BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

3

THE WAR BEHIND THE WORLD

THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

LESSON 3

The War Behind the World: The Origin of Evil

How did sin begin, why does it continue, and how will God bring it to an end?

KEY VERSE

"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

— 1 John 3:8

Introduction

The suffering and conflict we see in the world did not begin with God's purpose for creation. Scripture opens a larger story: a perfect creature chose pride and rebellion, drew others into deception, and carried that warfare into the human family. Yet the Bible also reveals the Father's answer in His Son, the help available in the present conflict, and God's promise that sin, death, and the curse will finally be gone forever.

Question-and-Bible-Answer Study

1. Who created all things, and through whom did He work?

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."
— Genesis 1:1

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:"
— Colossians 1:16

Study note. The Father created all things through His Son. Evil was not part of God's original purpose; the Son through whom creation came is also the One through whom God works to redeem it.

2. Was the being who became Satan created sinful?

"Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."
— Ezekiel 28:15

3. What place of honor had this created being occupied?

"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."

— Ezekiel 28:12-14

4. What desires led to his fall?

"Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee."

— Ezekiel 28:17

"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."

— Isaiah 14:13-14

5. What spirit did Christ reveal in complete contrast to Satan's self-exaltation?

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

— Philippians 2:6-8

6. How does the Bible describe the conflict that followed in heaven?

"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."
— Revelation 12:7-8

7. Who is the dragon, and what happened to him and his angels?

"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."
— Revelation 12:9

Study note. The Bible identifies the conflict as more than a struggle among human powers. Behind the visible world is a spiritual rebellion led by Satan, "the old serpent," whose central work is deception.

8. How did Jesus describe Satan's character and his relationship to truth?

"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."
— John 8:44

9. What direct contradiction brought Satan's deception into Eden?

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."
— Genesis 2:17

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:"
— Genesis 3:4

Study note. The serpent's first recorded lie directly denied God's word and concealed the deadly result of disobedience. The conflict on earth therefore centers on whether God's word will be trusted.

10. What is sin, and what does it finally produce?

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
— 1 John 3:4

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."
— James 1:15

11. How did sin and death enter the human family?

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"
— Romans 5:12

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."
— 1 Corinthians 15:22

12. How far have the effects of sin reached?

"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."
— Romans 8:22

13. Why has God not yet brought the conflict to its final end?

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
— 2 Peter 3:9

"For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye."
— Ezekiel 18:32

Study note. God's patience is not approval of evil. He delays the final judgment because He desires repentance and life, not the death of the sinner.

14. How did the Father reveal His love for a fallen world?

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
— John 3:16

15. For what purpose was the Son of God manifested?

"And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin... He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."
— 1 John 3:5, 8

16. How would Christ's death bring about the devil's defeat?

"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

Study note. Jesus entered the human family, remained without sin, and met the enemy at the cross. His death provides deliverance from sin and guarantees the final destruction of the one who brought death.

17. How completely did Christ face temptation?

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

— Hebrews 4:15

18. What conflict continues against those who remain faithful to God?

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

— Revelation 12:17

Study note. In this prophetic picture, the woman represents God's people, and the remnant of her seed represents the faithful who remain. The dragon is Satan, identified earlier in the study.

19. How should believers meet the adversary's attacks?

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

— 1 Peter 5:8-9

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

— James 4:7

Study note. Scripture does not direct us to face Satan in our own strength. We submit to God, remain watchful, stand firm in faith, and use the word by which Christ answered temptation.

20. What will happen when Satan's rebellion reaches its final end?

"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."

— Revelation 20:9

> "Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more."
> **— Ezekiel 28:18-19**

21. Will sin and its suffering ever rise again?

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

> "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
> **— Revelation 21:4**

> "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:"
> **— Revelation 22:3**

Lesson Summary

- God created all things through His Son, and evil was not part of His original purpose.
- Satan was created perfect, but pride and self-exaltation led him into rebellion and war against God.
- Satan's work is marked by deception, lying, and death; his lie in Eden led humanity to distrust God's word.
- Sin is transgression of God's law, and its course has brought death and suffering to the whole creation.
- God patiently calls sinners to repentance and revealed His love by giving His only-begotten Son.

- Jesus humbled Himself, faced temptation without sin, died to destroy the devil's works, and gives His people strength to resist the adversary.
- God will make an utter end of rebellion; Satan, death, sorrow, pain, and the curse will never rise again.

Personal Response

Consider these questions quietly and answer them in your own words:

1. Which part of this study most clearly helps you distinguish God's character from the origin and work of evil?
2. Where do you most need to trust God's word rather than the adversary's deception?
3. Are you willing to submit yourself to God and rely on Jesus Christ for strength in the conflict against sin?