

SOTERIOLOGY: DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

PART 29

KEY TERMS: SATAN, PART 3, HELL

If Satan cannot prevent some people from undergoing the new birth, his second level of attack is to lead them away from biblical truth and get them to submit to false doctrine, especially in nonnegotiable doctrine that impacts eternal life. In that way, he blunts their effectiveness as witnesses for and ambassadors of Christ. Satan's first attack was an attack on the veracity of God's Word. That attack was so successful he has had no reason to abandon it as his primary offensive weapon. It is no accident that the Lord used the Word of God to combat Satan's attack during the Temptation. It is no accident that the only offensive weapon in our spiritual warfare arsenal is "...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). In order to effectively wield that weapon, we have to thoroughly know it, understand it, and properly employ it. The whole purpose for the armor of God is to enable us to "stand firm against the schemes of the devil" (Eph. 6:11). If we don't know what that armor is and if we don't wield it wisely and well, it is useless.

Genesis 3:1-7 ¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" ²The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; ³but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.' " ⁴The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die!" ⁵"For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

Satan began by questioning God's Word and he rapidly progressed to contradicting and denying God's Word. Paul clearly informs us that Satan's strategy to lead the church away from the truth by using these pulpit imposters will be very successful. Their primary attack is done by changing, distorting, and denying the Word of God.

1 Timothy 4:1-2 ¹But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, ²by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,

2 Timothy 4:2-4 ²preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. ³For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

The sad fact is, as Paul made very clear to Timothy, many people believe the lie because they want to have their ears tickled and believe the lie rather than believe the truth. They not only don't want sound doctrine, they knowingly and willingly reject it.

What false doctrines has Satan introduced into the church? Early in church history the false gospel of baptismal regeneration made its way into the church. People who rely on water baptism to save them rather than on trusting the finished work of Christ Jesus to save them, remain lost. Hierarchical ecclesiastical church government finally resulted in the papacy which assumed authority over the Word of God. Flowing from that is the unbiblical doctrine that only the Magisterium of the Roman Church can interpret the Bible and everyone must submit to their interpretation. From that position of authority, numerous false doctrines have been brought into the church not the least of which is the mother/child cult the current incarnation of which is the worship of Mary. The idea that salvation was to be found in only the Roman Church was introduced. The continual sacrifice of Christ in the Mass evolved into mandatory dogma and that doctrine denies the once for all time "it is finished" work of Christ on the cross. Eventually, millions of believers were murdered by the Roman Church for daring to try and establish churches based on biblical truth. Satan has been a murderer from the beginning. That is the work of Satan; it is not the work of the true church; it is the work of a false church masquerading as a true church. Ecumenical cooperation without doctrinal purity is rampant in our time. Evolution and animal rights activism have destroyed the Creator/creature distinction and obscured the doctrine of sin and our need for a Savior, radical environmentalism, central government imposed socialism and the redistribution of wealth, global government, cultural liberalism, self-centered secular humanism, charismatic excesses, occult mysticism and other eastern religious practices, denial of the doctrine of hell, and the prosperity gospel have all infiltrated the teaching of the modern church and diverted people away from the truth of the Bible. The definition of sin has been changed to conform to the modern relativistic mindset that says what is true for you may not be true for me. This has been apparent in the sexual revolution that began fifty years ago and continues today as people approve of and embrace homosexuality. Morality has been subverted; sexual promiscuity and violence saturate the entertainment media. The moral standards of the Bible are said to discourage people from embracing Christianity. Satan has saturated the modern church with the false doctrine that Christianity is all about us and our life now rather than all about

glorifying and serving Christ Jesus and eternal life. Satan has diverted attention away from the human need for a Savior and convinced people their only problem is how to live well right now. Satan and his false apostles have been very successful in diverting the church from her mission and in destroying her effectiveness to preach the gospel to the people of a lost world. These are all issues that came to my mind while I was writing this paragraph; I'm certain many of you could add more to this list. Today's church is in serious spiritual trouble because it has been infiltrated by Satan and his servants.

Two Scriptures (Isaiah 14:12-19; Ezekiel 28:11-19) reveal some things about the creation and life of the angel who became Satan. In both Scriptures, a man is being described but then some truth is presented that seems to identify the power behind that man and that power is Satan. In Ezekiel 28:1-10, the "leader of Tyre" (v. 2) is the subject. In vv. 11-19, a new prophecy is given and the subject is the "King of Tyre" (v. 12). The description given here cannot refer to a mere human being. Many theologians, however, do restrict the meaning of these verses to the human leader or king of Tyre. "It would, of course, not be unusual for a prophetic passage to refer both to a local personage and also to someone else who fully fulfills it....So for Ezekiel 28 to refer both to the then-reigning king of Tyre as well as to Satan would not be a unique interpretive conclusion. Indeed, it seems the right conclusion: The historic king of Tyre was simply a tool of Satan, possibly indwelt by him. And in describing this king, Ezekiel also gives us glimpses of the superhuman creature, Satan, who was using, if not indwelling him. Assuming, then, that Satan is in the picture in these verses, what do we learn about his original characteristics at his creation? Whatever specifics these verses teach, they convey the clear idea that Satan was highly privileged, the epitome of God's Creation, who had an unparalleled position in the universe" [Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 162].

Ezekiel 28:11-19 ¹¹Again the word of the LORD came to me saying, ¹²"Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. ¹³"You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The ruby, the topaz and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx and the jasper; The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, Was in you. On the day that you were created They were prepared. ¹⁴"You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire. ¹⁵"You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created Until unrighteousness was found in you. ¹⁶"By the abundance of your trade You were internally filled with violence, And you sinned; Therefore I have cast you as profane From the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the stones of fire. ¹⁷"Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, That they may see you. ¹⁸"By the multitude of your

iniquities, In the unrighteousness of your trade You profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; It has consumed you, And I have turned you to ashes on the earth In the eyes of all who see you. ¹⁹“All who know you among the peoples Are appalled at you; You have become terrified And you will cease to be forever.” ’ ’ ”

The person the Lord was describing in this Scripture was the epitome of wisdom and beauty (v. 12) and this person was a created being, a creature (vv. 13, 15). It is interesting to note that God is in mourning over the fall of this being (v. 11); this Scripture is a lamentation. God apparently took great pleasure in creating this being and was anguished over his fall. Whatever it means to be in Eden, the Garden of God, it is a place of incredible beauty and privilege in which to be (v. 13). The physical description of this being is beyond our comprehension (v. 13). This being was a covering cherub (v. 16) which is certainly an exalted position of immense responsibility. This person was created blameless (v. 15) meaning he possessed perfect moral integrity. He became proud of his exceptional beauty and corrupted his wisdom by reason of his splendor (v. 17). At some point these things combined to turn his heart away from God and to himself and he rebelled against God (vv. 15-16). The result is God's wrath fell on him. This Scripture actually covers a long period of time; it begins with his creation and ends with his destruction (vv. 18-19). The only possible being this Scripture describes is Satan.

The other Scripture describes Satan's original rebellion (Isaiah 14:12-19).

Isaiah 14:12-19 ¹²“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! ¹³“But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. ¹⁴‘I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ ¹⁵“Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit. ¹⁶“Those who see you will gaze at you, They will ponder over you, saying, ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms, ¹⁷Who made the world like a wilderness And overthrew its cities, Who did not allow his prisoners to go home?’ ¹⁸“All the kings of the nations lie in glory, Each in his own tomb. ¹⁹“But you have been cast out of your tomb Like a rejected branch, Clothed with the slain who are pierced with a sword, Who go down to the stones of the pit Like a trampled corpse.

Some theologians believe this Scripture is referring to the king of Babylon; others understand this to picture “the fall of the king of Babylon [as] an antitype of the previous fall of Satan and a type of the future fall of Antichrist. Delitzsch says it concisely: ‘A retrospective glance is now cast at the self-deification of the king of Babylon, in which he was the antitype of the devil and the type of Antichrist.’ The passage

transcends anything that can be said of an earthly king and has been understood from earliest times to also refer to Satan's fall as described in Luke 10:18" [Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 164; Dr. Ryrie was also quoting Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, p. 1:312]. Dr. Ryrie could be correct about his assessment of Luke 10:18 when Jesus said He watched Satan fall from heaven like lightning. It is also possible that this Scripture is proleptic, that is, prophetic and the Lord was describing the Tribulation event of Revelation 12:9 where Michael and the angels permanently removed Satan and his angels from heaven. The problem with understanding Luke 10:18 to represent the expulsion of Satan from heaven at the time of his original sin is that he still had, and still has, access to God the Father on His throne in heaven. That is clearly portrayed in the first two chapters of Job (Job 1:6-7, 2:1-2) and we know that Satan is constantly going before the Father and accusing the saints of sin (Rev. 12:10) where as Advocate, Christ Jesus, intercedes on our behalf (1 John 2:1).

The five "I will" statements indicate pride is the root of the problem and Paul seemed to confirm that in 1 Timothy 3:6.

Ascending to heaven is the expression of a desire to be equal to God. The third heaven is the abode of God. Satan and the angelic realm were apparently assigned a lower abode and his desire was to place himself in the place of God. He wasn't satisfied to remain in his rightful place. It is possible that an element of this desire is to replace God.

Raising his throne above the stars probably refers to ruling over the angels, but it could simply be a reference to ruling in the heavens, the abode of God. Satan's desire was for a throne from which he could rule, most likely, over the angelic host.

Mount Zion was said to be in the "far north" (Ps. 48:2) and the mount may signify the seat of God's government on earth (Is. 2:1-4). This may express a desire on the part of Satan to usurp the Messianic role that belonged to Christ Jesus and rule over Israel if not the earth.

Ascending above the heights of the clouds expresses a desire to usurp the glory that belongs to God.

The exact meaning of these first four "I will" statements may be a bit difficult to determine, but the fifth is quite clear. "I will make myself like the Most High" is a declaration to be God. This was a direct challenge to the authority of God and it reveals his desire to be the ruler of heaven and earth. This is total rebellion against God and against the role and position assigned to Satan by his Creator.

“Satan’s sin was all the more heinous because of the great privileges, intelligence, and position he had. His sin was also more damaging because of the widespread effects of it. It affected other angels (Rev. 12:7); it affects all people (Eph. 2:2); it positioned him as the ruler of this world, which he uses to promote his kingdom and to counterfeit God’s (John 16:11); it affects all the nations of the world, for he works to deceive them (Rev. 20:3)” [Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 165]. “Satan’s sin may thus be summarized as a purpose to secure (1) the highest heavenly position; (2) regal rights both in heaven and on earth; (3) Messianic recognition; (4) glory which belongs to God alone; and (5) a likeness to the Most High, the ‘possessor of heaven and earth.’ There can be no adequate estimation of the immediate effect of Satan’s initial sin, first upon himself, and then upon that vast host of spirit beings who, in allegiance to Satan, ‘kept not their first estate’; or of the final effect of that sin upon the entire human race whose federal head adopted the same satanic repudiation of God” [Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, p. 2:50].

Satan’s rebellion destroyed much more than humanity; it affected the entire creation. Christ Jesus not only provided mankind the opportunity to be saved, but He will also correct all that has been destroyed in the created order.

1 John 3:8 ⁸...The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

Romans 8:19–23 ¹⁹For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. ²³And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

We need to understand that Satan is the enemy of God and he is constantly seeking ways to destroy mankind. He particularly wants to destroy the Jewish people. He seeks to keep people from believing in Christ and failing that he seeks to destroy the effectiveness of those who do believe. We are in a constant battle with Satan and with those who are allied with him. Satan’s primary method of operation is to add to, take away from, deny the truth of, and confuse the Word of God. He has been very successful at infiltrating the church with false teachers, wolves in sheep’s clothing, and heretical doctrines. He has been very successful in convincing the world at large that science and evolution trump the Word of God. He has been very successful in convincing the world that secular humanist wisdom is superior to the wisdom of God.

We need to avail ourselves of the full armor of God and faithfully fight the good fight of faith.

HELL

In English, "hell" is a catch-all word that interprets several words and ideas in the Bible; "hell" is not specifically a biblical word but it does accurately describe biblical concepts. In general, we understand it to mean a "term that in common usage designates the place of future punishment for the wicked" [Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, s. v. "hell"]. This definition leaves a little bit to be desired because by using the word "wicked" it implies to the average English speaking and thinking person that personal sins are the problem rather than the sin nature which produces those personal sins being the problem. The Bible Dictionary published by the Southern Baptist Convention also errs in its assertion that temporal sin is the basis for eternal punishment. "The assertion that God would be unfair to punish eternally a temporal sin underestimates the seriousness of sin, the spiritual nature of sin, and the supreme holiness of God" [*Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, s. v. "Hell"]. God isn't punishing temporal sins with eternal punishment; people undergo eternal punishment for rebelling against God in and with Adam and thereby acquiring a sin nature the remedy for which is belief in the person and work of Christ Jesus who paid humanity's personal sin debt on the cross.

The Old Testament identifies the place of the dead but the concept of hell as a place of eternal punishment, while present, is not emphasized. This place of the dead is called Sheol, שְׁאוֹל, which was variously identified as the Underworld, Hades, or the grave. It is the place under the earth where the dead reside and it can be viewed as the realm of death. Sheol was the place of the dead for both believers and unbelievers and they have, or had in the case of believers, a conscious existence there. References to Sheol always refer to going down and both believers and unbelievers referred to its place in that manner. God exercises authority over Sheol.

There seem to be only two verses in the Old Testament that specifically speak to the eternal nature of what we would call hell.

Daniel 12:2²⁴ "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.

Isaiah 66:24²⁴ "Then they will go forth and look On the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm will not die And their fire will not be quenched; And they will be an abhorrence to all mankind."

The resurrection of Old Testament believers is clearly presented in Daniel 12:2. That means Sheol is not the permanent abode of those believers. The Lord clearly identified two areas in Sheol, or Hades in Greek, one for believers, called Abraham's Bosom or Paradise, which was a place of rest and blessing and one called Abaddon which was a place of torment (Luke 16:19-26). Neither place was a permanent abode. Once Christ was raised, Abraham's Bosom was closed and those Old Testament saints went to be in the presence of the Lord to await their bodily resurrection (Eph. 4:8). The unbelievers in Hades will remain there until the second resurrection when they will be raised to undergo the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

Luke 16:19–26 ¹⁹“Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. ²⁰“And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, ²¹and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. ²²“Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. ²³“In Hades [ᾗδης] he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴“And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.’ ²⁵“But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. ²⁶“And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.’

Clearly, the implications are that the rich man is an unbeliever suffering torment in a place called Hades and Lazarus is a believer resting in the place where Abraham, a believer, is residing and that place is called Abraham's Bosom. There is an impassable chasm between the two that no one is able to cross over from one area to the other.

Paradise, παράδεισος, is a dwelling place of the righteous dead in a state of blessedness. The word comes from Persian and it referred to the public gardens in Persia that were owned by royalty and nobility. In early Greek, it had a more general meaning of park, garden, or orchard. “In Luke 23:43 the usage is no doubt dependent on contemporary Jewish conceptions, referring to the hidden, intermediate abode of the righteous” [*New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, s. v. “παράδεισος”]. Hades, ᾗδης, is the place or abode of the dead which in Hebrew is Sheol. Abaddon, אַבְדֹּן, means destruction. It is the Place of Decay, the netherworld of the dead. This is the Hebrew term for the unbeliever's portion of Sheol. When the Old Testament refers to the “pit,” it is synonymous with Abaddon. Pit, בּוֹר, means a pit, cistern, or well. In this use it refers to a prison or dungeon.

Proverbs 15:11 ¹¹Sheol [שְׁאוֹל] and Abaddon [אַבְדּוֹן] lie open before the LORD, How much more the hearts of men!

Job 28:22 ²²“Abaddon [אַבְדּוֹן] and Death say, ‘With our ears we have heard a report of it.’

Psalms 30:3 ³O LORD, You have brought up my soul from Sheol [שְׁאוֹל]; You have kept me alive, that I would not go down to the pit [בּוֹר].

Ezekiel 26:20 ²⁰then I will bring you down with those who go down to the pit [בּוֹר], to the people of old, and I will make you dwell in the lower parts of the earth, like the ancient waste places, with those who go down to the pit [בּוֹר], so that you will not be inhabited; but I will set glory in the land of the living.

Once the judgment of these unbelievers is complete, even Hades will be thrown into the lake of fire because it will no longer be needed as a staging area for unbelievers. Once the Great White Throne judgment is complete and the eternal state commences, there will no longer be unbelievers who will need to be housed Sheol.

Revelation 20:11–15 ¹¹Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. ¹⁴Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

“The rich man, who is evidently still in Hades, is a representative case and describes the unjudged condition in the intermediate state of the wicked. As to his spirit, he was alive, fully conscious, in exercise of his mental faculties, and also tormented. It is thus apparent that insofar as the unsaved dead are concerned, no change in their abode or state is revealed in connection with the ascension of Christ. At the sinners' judgment of the great white throne, Hades will surrender the wicked. They will be judged and cast into the lake of fire....The wicked...are [now] in Hades....awaiting resurrection...to condemnation” [Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, s. v. “Hades”].