

Satan in the Early Church

Lesson 13: Acts 5:1-11; 16:16-34; 19:11-20

August 30, 2020

Overview of study

1. Lucifer Cast Out
2. The Serpent in Paradise
3. Consider Job!
4. Days of Affliction and Homelessness
5. Has YHWH Determined to Destroy His People?
6. YHWH is Good to Those Who Wait for Him
7. YHWH Will Punish Iniquity
8. Remember Us, O YHWH

Overview of study

9. The Temptation of Jesus

10. The Enemy and the Kingdom

11. Demons Cast Out

12. The Father of Lies

13. Satan in the Early Church

Acts 5:1-6

¹But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, ²and kept back *some* of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. ³But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your **heart** to **lie** to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *some* of the price of the land? ⁴While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your **heart**? You have not **lied** to men but to God." ⁵And as he **heard** these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who **heard** of it. ⁶The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.

- It was fine to keep money back, but not to lie
- Lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God
- Judgment on others needs to lead us to a greater fear of God

Acts 5:7-11

⁷Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price." ⁹Then Peter *said* to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have **buried** your husband are at the door, and they will **carry** you out *as well*." ¹⁰And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they **carried** her out and **buried** her beside her husband. ¹¹And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.

- It is bad enough to sin ourselves, but even worse to involve others
- The sin was testing the Lord
- Their punishment was for the benefit of the church

What we learn about Satan

- Satan wants us to be discontent
- Satan wants us to seek to please ourselves
- Satan filled their hearts and they lied to God
- What Satan had done to damage the church God used to help it

Acts 16:16-18

¹⁶It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling. ¹⁷Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, "These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation." ¹⁸She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to **come out** of her!" And it **came out** at that very moment.

- Should we trust an enemy who chooses to tell the truth?
- Jesus wouldn't let the demons tell who He was
- Paul didn't command the spirit to come out in his own name

Acts 16:19-21

¹⁹But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities, ²⁰and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, “These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, ²¹and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans.”

- The masters only cared about their profit, not the spiritual good of their slave
- They didn't tell the magistrates the real issue

Acts 16:22-24

²²The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order *them* to be beaten with rods.

²³When they had struck them with many blows, they **threw** them into **prison**, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; ²⁴and he, having received such a command, **threw** them into the inner **prison** and fastened their feet in the stocks.

- It appears that Paul and Silas were not allowed to defend themselves
- They were not released after being beaten
- They were being treated as dangerous individuals

Acts 16:25-30

²⁵But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; ²⁶and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were **opened** and everyone's chains were unfastened. ²⁷When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors **opened**, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!" ²⁹And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, ³⁰and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

- Suffering brought praise
- The other prisoners paid attention
- It is interesting that the other prisoners did not flee
- Had the jailer been listening too?
- Salvation happens to us

Acts 16:31-34

³¹They said, “**Believe** in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” ³²And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. ³³And he took them that *very* hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his *household*.

³⁴And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having **believed** in God with his whole household.

- Note the connection between salvation and faith
- They didn't just tell him to believe, but told him what was to be believed
- We can see the change in the jailer

What we learn about Satan

- Satan doesn't like to lose those he controls
- If he can exploit it, Satan will even acknowledge God
- Satan makes people believe that the material is more important than the spiritual
- Satan attempts to bring harm after he is defeated

Acts 19:11-16

¹¹God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, ¹²so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the **evil spirits** went out. ¹³But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the **evil spirits** the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, "I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches." ¹⁴Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. ¹⁵And the **evil spirit** answered and said to them, "I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" ¹⁶And the man, in whom was the **evil spirit**, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

- Jesus healed from a distance
- Satan and those who follow him seek to imitate and pervert what God is doing
- This evil spirit was able to recognize individuals

Acts 19:17-20

¹⁷This became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified.

¹⁸Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices. ¹⁹And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and *began* burning them in the sight of everyone; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. ²⁰So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.

- Again, fear follows judgment, but also glory to the Lord
- Christians need to completely renounce old, sinful ways
- The word of the Lord will prevail

What we learn about Satan

- Satan is envious of God and wants the honor that is rightly due only to the Lord
- Evil spirits are aware of individual people
- The work of Satan is very different from the work of the Lord

Summary

- Satan wants us to be displeasing to, and be displeased with God
- Satan is subtle and will even acknowledge God if it suits his purposes
- Satan wants us to focus on the physical more than the spiritual
- 1 John 4:4 “You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”