

## Lesson 4: Satan lies on earth

### Memory Verse:

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44)

Jesus said the words recorded above to the Jews. He said them to the chosen people of God. He accused the members of God's church on earth of being children of Satan. Would he have said this unless it was true?

So when Satan came to earth and tried to convince Adam and Eve to disobey God do you think he told the truth? Of course not! And we can get a better idea of the lies Satan told in heaven by looking at the lies he told Adam and Eve when he tempted them into sin. We can read about that in Genesis 3.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat fruit from any tree in the garden?'"

The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:1-5)

This is certainly a very condensed account of the conversation. But even this much shows us how slyly Satan crafted his lies to make his ideas sound reasonable. What insinuation do you hear in Satan's first words, "Did God really say...?" He's hinting already that God didn't treat them well without having a selfish motive. "Maybe God doesn't really have your best interests at heart," he seems to suggest.

Eve quickly came to God's defense. "No, God only said we couldn't eat from this one tree." But that gave Satan the opportunity he wanted. He would take the only restriction God had placed on Adam and Eve and make it sound like God was being selfish. So he whipped out the biggest lie of them all. "You will not surely die."

To understand what a monstrous lie this was we need to understand what God's law is like. We're so used to laws as humans make them we're tempted to believe God's law is like human law. But in several key passages the Bible calls on us to worship the creator. God invented life, God created his universe to work in a certain way. His law is simply the principles around which life operates.

Let's take an obvious example of creation law; the law of gravity. Life wouldn't be possible without gravity, for the planets wouldn't hold atmospheres. Without gravity the birds wouldn't be able to fly. As long as we relate properly to gravity it helps us. But suppose I go to a tall building a jump off the side. Would I violate the law of gravity? Not really, because it would make me fall. But I wouldn't be in harmony with the law either. I would have turned it into an enemy because of what would happen to me when I got to the bottom.

Would it be appropriate to punish me because I lived out of harmony with God's law of gravity? Actually, it wouldn't be necessary because the very act of living outside of God's design law would

bring a natural result. Sin is like that. Examine these verses:

Therefore as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in that way death came to all men, because all sinned.... (Romans 5:12)

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Romans 6:23

Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death. James 1:15

In all of those verses death comes from sin. It is the natural result of living outside God's design for life. So when God told the first humans not to eat from the tree he didn't say, "Do what I tell you or else...." He said, "If you want to live then don't do something that would cause you to die."

And what did Satan say? "You will not surely die." The problem isn't sin, he's suggesting. The problem is God. He would kill you for disobeying him. If we can just fix God sin won't be a problem. And Satan has a version of that lie for our day.

Many Christians believe that God poured out his wrath against sin and sinners on Jesus. Since Jesus took the punishment for our sin God's "justice" is satisfied and we can claim Jesus' sacrifice and thus not have to die. The problem is that this is an attempt to fix God. If God wouldn't be so angry at sinners that he has to kill them, then sinners can live with God without fixing their sin problems.

Let's suppose someone you know had cancer. Suppose they went to the doctor to get treatment. But they brought with them their healthy older brother and told the doctor, "Please examine my older brother. Whatever you find in him, put it down in my record." Let's further suppose that this someone found a doctor willing to go along with this scheme. Would the presence of the older brother's data in the patient's record stop the cancer from destroying the patient? The very idea is ridiculous!

The problem of the human race is sin. It's been that way since Adam and Eve ate the fruit. If the sin problem isn't fixed it will lead to our death. Sin IS the problem, not God. God is the great physician who wants to heal us from the disease of sin so we can have eternal life. We don't need to fix God, we need to fix ourselves. We need Jesus to come do for us what God told Joseph he would do for us.

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

Possible thought papers:

1. Suppose someone lied to you about a friend and said that friend had done something cruel to you. Remember that the accusation is a lie. What would happen if you believed that lie?
2. Matthew 1:21 says Jesus would save his people FROM their sins. How would the message change if it said "in" their sins? How about, "from the punishment for their sins?"
3. In Revelation 9:11 Satan, the "angel of the Abyss," is called "Abaddon" and "Apollyon." Both words mean destroyer. How would it change someone to worship the destroyer instead of the creator?