etc.

Revelation 12, which speaks of the Dragon cast from heaven, begins with a woman in heaven, clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet and crowned with 12 stars. The Dragon which opposes her has 7 heads and 10 crowned horns. This Dragon casts a flood after the Woman. The earth opens her mouth and swallows the flood. All this is obviously (and, when looked into, is seen to be) a part of the 'signification' of the political events on earth between John's day and Christ's return.

This chapter is, like most of the rest of the book, an animated political cartoon, prophesying in symbol the events to do with Europe and the Catholic Church, especially as related to the well-being of the true people of God, whom both the pagans and the Catholic Church persecuted. The chapter represents the rise of the Emperor Constantine and the Catholic Church to political power in the Roman Empire, and the consequent casting of the pagan Dragon power out of the political heavens. A study of the whole book, in the light of a true understanding of the Gospel of the Kingdom, makes this quite clear and convincing.

### **THE SERPENT IN EDEN**

The Eden narrative speaks of the serpent as the most intelligent of the '*beasts of the field*,' endowed with the power of speech to accomplish God's purpose. (For a similar example of this phenomenon see Numbers 22:21-34) There is not the slightest hint of any Devil in the background motivating and manipulating the serpent. Its actions are attributed by Scripture entirely to its own '*subtlety*': and IT - not the Devil of orthodoxy - is sentenced for its presumption, while the one commonly assumed to be the real offender is not even mentioned, let alone condemned as the true source of the evil.

### **'ANGELS THAT SINNED'**

For 'proof' of the Devil, we are referred to the '*angels that sinned*' --

#### **BibleKEY** word search:

"azazel" - translated in KJV as - "the scapegoat" - Leviticus 16:8-10; defined by Strong's Dictionary as "goat of departure"

#### **BibleKEY** fact:

“ Revelation 12 is, like most of the rest of the book, an animated political cartoon, prophesying in symbol the events to do with Europe and the Catholic Church, especially as related to the well-being of the true people of God, whom both the pagans and the Catholic Church persecuted. ”

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*"God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell ("Tartarus" and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Peter 2:4).*

*"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6)*

This is all we are ever told about these sinning angels or 'messengers' They are clearly not of the holy 'elect' angels of God, **for such cannot sin**. The idea that they can is derived from pagan mythology, wherein 'gods' continually sin. God's holy angels are immortal, and sin and immortality are totally impossible associates in the pure Bible picture.

Note well that these sinning angels (whoever they are) are '*reserved in chains of darkness*' (obviously death) *UNTO a (future) judgment.*' They certainly therefore cannot be the Devil's angels of orthodoxy that roam at will doing the Devil's bidding. Whoever they are, they give no support to the Devil theory.

Who they are we are not told. It is clear from the way Paul refers to them in that passage that at that time more was known about whoever it was that was referred to by this term '*angels*' - information we do not have. But seeing God has not seen fit to tell us any more about them than He has, it is wisest not to speculate. Certainly '*angels*' bound in chains waiting judgment give no support to the orthodox doctrine.

### **ISAIAH 14: LUCIFER, SON OF THE MORNING**

Orthodoxy takes us to Isaiah 14:12 -

*"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!"*

Orthodoxy tells us this is their Devil, now a mighty victorious power, simultaneously tempting billions and torturing billions, eternally ruling over far more of the human race that God is at present or ever will be. But the Bible says this Lucifer is a '*man*' (v. 16), become weak (v. 10), the King of Babylon (v. 4), in the grave and covered with worms (v. 11).

### **EZEKIEL 28: THE ANOINTED CHERUB**

Then we are taken to Ezekiel 28:12-14 -

*"The anointed cherub . . . in the garden of God . . . perfect in beauty".*

But what are the facts? Who does the Bible say it is? The Bible states that it is the '*prince of Tyre*,' a '*man*' (v. 2), to die, be slain, and be brought to the pit (vs. 8-10).

It is all but incredulous that traditional organized Christianity finds it necessary to seize on such wording -- plainly referring in both cases to **men** whom God specifically identifies and is condemning -- to try to put together a supposed teaching of a Devil! Why? Simply because there is **no legitimate scriptural support** for this **pagan idea** adopted from the heathen mythology of Egypt, Greece, Rome, etc.

When we look into the checkerwork of passages stitched together to give a picture of the Devil as presented by traditional Christianity, we find there is nothing there but assumption and misapplication.

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### **BibleKEY** word searches:

**"angels (that sinned)"** - Strong's Greek Dictionary #32 "aggelos" (ang'-el-os); from *aggello* [probably derived from #71; compare #34] (to bring tidings); a messenger; especially an "angel"; by implication, a pastor: Translated by KJV-- angel, messenger.

**"Lucifer"** - Strong's Hebrew Dictionary #1966 "heylel" (hay-lale'); from #1984 (in the sense of brightness); the morning-star: Translated by KJV-- lucifer (the king of Babylon).

### **BibleKEY** fact:

“ God's holy angels are immortal, and sin and immortality are totally impossible associates in the pure Bible picture. ”

# BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT THE DEVIL (Part I)

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Name Mr/Mrs/Miss .....

Address ..... Postal Code .....

\* You may need an additional sheet for your answers if there is not enough space below. Your answers to the following questions will help you - and us - to determine how much you have discovered about your Bible. Please return this form in the envelope provided even if you are unable to answer all the questions. On receipt of it we will forward a further study, as well as some comments on your

## ***QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THIS LESSON***

1. According to popular doctrine, who is more successful in securing men's lives, God or the 'Devil'?
2. Is it important that we understand who or what the Bible devil is?
3. What was the purpose and mission of Jesus in relation to the devil?
4. Why did Jesus have the same nature as we have?
5. How did this enable him to 'destroy the devil'?
6. Would being of flesh and blood, and dying, enable him to destroy the Devil as taught by orthodoxy?
7. Is an immortal sinner, or a sinning immortal, a scriptural possibility?
8. What is the Bible devil?
9. Can any person but God have the 'power of death'?
10. How does Sin have the 'power of death' ?
11. What is Jesus' ultimate mission in relation to Sin and Death?
12. What was the first step in fulfilling this mission?
13. Why does the Bible use personification so much?
14. What about the danger of it being misunderstood (as orthodoxy misunderstands the personification of the Holy Spirit and of the Devil)?
15. To whom does God send a 'strong delusion that they may believe a lie'?
16. a) Did God ever warn Israel about a personal, supernatural Devil?  
b) Did He ever warn them about their own evil hearts and tendency to sin?
17. a) What is Rev. 12 all about?  
b) How do we know it does not refer to supposed fall from heaven of the 'Devil' of orthodoxy?
18. Is there any mention of the Devil in connection with the events in Eden?
19. How can we be sure the 'angels that sinned' had nothing to do with orthodoxy's Devil?
20. Who is 'Lucifer' in Isaiah 14?
21. Who is the 'anointed cherub' of Ezekiel 28?