

THE ORIGIN AND END OF SIN

We cannot consider Christ and the gospel without also considering "sin." Christ came to this earth because of sin, and the "gospel" is the good news for the sinner of salvation from sin through a belief in and acceptance of Christ.

In our last lesson we briefly concluded with some verses from Revelation 20. There the Bible says that all sin will finally end in a lake of fire. But what about the beginning of sin? We have studied about Adam and Eve and their sinning in Genesis 3. Was that the beginning? Who was there, or what force was there, to tempt them at that tree? With God there in the garden, what could be strong enough to lead them away from Him?

To discover the real originator of sin, his power, his deceptiveness, leads us to see clearly why our relation to Christ is so vital. When we see the supernatural character of the one who originated sin, we will then realize more fully the battle we all face, and the wonderful victory we can have through Christ.

1. The Bible tells us that a being called "Satan" was the originator of sin. What can we learn about him and the beginning of "sin" in this passage of scripture--Revelation 12:7-9? (See also 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6.)

2. For a long time, many have asked a puzzling question: If a holy God created an angel who was later found to be defective, wouldn't God then be responsible for sin? The fact is that God created all angels good and perfect. Not one had a flaw. The fact that a good angel went bad is at best, inexplicable. We must leave it that way. But we do know that sin began, in heaven, when a perfect angel went wrong.

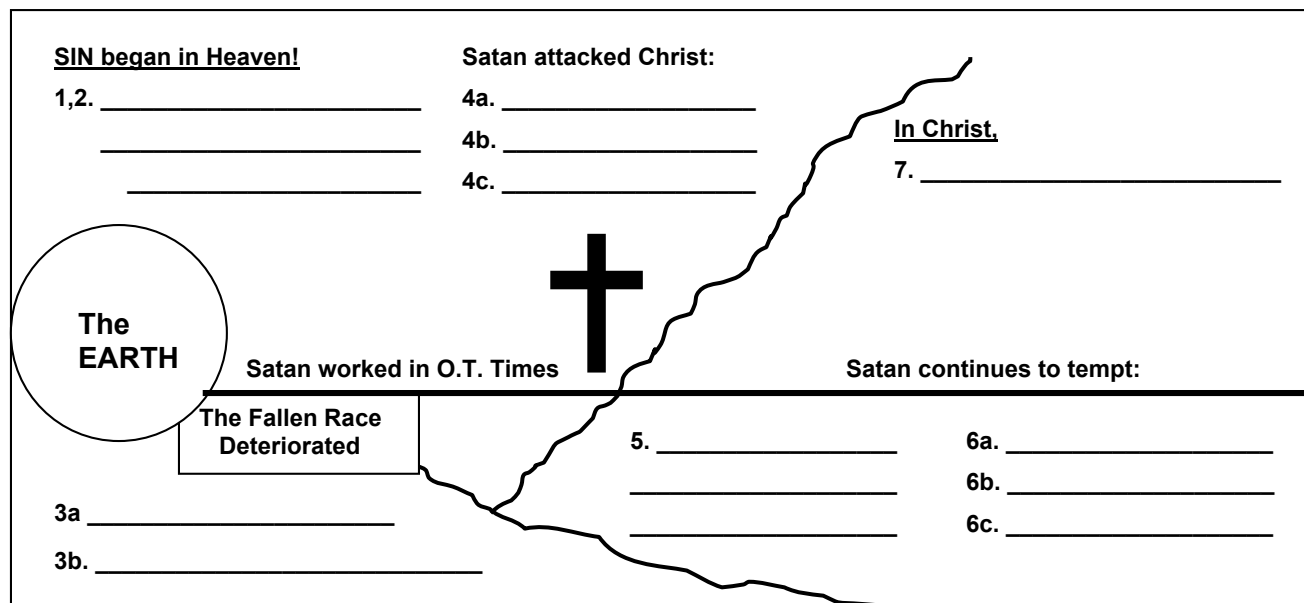
- (a) Study Ezekiel 28:11-17. This lamentation on the king of Tyrus (verse 12) is really a revelation of the power behind the king, or the power that worked through the king. What are some of the points in this passage that clearly describe a power far greater than any earthly king?

- (b) Study also Isaiah 14:12-14. It is a very similar passage, describing the power behind the king of Babylon (verse 4). It tells us of Lucifer, the shining one, who later became Satan, the accuser, the devil, the dragon, the serpent. Verse 14b helps us see a little of what happened. He fell, he spread his discontent among many of the angels, many good angels became evil angels, they were all cast out of heaven, Adam and Eve were led into sin, and he proclaimed himself "prince" of this world (John 12:31; 14:30).

3. Cast to this earth, Satan immediately set out to seek those whom he might devour (1 Peter 5:8). What do these sample passages teach us about his success during the years of the Old Testament?

- (a) Genesis 3:1-6 _____
 - (b) Romans 5:12 _____

4. When Christ came to this earth to save sinners, the devil immediately attacked Him also. He sought to destroy Him when He was born (Matthew 2:1-16). His "great temptation" of Christ marked the beginning of Christ's ministry. How, in what three areas, did the devil tempt Christ in Matthew 4:1-11?
- (a) _____ (b) _____ (c) _____
5. The truth is that the devil was on Christ's trail all through His earthly life. But Christ never sinned (Isaiah 53:9; 2 Corinthians 5:21). What effect did the death of Christ have on the future of the devil, in Hebrews 2:14?
- _____
6. Satan will continue his attack on all mankind until Jesus comes the second time. He tempts you and me, as he has tempted every person since Adam and Eve. He will work in the same areas as he did with Christ. (See question 4.) What are some of the other ways he seeks to tempt and mislead us?)
- (a) Zechariah 3:1 _____
- (b) James 1:13,14 _____
- (c) Matthew 24:23,24 _____
7. Satan tempts, misleads, deceives in many ways. That is his work. But God's work is to help us be **overcomers, victors, saints** for His kingdom. 1 Corinthians 10:13, James 4:7, 1 John 5:4 give us great assurance that we can overcome temptation as we depend on Christ.



WHO IS "MICHAEL?"

Meaning of the original words: In the Old Testament Hebrew, the name, Mika'el (Mik-ah-el) means, "Who is like God?" The New Testament Greek word, Michael, is derived from the Old Testament word.

Various Bible Occurrences of the Name:1. The archangel (Jude 9).

Michael as a heavenly being appears only in apocalyptic passages such as Dan. 10:13,21; Dan. 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7. ("Apocalyptic" refers to books regarded as prophetic, and using symbols, and looking to the final destruction of evil and the triumph of good.) In Dan. 10:13, Michael is described as one of the chief princes who had come to the help of an angel in his contest with the prince of the kingdom of Persia. In Dan. 10:21, he is described as "your prince," and in Dan. 12:1 as the "great prince" who is the protector and deliverer of Daniel's people. In Rev. 12:7, he is mentioned as having fought in heaven with the dragon, or Satan, and his angels, a fight that ended in victory for Michael and the expulsion of Satan and his angels from heaven.

Jude 9 tells of a contest between Michael and the devil for the body of Moses. Jewish literature describes Michael as the highest of the angels, the true representative of God and identifies him with the "angel of Yahweh," a term frequently mentioned in the Old Testament as a divine being. Many Bible scholars identify Michael with Christ. The context of Rev. 12:7, including verses 2,4,5,10, all of which depict Christ as the child of the woman, would lead to the conclusion that Michael in verse 7 would refer to Christ as well. In Jude 9, Michael is said to be the archangel.

In 1 Thess. 4:16, the voice of the archangel is associated with the resurrection of the saints at the coming of Christ. Christ declared that the dead would come forth from their graves when they hear the voice of the Son of Man (John 5:28).

The name, "Michael," is used only in instances where Christ is in direct conflict with Satan. Thus it seems to be used as the name of One who is like God, or Christ, where the "great controversy" between Christ and Satan is the subject. Since the rebellion in heaven, and continued on earth, is Satan's attempt to install himself on the throne of God, and "be like the Most High" (Isa. 14:14), the name Michael is a most fitting name for Him who has undertaken to vindicate the character of God and disprove Satan's claims.

2. Num. 13:13: Here Michael was the name of a man whose son Sethur was the spy representing the tribe of Ashur.

3 and 4. Two Gadites, one the descendant of the other. 1 Chron. 5: 11,13,14.

5. 1 Chron. 6:40; compare 39,43. A Gershonite Levite, and ancestor of Asaph.

6. 1 Chron. 7:3. Michael here is a "chief man" of the tribe of Issachar.

7. 1 Chron. 8:1,16. A descendant of Benjamin.

8. 1 Chron. 12:20. A warrior from the tribe of Manassah.

9. 1 Chron. 27:18. A man whose son Omri was David's chief officer over the territory of Issachar.
10. 2 Chron. 21:2. A son of King Jehoshaphat of Judah.
11. Ezra 8:8. A man of the family of Shephatiah.