

Satan: the Cherub Who Bit the Dust

Number 2 in a series of messages on the unseen world

August 1 & 2, 2009

Intro:

I generally don't read news stories pertaining to CNN founder Ted Turner, and the photos of his comb-over are worse, but I just had to take note of a pertinent quote. He said, *"If I only had a little humility, I would be perfect."* You never know if you should take celebrities seriously, *probably not*, but this kind of blatant self-promotion seems to surround us. Athletes, rock stars, actors and business people are all prone to pride. We all are and maybe it has always been this way, but it just seems so common these days. Should we tolerate arrogance in our world and in our hearts or take it very seriously?

Seminary president, R. Albert Mohler, Jr., whom Time called the *"reigning intellectual of the evangelical movement in the U.S"* wrote: *"According to Scripture, pride is not simply one sin among others. In a very real sense, it is the very root of all sin--demonstrating the ambition of the human heart to assert the human will over God's will."*

I read daily meditations by the brilliant author, C.S. Lewis. His is another of the many voices through history suggesting that pride is the root of all sin: *"There is one vice of which no man is free, which everyone in the world loathes when he sees it in someone else, and of which hardly any people, except Christians, ever imagine that they are guilty themselves... The essential vice, the utmost evil, is pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison. It was through pride and the devil became the devil. It is the complete anti-God state of mind."*

He mentions *how the devil became the devil*. This thought moves us to consider *the original sin*. When we think of *the original sin*, we may think of the Garden of Eden, but *the original, original sin*, took place before anyone bit a forbidden

fruit. An angelic cherub bit the dust first. When you turn to Gen 3 *the snake* is already there. Elsewhere the Bible identifies this serpent as the devil himself, Satan ([Rev. 12:9 & 20:2](#)). He's called our adversary and accuser, and not just a *personification of evil*, an impersonal force, or symbol, but a living, active, malevolent, enemy. He paved the path away from God, and then the first people followed his lead.

Last week we saw that the Bible affirms the reality of *spirit beings* (angels) and says that a war rages in the unseen world. Some of the angels are opposed to God and to the *human beings* he made. These demons are led by Satan.

You might say, *"I can't buy that."* That's how Satan wants it. Keith Green wrote a song with lyrics from Satan's perspective: *"I used to have to sneak around, but now they just open their doors. No one is watching for my tricks. My job keeps getting easier now that no one believes in me anymore."*

When we say, *"I can't believe in the devil's existence,"* this is to mistrust Jesus. He referred to [the devil and his angels \(Mt 25:41\)](#). Jesus said the devil is a thief whose agenda is to [steal, kill and destroy \(Jn. 10:10\)](#). He wants to rip you off. He wants you dead. [Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour \(1 Peter 5:8\)](#). He wants to eat you alive. He lures people to engage in anything that warps the image of God. He degrades, twists, perverts, exploits, and dehumanizes. If we take the Scriptures seriously, we must acknowledge that the devil is still alive and well.

Where did our enemy come from? As we learned last week, the Bible teaches that God created everything, including angelic beings ([Neh 9:6 - the host of heaven](#) [a term referring to angels], [Col 1:15-16 - By Him were all things created, visible and invisible, thrones, powers, authorities, rulers](#) [terms referring to various classifications or ranks of angels]). While they were created as [ministering](#)

spirits (Heb 1:14), to carry out God's will, one went bad. Real bad. Let's learn all about it:

1. The original original sin was *Satan's rebellion against God's position*. *Satan was created as Lucifer, Star of the Morning, but was condemned as the leader of a spiritual mutiny against God's authority.*

Though he was created with the ability to love God, he used his freedom to rebel against him and fell from his high position in heaven. **Rev 9:1** mentions that a star from heaven *had fallen*; and was given the key to the bottomless pit. He leads a third of all angels who rebelled with him in their constant battle against all the God is for (**Mt 25:41; Rev. 12:4**).

So, though the popular philosophy of dualism proposes equal and opposite principles of good and bad, it's clear that the devil is a created being, and therefore not eternal, self-existent, omniscient or omnipotent.

But let's learn more about the fall of Lucifer. **Ez. 28:11-17** sheds some light on this. The chapter first speaks of someone who is merely mortal, the ruler of a place called Tyre. A lament is taken up against him and then halfway through a transition takes place when the text is no longer talking about someone who is a *human* being, but a *spirit* being. Not the *ruler* of Tyre, but the *King* of Tyre - the evil supernatural power behind the mere human ruler of Tyre. (He was the model of perfection 12, in Eden 13, anointed as a guardian [covering] *cherub* with access to the mount of God 14, blameless from the time of his creation until wickedness was found in him 15, Specifically, arrogance. 17. His own splendor corrupted him).

Another key passage here is **Is. 14:12-14**. Lucifer challenged God's unique role. Satan wanted to dethrone God by enthroning himself. Pride led Satan to rebel and launch a coup attempt. Self-centricity is the origin of all sin. *Pride came before the fall!* **1 Tim. 3:6** - to become conceited means to fall under the same judgment as the devil.

T - Let's watch Satan at work in a case study of [Gen 3:1-6](#) that shows how humanity bit the dust.

2. Our original sin was *humanity's refusal to trust in God's provision*. Satan uses an effective strategy to erode our confidence in who God is and what he offers.

As you get into the creation account it becomes clear that Adam and Eve had an ideal environment and upbringing. This shows that sin is not rooted in sociology, politics or heredity, but is a *spiritual* problem. It's time to stop blaming our failures on someone else's dysfunction! There are all kinds of influences, but we're responsible for our choices. T - Let's see Satan in action:

He comes in disguise. [3:1a](#) Why give himself away? He's still around, but he won't show up wearing a red suit. [2 Cor. 11:14](#) - Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

He comes with doubts. [3:1b-3](#) He caused her to doubt God's goodness. He insinuated she lacked something. *God's holding out on you. You're being deprived!* Sound familiar? He is still at it, calling attention to what we do not have, producing discontent.

More specifically, he caused her to doubt God's Word. *"Did God really say that?"* This trick worked so well that Satan hasn't had to change his strategy in all these years.

Note: she added to what he said. This demonstrates that his tactic was already working. [Rev 22:18,19](#) - *don't add to or take away from God's Word!* The additional prohibition made God seem less generous and more demanding. Do we sense a hint of resentment growing? Satan wanted her to picture God as a tyrant and herself as deprived!

If we really understand who Satan is, if we grasp his nature, we will reject what he wants for us. [James 4:7](#) - Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Don't say, *the*

devil made me do it. You don't have to give in. [1 Peter 5:9](#) Resist him, standing firm in the faith. *More to come in series.*

He comes to deceive. [3:4,5](#). [2 Cor. 11:3](#) - But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. It fits Satan's nature to lie: [Jn 8:44](#) - *a liar, there is no truth in him, he is the father of lies.* [Rev 12:9](#) - *he deceives the whole world!* His big lie is to deny the truth of consequences. [Gal. 6:7](#). The list of consequences is a long one:
7- Knew evil by experience, felt the shame.
8-10 - experienced alienation; tried to hide from God.
11-13 - avoided personal accountability, didn't confess and ask for forgiveness with repentance, but *played blame game!*
14-19 shows how sin separates us from God. They were unfit to dwell in God's presence.

Satan engages in false advertising: *I offer what God offers at a lower price!* But the price turns out to be too high!

He comes with delights. [3:6](#) If sin didn't feel good, at least for a while, it wouldn't be nearly as popular. Delights for the body, soul and spirit. (Note parallels in [1 Jn. 2:15-17](#) and [Luke 4](#).)

- **He appealed to physical appetites:** good for food... He called to her attention just how much she wanted that fruit. [1 Jn. 2:16](#) - the lust of the flesh. *Indulge yourself! You deserve it; take care of your normal needs! He continues to motivate us to satisfy our sensuality in illicit ways.* *Nothing wrong with experimenting. Just once can't hurt.*

- **He appealed to esthetic senses:** pleasing to the eye... He called to her attention just how good it looked. [1 Jn.](#)

2:16 - the lust of the eyes. *I need stuff! Satan still seeks to lead us astray by luring us to gratify our greeds. More stuff will lead to success and significance. Lie!*

• **He appealed to spiritual pride: for gaining wisdom...** He called to her attention what it could do for her. **1 Jn. 2:16 - boastful pride of life**. *Be somebody. Satan fans into flame our burning arrogant ambition so we dethrone God. Assert your independence. You don't need anyone over you!*

In **Heb. 4:15** we read that Jesus was tempted in all ways as we are. The attack recorded in **Luke 4** came on these same three fronts: *enjoying things, obtaining things, and achieving things in illegitimate ways.*

In the end, Eve decided to reject what was right in favor of what was appealing. She rejected God's standard. And worse, she played God. When we set ourselves up as the final authority, feigning self-sufficiency, we're essentially swapping roles with God, thinking we'll be better off running our own lives. C. J. Mahaney defines pride: *"when sinful human beings aspire to the status and position of God and refuse to acknowledge their dependence upon Him."*

NOW WHAT? *All the above shows how easy it is to bite the dust, but how can we avoid going down in flames?*

Consider writing alternative "I wills."

• **I will re-enthron God as the Lord in my life.** *You rule and reign in my life. I acknowledge your authority.* There are two ways to go through life: to respond to God's authority with respect, submission, service and worship, or usurp that authority in arrogant defiance, rejecting God's position.

Satan says God *isn't* worthy of worship. This is a lie.

Satan also says God *doesn't* love you. This is a lie.

• **I will trust God as my loving Father who knows and wants what is best.** *I'm not going to listen to the liar saying that God just wants to cramp my style.*

We've been concentrating on the origin of evil. To conclude we need to understand its destiny as well. Back in the garden, God prophesied that the serpent would eat the Savior's dust. **Heb. 2:14** – Jesus took on flesh, sharing in our humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil. What does that mean for us? Col. 1:13,14 God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. *Preview next 3 weeks.*

Prayer: Prayer team members available. Come up!

More Meat (very random thoughts that didn't make the cut but may be of interest):

Don't Listen to the Liar

If we really understand Satan's agenda, we will reject what He wants for us. Who have you been listening to? Jesus calls him the prince of this world. Called the god of this age in 2 Cor 4:4.

1 Jn 5:19b - "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."

He'll dangle appealing things before us and temp us to deny the truth of consequences. The temptation above all others is to play God, to take his role, decided on your own standards apart from his word. "I don't need anyone over me!" You'll exchange a loving and fair master for a brutal liar, bent on your destruction.

Do Trust in God's Goodness

If we really understand who God is, if we grasp His nature, we will want what He wants for us and accept His prohibitions. When God speaks, He doesn't want our opinion, He wants our obedience. Selective submission is not submission. It shows pride, self will. He wants what is best for us. His goodness is shown best in his provision for our sin. First hint is seen in Gen 3:15. When Satan deceived Eve he succeeded in gaining control of the human race. Sin entered the world and death through sin (Rom. 5:12). Humanity was lost, eternally separated from their righteous God. Yet on that same day God promised one who would come and do battle with the devil. Although He would be wounded, the one who would come from the seed of the woman would prevail and crush the head of Satan. The prophecy was fulfilled in Christ's crucifixion and victorious resurrection. The power of sin and death is broken. We can be set free from the devil's domain of darkness.

Not politically correct. But check Matt 25:41; 2 Thes 1:7-9 concerning everlasting destruction! If God is holy and if choices are to honored, then hell must exist.

CS Lewis: "There are two kinds of people in the end; those who say to God your will be done and those to whom God says, your will be done. The lost enjoy forever the freedom they have demanded." Hell is a consequence of rebellion against God. To remove results would be to eliminate the reality of the choice. Newsweek: "In rejecting heaven and hell, the rationalist also rejects the awesome seriousness of moral and immoral behavior."

Justice of hell: if someone goes to the doctor, receives the diagnosis and yet refuses to take the prescription, you don't blame the doctor

Lee Strobel: "You don't read half a novel and then criticize the author for not resolving the plot. God will bring accountability at the right time."

For the first couple, their pleasure turned to pain. Their life became death. They had abundance before the disobedience, after it they had to toil for what they could. Fellowship turned to alienation. So it is with each one of us when we choose against God's ways. Disharmony, catastrophe.

One more great quote about pride: Frank Leahy said, "Egotism is the anesthetic that dulls the pain of stupidity."

When God speaks, he doesn't want our opinion, He wants our obedience.

Gen 3:4 Certainty of punishment denied. *"I know better than God; He is mistaken."*

Luke 4 - Satan aimed the first temptation at the body using bread. He aimed second temptation at the soul offering possessions to satisfy covetous desires. Aimed third temptation at the spirit using recognition from the people to satisfy spiritual pride.

Note Adam's culpability. 1 Tim 2:14 - *"It was not Adam who was deceived, but Eve."* He knew what he was doing; he followed eyes wide open.

How important is all of this? For the first couple, their pleasure turned to pain. Their life became death. They had abundance before the disobedience, after it they had to toil for what they could. Fellowship turned to alienation. So it is with each one of us when we choose against God's ways.

His temptation can be in the form of accusations. Try to serve God and he will scream of your unworthiness.

Rebellion led to slavery to sin Rom 6:17.

God didn't make the world to experience this kind of suffering. God made beings with the freedom to choose him and experience peace. But they used this freedom to defy him.

Never forget the gospel: Rom 3:23; 6:23; Is. 53:6; 59:2. The justice of God met the love of God on the cross.

More on parallels:

The avenues of temptation: how does it reach us?

Heb. 4:15 - tempted in all things as we are! Lots of ways to be tempted. Attack comes on three fronts. To enjoy things, to obtain things, to achieve things in illegitimate ways or to illegitimate extents. Parallels: gen. 3:6 Appealed to 1.

physical appetites: "good for food, 2. esthetic senses: "a delight to the eyes," 3. spiritual pride: "to make one wise."

1 Jn 2:16 Lust of the flesh, of the eyes and boastful pride of life. See Christ's temptation Lk 4 for another parallel: 2-4 offer was bread to satisfy hunger. 5-8 offered possessions to satisfy covetous desires. Vss. 9-12 offered recognition from the people to satisfy spiritual pride.

Luke 4 - Satan dared Jesus to satisfy a legitimate craving in an illegitimate way. "Why would God do this to you? Doesn't He feed his son? He's neglecting your needs! He

won't take care of you; better take care of yourself!" For Christ to do His work, He had to live His personal life within human limits, in perfect dependence to the Father. If He had stooped to save Himself, He would've been unworthy to save men!

"I'm not in this for me." Jn 5:30; 6:38 - came to do the will of the Father not His own. Matt. 26:39 - "not My will but Yours be done." Jesus knew that He was in the care of the Father, no matter what the situation looked like! God will take care of us too - Phil. 4:19 "God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

Satan still says, Don't depend on God - assert your independence in self-interest. You deserve it, take care of your normal needs! Have you been listening to this lie? Happiness comes from satisfying fleshly appetites? When we distrust God's care, we meet desires our own way.

Get what you want - fulfill your fantasies. Real success, significance! Contentment = stuff. Materialism = satisfaction. Lk. 12:15 "Be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

Contentment is the answer to temptation. More = better, a lie. Matt. 13:22 "the deceitfulness of riches..." 1 Tim. 6:9,10 - Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.

Satan offered Jesus recognition from the people to satisfy spiritual pride. What wait? You can have it all now! Take the easy way! Take God's glory. To receive acceptance

without going to the cross was to short circuit God's plan. Just take a short cut! No, must first suffer. No crown without cross! Can't produce spiritual ends by fleshly means.

Arrogance is never being in doubt but often being in error.

An egotist is someone who is always me-deep in the conversation.

How will you know if you have a humble servant's attitude? By how you react when you are treated like one.

Pride is like a beard, it keeps growing. Need to have it shaved everyday. It's the only disease that makes everyone sick except the person who has it. Gal. 6:3 - For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. No problem for me? 1 Cor. 12:12 - Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

The Bible affirms that God is loving and that He is powerful and yet our world is characterized by evil and suffering. Most attempts at harmonization seek to discount one or more of these affirmations. Either God doesn't care (but He is at least as displeased as we are), or He is doing the best He can under the circumstances (but a weak God is not God), or evil can be denied (it's not all in your mind, it's all around)!

For Adam and Eve's devotion to be real, they had to have the freedom to choose an alternative. So one prohibition was present to provide a choice. That made obedience voluntary (16-17), but made disobedience possible. The tree was a test to reveal their allegiance, or lack of it. It was a reminder that they were responsible to God. A possibility

to go wrong must be there. Worship which is not freely given is not worship at all.

There's a difference between righteousness and innocence. Righteousness is innocence that has been maintained in the presence of temptation. Testing either develops or destroys us. Combine this situation with the reality of cause and effect and the stage is set for potential disaster.