

## Aim of lesson

To enable the young people to understand the Bible background of these words.

## Bible background

Many passages listed in the students' notes.

## Preparation required

You may have a copy of 'The Devil - The Great Deceiver' by brother Peter Watkins, or 'Christadelphians - What they Believe and Preach' by brother Harry Tennant, in which chapters 15 and 16 deal with this subject. Some preparatory reading will be helpful, especially if you intend to teach the next four lessons.

## Suggested outline of lesson

### The source of sin

Ask the students to look up the passages in their notes and decide what the Bible says about where sin comes from. It is significant that the Bible never encourages us to lay the blame for sin elsewhere.

Mark 7:20-23 'from within, out of the heart ...'

James 1:14 'by his own evil desire'

Romans 7:18-21 'sin living in me'

Jeremiah 17:9 'The heart is deceitful'

### The source of evil

The word 'evil' is used to include both sin and its effects; so it includes those things that 'go wrong' in life that are not directly the result of human wrongdoing: earthquakes, calamities, etc. It also includes occasions, as in the life of Job, where God brings about calamity for the ultimate benefit of the one who is suffering and of those who observe the troubles. Once again get the students to use the references in the students' notes.

Genesis 6:5 Before the flood, men's hearts were evil

Genesis 37:20 'a ferocious animal' (AV evil beast), which is of itself neither good nor bad.

Isaiah 45:5-7 God makes peace, and creates evil (AV): I the LORD do all these

Job 2:7-10 Job had received both good and evil from God.

### A Study of the words "Satan" and "Devil".

Although the Bible seems quite clear that sins originate inside us, we do have to recognise that the words Devil, Satan and Lucifer (AV) do occur in Scripture and therefore we can understand how the belief arose in an evil being going around causing evil and making us sin. To try to understand these problem passages we should know what they mean.

### Satan in the Old Testament

"Satan" is an ordinary Hebrew word for an enemy, opponent, adversary. It is not used to mean 'the great enemy of mankind' in the Old Testament, but is used both as a verb and a noun, singular and plural, for all kinds of enemies. The word 'Devil' does not appear in the Old Testament at all, and the Jews have never believed in a supernatural Satan. The passages in the book of Job referring to 'Satan' were similarly understood by them to refer to someone who put forward an opposing view, whether he be human or angelic. The examples of the use of the word given in the students' notes are:

Numbers 22:22 The angel who opposed Balaam

1 Kings 5:4 David had no adversaries

1 Kings 11:25 Rezon the son of Eliadah opposed Solomon

2 Samuel 24:1            God incites David to number Israel; 1 Chronicles 21:2 says it was Satan.

## **The Devil in the Old Testament**

The word 'devil' does not occur at all in the NIV translation of the Old Testament, and only four times in the AV (Leviticus 17:7, Deuteronomy 32:17, 2 Chronicles 11:15, and Psalm 106:37). On each occasion it refers to pagan idols. The Hebrew word is sa'ir, from which our word satyr comes. In fact it is translated satyr in Isaiah 34:14 ('wild goats' in the NIV). In general the word means 'goat' or 'goat-like'. Note the letter in the students' notes for the next lesson.

## **Satan in the New Testament**

So in the Old Testament Satan is just an adversary. In the New, however, it has a more focused meaning, always referring to people or things that are opposed to God. In the following passages the Hebrew word is carried forward into Greek in just the same way as it has been into English.

Mark 8:33                Simon Peter, by his words, was opposing the will of God

Luke 13:11-16          A crippled woman, 'whom Satan had bound'

1 Thessalonians 2:18    By some means the work of God through Paul was prevented.

1 Timothy 5:15          False teachers in the church.

Acts 5:3                 Satan tempted Ananias and Sapphira.

Matthew 4:1-10         Christ refers to the tempter - the devil - as Satan.. From this, and other passages, we learn that the two words in the New Testament are referring to the same thing.

The reference in Luke is informative because it is clear from it that 'Satan' includes the effect of sin as well as the sin itself - not that the woman was especially sinful, but her affliction was part of the curse for sin that falls upon us all. So Satan represents everything in human nature and in its consequences that is opposed to God.

## **The Devil in the New Testament**

John 6:70                Judas Iscariot is described as 'a devil'.

Ephesians 6:11          Christians need to stand against the wiles of the devil.

James 4:7                The devil must be resisted.

1 Peter 5:8              The devil is looking for people to devour.

Compare this passage with Genesis 4:7 'sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it', to make the points that 'sin' is personified in the same way as the 'devil' is, and the same metaphor is used of both (meaning, of course, the same thing).

## **Why does Scripture speak of our human nature in the way it does?**

Our battle with our human nature is sometimes described as a battle between two parts of ourselves to help us understand how we should really fight to become Christ-like. In a way it is a parable to make it easier to understand. When the darker side of our nature is personified it seems as though it is another person who is being spoken of.

## **Thinking about Hebrews 2:14**

In his death, Christ destroyed his own humanity: the devil within, and because of this triumph he also freed himself from death. 'For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him'. (Romans 6:9). There was no sense in which anyone or anything outside himself was destroyed.

In doing so, however, he benefited us because when by faith and baptism we associate ourselves with his death, and so long as we remain firm in our faith and obedience, our sinful human nature has no power to condemn us to death.

## **Relevance to our lives**

The consequences of wrong doctrine. Some people quite seriously believe in a supernatural being who is the source of evil. But some of the consequences are:-

- Responsibility for sin is not always clearly put where it belongs - with ourselves

- The meaning of Christ's sacrifice changes - Hebrews 2:14
- Troubles that come to us may not be seen as the chastening of a loving Father - Hebrews 12:6-11
- Belief in a personal Devil often accompanies belief in a personal 'Holy Spirit'; both may be personalised
- A more superstitious view of life, and of the Bible. What is more reasonable than to say that human nature is the source of mankind's problems!

## **Prayer**

Matthew 6:13: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

## **Other suggestions for activities**

Think about this analogy:

'I have two dogs fighting inside me: a black dog and a white dog. When the white dog wins I do what is right; when the black dog wins I do what is wrong.'

'Which one usually wins?'

'The one I feed the most'

Get the young people to think what the two dogs eat, and how they can feed the white dog.