

Th131 God's Plan

Lesson Th131-35 The Resurrection

In today's lesson we will learn of Satan's defeat. Parts of today's lesson will be told as a story and enhanced to help bring meaning and understanding to events that are alluded to in the Bible. To begin, we must first review this course to see how all the lessons fit together to bring us to this point.

God is love and He decided to create beings in His image and likeness to love and to be loved in return. God created the universe as a place where His children could live. Perfect love requires that people have a choice. So before they could be created, God would have to wait for another choice to come into existence. God created Lucifer perfect. He was one of the most powerful angelic beings in all of creation. But over time his heart became filled with sin. Although his heart was dark, he had never broken any of God's laws. Thus God, being a God whose holiness defined law, did not have a legal reason to condemn him. But God could fire him from his position of honor and Lucifer was removed from his position in the throne room of God.

Lucifer then chose to become the opposite of God and by doing so, created evil. By becoming the opposite of God, Lucifer became Satan. In this way Satan became essentially a choice in God's creation. Then God created Adam and Eve. Satan tempted them and they chose rebellion over obedience. And so began the war between God and Satan. The war would be fought for the hearts of mankind. During thousands of years of human history God revealed His holiness, His law, and that He was the ultimate Judge of mankind. Some people chose to love God; most chose to reject His love.

From the very beginning of the war, God had promised that one day one of Eve's descendants would destroy Satan's power. At just the right time God sent His Son to be born as one of us. Satan tried to kill Jesus as a baby and then tempted Him as a man. But Jesus was always obedient to His Father God. Jesus went around preaching, healing, and casting out demonic fallen angels who had possessed people. Then He commissioned 72 of His disciples with His power and suddenly Satan found his kingdom under assault. Satan decided to end the battle once and for all. He found one of Jesus' disciples, Judas, who had a lust for money and had become a thief. Satan used this weakness and entered into Judas. Satan and Judas then betrayed Jesus. Satan manipulated the people of Jerusalem and the Romans took Jesus out of the city and crucified Him. Late in the afternoon Jesus died and His body was buried.

Where did Jesus' spirit and soul go when He died? That is a very good question. First we must remember that Jesus was not only God, He was also a complete man. Jesus taught that when a person died his spirit and soul descended into a prison commonly called the grave. The grave was divided into two distinct places. Fallen angels would escort the wicked into a place of fire and torment we call 'hell.' God's angels would escort the righteous to a part of the grave Jesus called Paradise. While hanging on the cross He told the thief next to Him that that very night they would be in Paradise. And so when Jesus breathed His last and died on the cross, His

soul and spirit were escorted by angels and descended into the grave. Jesus was locked into Paradise.

Now Satan and all of his fallen angels must have celebrated that night. Satan's plan to defeat Jesus had been flawless. Not only had they defeated Jesus the man, they had also defeated God himself! The keys to death and the grave were firmly in Satan's grasp. Many of the very beings that God had created to be His children were now locked in the grave. They would never see their Creator's face. Everyone sinned. Everyone died. God's plan had failed and Satan reveled in his victory.

Jesus' arrival in Paradise must have caused quite a stir. What do you think He did while in the grave? The Bible tells us that Jesus preached to those who were captive. Perhaps Jesus was able to preach to all of those in the grave. All the prophets of the Old Testament stood and listened as Jesus began in Genesis and walked them through the prophecies about himself. He explained to them that the blood of an animal sacrifice could never pay the price for a human's sin. Indeed, the soul that sins shall die. And although they were all loved by God, His law demanded that the price of sin should be paid—human blood for human sin. But since every man was guilty of sin, their blood could not pay the price for their own atonement. Their deaths were the payment. They could never be free of the grave, for if that would happen, there would no longer be a payment. They were all still guilty of sin with its penalty, death. God is the judge. He is fair and righteous and will never break His own laws. And since mankind could never pay for their own sins, God, the merciful judge and loving Father, sent Jesus, the sinless one, to die and shed His blood to pay the price for their sins.

Perhaps Jesus gave the equivalent of an altar call and asked who there would accept Him and His blood as the payment for their sins. We can be sure that if He did do this, that everyone present in Paradise bowed before Him and received His love and forgiveness. Then He announced, "Let's go home. Our Father is waiting for us." Everyone looked about in shock. What did Jesus mean? People did not just leave the grave. It was a prison and Satan held the keys. Can you imagine what it must have been like—Jesus walking towards the gates with all the righteous of Paradise following Him? As he approached the gates, perhaps there was a tremendous earthquake. The gates began to shake violently. Then suddenly the hinges became loose and the gates burst open. If this were a modern day story there would be red lights flashing and sirens and alarms going off. Fallen angels would come rushing to the gates to stop the prison break. Satan himself would stand at the gates trying to force everyone back.

"Stop!" Satan might have demanded of Jesus. "You must remain in the grave. The soul that sins shall die."

"Satan!" Jesus answered with a commanding voice. "You have quoted the Bible correctly, but you have made one significant mistake."

"A mistake?" Satan said, pausing to think for a moment. "I don't think so. If I must obey God's laws, then you all must obey them as well. All of you, back into the grave," Satan ordered.

"Satan, again I say to you, you have made a mistake. Indeed the soul that sins shall die. Tell me Satan, what was the sin that I committed that gave you the right to murder me and lock me in this grave?"

Suddenly Satan became very quiet. No matter how long or hard he might think he would never find a single instance where Jesus had sinned. And without sin, Jesus was an innocent man. Satan had no right or authority over Him. Then God, the righteous and fair judge, spoke in a voice that rumbled throughout all of creation. "Satan! You have broken the law for it is written, 'You shall not murder!' Every human who has ever lived was under the sentence of death. But my Son, Jesus, has never sinned. When you entered into Judas and betrayed Jesus to His death you committed murder. Therefore I condemn you. Your power and authority is stripped from you."

And in that moment Satan realized that all of his plans had merely led him into a trap. Jesus stepped forward and Satan fell to his knees as Jesus snatched the keys of death and the grave from him. Then all of those in Paradise followed Jesus up and out of the grave. God's children, those whom God had loved so much that He had given His Son Jesus to die for them, were now free from the grave. Their spirits and souls ascended up into heaven into the presence of God. For indeed it can be interpreted from the Bible, that when Jesus ascended from the grave, He led out those who had been captives in Paradise.

This lesson is **important** because it offers an explanation of what may have happened when Jesus, according to scripture, preached to the spirits of the righteous dead in the grave and then led them from Paradise into heaven.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that the trap Satan set for Jesus caused his own defeat and condemnation by God. Satan lost his authority over death and the grave, when he had Jesus, the sinless Son of God, killed by the Romans.

Let's **review** what you learned in this lesson.

1. Where did Jesus' spirit and soul go when He died? [Pause 5 seconds]
 - A. If you said that Jesus descended into the grave, into Paradise, you are correct.
2. What did Jesus do while He was in Paradise? [Pause]
 - A. If you said Jesus preached to the spirits in prison, then you answered correctly.
3. Why was Satan found guilty and condemned by God? [Pause]
 - A. If you said that Satan had murdered Jesus, who was innocent of all sin, you are right.

Your **assignment** is to review the entire story from the creation to Christ's resurrection. Practice telling the story until you know it completely and can share it with others.

With this lesson we see the culmination of the redemption of God's children through the death of Jesus. God accomplished three great tasks with this one event. First, the demand for a blood sacrifice to cover the sins of God's children was met. Secondly, because Satan committed a crime, his power and authority throughout the universe was broken. Finally, God's children in

Paradise, whom He dearly loved and who had been in captivity for millennia, were set free and ushered into His presence.