

That The World May Know - Faith Lessons Of The Early Church - Session 3 – Where Satan Lives

The Ongoing Conflict between God and Satan

Since before God created the human race, a great battle has taken place between him and Satan. The early Christians realized that the gods of their pagan neighbors were, in fact, counterfeits of Satan designed to deceive them and lure them away from following the true God. We also need to recognize Satan's counterfeits and the places in our culture where he exerts his power. Armed with the power of God, we need to take our "stand against the devil's schemes" as described in Ephesians 6:10 – 11.

1. What basic conflict is described throughout the Bible, and what are Satan's intentions?
Genesis 3:1 – 15
Revelation 12:7 – 17
2. What is Satan's nature? What does he try to accomplish?
Genesis 3:1 – 5
Matthew 4:1 – 4
John 8:42 – 47
2 Corinthians 11:13 – 15
3. In contrast to what Satan wants people to think, who is really in charge of this world?
Ephesians 1:18 – 23
1 Timothy 6:13 – 16
4. During His ministry on earth, what did Jesus Christ accomplish related to the battle between God and Satan? In what ways did he demonstrate His authority and power over Satan?
Matthew 8:28 – 32
Matthew 12:22 – 28
Mark 1:21 – 27
Hebrews 2:14 – 15

5. What role in this battle did Jesus Christ assign to His disciples? In what ways did he encourage them?
Matthew 10:1 – 8
Luke 10:17 – 20

Jesus Christ Exposes Satan' Counterfeits

Satan has deceived people with his diabolical schemes from the beginning of human history. It is remarkable how closely some of the ancient pagan religions imitated and claimed to provide the same blessings that God provides. Jesus Christ knew what His followers would encounter in pagan cities such as Pergamum, and through His words and actions He prepared them to refute Satan's claims.

1. The priests of Dionysus claimed that their god could turn water into wine, but that he did it secretly at night, in his temple. What was Jesus Christ's first miracle? When and where did He do it?
John 2:1 – 11
2. Demeter, the goddess of grain, supposedly provided daily food for people. Her followers also believed that she offered the possibility of resurrection and forgiveness of sins through ceremonial washing in the blood of bulls.
 - a. In contrast, who did Jesus Christ recognize as the provider of all food and nourishment? What example does the text provide of how Jesus Christ's need for those things was met?
Matthew 4:1 – 11
 - b. In what way did Jesus Christ demonstrate this truth to His disciples?
John 6:1 – 14

- c. What did Jesus Christ promise to those who placed their faith in Him? In what ways did He demonstrate this power?
John 11:17 – 44
John 20:24 – 31
1 Corinthians 15: 1 – 8

- d. How is Jesus Christ able to cleanse people from sin?
Hebrews 9:11 – 14

3. Asclepius was known as the god of healing. People who came to him were required to give Asclepius full credit and honor for their healing. But what did Jesus Christ do even for those who could not come to Him? How much credit did He seek?
John 4:46 – 53
John 5:1 – 13
4. Followers of Zeus claimed that he was the giver of life, lord of all, and creator of all. How do we know that such claims belong to Jesus Christ alone?
John 1:1 – 4
John 11:25 – 26
Revelation 19:11 – 16
5. The Roman emperor declared himself to be the son of a god, lord of all, and the source of truth. He demanded to be worshiped as god. In contrast, who does the Bible reveal to be the Son of God, Lord of all, and the source of truth?
John 1:14
John 12:27 – 33
Acts 1:1 – 11
Acts 2:32 – 36

Living in the Place Where Satan Dwells

Satan can be described as living or having his throne wherever he is able to pull people away from God. He accomplishes this by making the pursuit of sin not only acceptable but also appealing and by robbing God of the credit God alone deserves. Believers who live in such places have a great responsibility to remain faithful and true witnesses of God.

1. What are the responsibilities of believers who live in the midst of an evil culture?
1 Peter 3:8 – 16
2. Each of the following Scripture passages comments on pursuits of evil that were common in the ancient world. Identify the evil pursuits(s) and consider how they were practiced in Pergamum. Consider the challenges a believer would face in order to be a witness for God in such a culture.
Leviticus 17:10 – 12
Acts 15:19 – 29
1 Corinthians 6:9 – 11
1 Corinthians 10:14-21
2 Peter 2:10 – 19
1 John 3:7 - 10

Avoiding Every Hint of Sin

Although God praised the church in Pergamum for its faithfulness in the midst of great evil, God condemned several things that some Christians there were doing. As you explore the following Scripture, ask yourself which common activities today are often associated with pagan people and why it is so important for Christians to avoid even the hint of sin.

1. What complaints did God have against some of the Christians in Pergamum? How seriously did God consider the problem to be?
Revelation 2:14 – 16

2. Why was eating food sacrificed to idols such a significant issue?

In the Old Testament?
Numbers 25:1 – 3

In the New Testament?
1 Corinthians 8:1 – 13
1 Corinthians 10:18 – 22

3. What was so offensive about eating raw meat (meat with blood in it)?

In the Old Testament?
Leviticus 17:10 – 14

In the New Testament?
Acts 15:19 – 29

Standing Stones of the Faith

As Christians, our ability to face the future is directly related to our awareness of how God has already worked in our lives. God's work in the past, whether the distant past or our own past, is part of the foundation on which our beliefs and commitment are built. We also have the important responsibility of expressing God's truth to a spiritually hungry world. For both of these reasons, we need to acknowledge and praise God for all that he has done—the ordinary as well as the extraordinary. Thus it is appropriate for God's people to establish "standing stones" as memorials to what he has done.

1. Summarize the story or event described in each of the following passages. Take note of the work of God that each standing stone commemorates or represents.
Genesis 28:10 – 18
Joshua 4:1 – 9
Joshua 24:19 – 27
Revelations 2:12 – 17

2. To what does Peter compare believers?
1 Peter 2:4 – 5

- a. What kind of life does this require a believer to live?
- b. How does what God is doing reflect the purpose of "standing stones?"

References

Genesis 3	Genesis 28
Leviticus 17	Numbers 25
Deuteronomy 24	Joshua 4
Joshua 24	1 Chronicles 16
Nehemiah 4	Matthew 4
Matthew 8	Matthew 10
Matthew 12	Matthew 16
Matthew 28	Mark 1
Mark 8	Luke 10
John 1	John 2
John 4	John 5
John 6	John 8
John 11	John 12
John 20	Acts 1
Acts 2	Acts 15
Romans 1	1 Corinthians 6
1 Corinthians 15	1 Corinthians 8
2 Corinthians 4	2 Corinthians 7
2 Corinthians 10	2 Corinthians 11
2 Thessalonians 2	Ephesians 1
Ephesians 5	Ephesians 6
1 Timothy 6	Hebrews 2
Hebrews 9	1 Peter 2
1 Peter 3	2 Peter 2
1 John 3	Revelation 2
Revelation 12	Revelation 19