

Study 3 - DOMINION RELINQUISHED AND REGAINED!

“For this purpose, the son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” (1 John 3:8)

Introduction

To understand why God gave Adam and Eve dominion power over Satan at the beginning of creation, and why they fell from this dominion, we must look at Satan’s background and motivations. He had been created by God as an angel called Lucifer, or “light”. However, he rebelled against God and was expelled from heaven, along with a third of the angels who had joined him. Some theologians and Bible scholars have concluded that Satan’s rebellion and expulsion from heaven took place between the first two verses of Genesis 1 – between *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (verse 1) and “The earth was without form, and void, and darkness was the face of the deep” (verse 2)*. It is from this viewpoint that we will examine humanity’s dominion mandate.

Satan had already been expelled from heaven when Adam and Eve were created, and his kingdom of darkness and destruction was in operation. The devil had seized the territory of earth, and God allowed him to do this – for His own purposes. It is essential to recognise that Satan is never stronger than God. He is a created being, and he was thrown out of heaven after he rebelled. God always has total control over everything He creates.

Genesis 1:2 says that *“darkness was on the face of the deep,”* meaning that the earth was in chaos and darkness because Satan had seized it; the presence of his kingdom always results in such disorder and destruction. But Genesis 1:2 also says. *“And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”* Even in the midst of the darkness, God’s power to create was present, because the territory of earth did not belong to Satan. He was a usurper. Under the influence of God’s Spirit, the earth received light, order, and life. God made human beings and gave them dominion not only over the natural world and everything in it, but also over the enemy, who was still present on the earth. They were to subdue him and his kingdom – to bring him under control by spiritual force.

Yet the devil desired to shroud the earth in darkness once again. To do this, he had to recover his rule by taking the territory away from man, since God had granted man authority over it. Satan’s plan was to make human beings fall from the glory of God by means of the earth, seeking to devour God’s supreme creation. (See 1 Peter 5:8 NIV.) In a tragic decision, human being chose not to use their authority over the enemy, and this is the origin of mankind’s myriad problems. Yet God, in His sovereignty, would fulfill His purposes even in the midst of Satan’s plan of destruction.

Study Questions

Part I: How Mankind Fell from Dominion

1. (a) Amid the other trees in the garden of Eden, what two special trees had God placed there? (Genesis 2:9b)

(b) What command did God give Adam (and, through him to Eve) about the trees in the garden? (Verse 16-17)

2. What did Satan, in the form of a snake, falsely insinuate that God had said? (Genesis 3:1b NIV)

3. (a) What lie did Satan tell Eve in regard to eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? (Genesis 3:4)

(b) What did Satan say would happen to Eve if she ate the fruit? (Genesis 3:5b)

4. (a) How did both Adam and Eve respond to the serpent’s suggestion? (Genesis 3:6b)

(b) Why was Adam held more responsible than Eve for succumbing to Satan’s temptation and sinning against God? Complete the following:

1 Timothy 2:14: “Adam was _____, but the woman _____, fell into transgression.”

5. (a) What are some of the consequences for the earth and for Adam (and all the human beings to come) of Adam’s sinning knowingly? (Genesis 3:17b-19)

(b) What are the “wages of sin”? (Romans 6:23a)

A person’s disobedience is the devil’s legal authorization to attack him.

REFLECTION ON SURRENDERED DOMINION

When Adam disobeyed God, Satan made himself the earth’s legitimate governor – legitimate not because God gave him this authority but because Adam sinned, thereby surrendering his authority to the kingdom of darkness. Consequently, human beings lost their dominion and their life in the presence of God. What is more, they lost the territory God had given to them, and they entered into Satan’s bondage. In essence, Adam gave the enemy the keys to his life, and that is how Satan took over the rulership of the earth.

6. How should Adam have responded to Satan’s temptation, as Jesus responded to Satan’s temptation given through Peter? (Matthew 16:23)

Part II: The Four Stages of Adam’s Fall

▽ **Stage #1: Adam Was Aware of His Coexistence with Evil**

7. Which tree in the garden of Eden indicated the existence of evil? (Genesis 2:9)

Coexisting with evil isn’t the same thing as tolerating it.

▽ **Stage #2: Adam Began to Tolerate Evil**

8. (a) Recall in what manner Adam and Eve had been created. (Genesis 1:26-27a)

(b) What idea from Satan did Adam and Eve entertain that led to their downfall? (Genesis 3:5)

9. In a comparable example of spiritual from the New Testament, for what reason did Jesus admonish the church at Thyatira? (Revelation 2:20 NIV)
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The evil you tolerate will become the evil that destroys you.

▽ **Stage #3: Adam Lost the Fear, or Reverence, of the Lord**

10. (a) When a person has the fear of the Lord, what will he hate? (Proverbs 8:13a)
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(b) What are some examples of this hated thing? (Verse 13b)

KEY DEFINITION: To “fear the Lord” is to reverence, honour, and respect Him. It means to be in awe of Him. Thus, it guards us against yielding to evil. When Adam became indifferent to the dangers of evil, he soon entered a relationship with it. If we lose our reverence for the Lord, evil will not be held back. God’s Word tells us that if we fear the Lord, we will hate evil – we will not allow it to influence us.

Losing the fear of the Lord leads to a loss of sensitivity to evil; we no longer see its dangers and consequences, and we compromise the truth.

▽ **Stage #4: Adam Finally Sinned**

11. (a) What leads us to succumb to temptation? (James 1:14b)
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(b) When an evil desire is conceived, what does it give birth to? (James 1:15a)

(c) When sin is full-grown, what does it bring forth? (Verse 15b)

REFLECTION ON ADAM’S DESCENT INTO SIN

Adam went from coexisting with evil to tolerating it to losing the fear of the Lord to falling from God’s glory into the curse of sin. Today, the same sad descent and subsequent surrender to temptation takes place in the lives of millions of people. The strategy of the deceiver is to wear us out mentally, emotionally, and physically until we finally give in and fall. Satan and his demons observe us and know our weaknesses. They wait for the opportune moment to tempt us in our weakest area, often in deceit, until we lower our guards and submit. Satan discussed God’s commandments with Adam and Eve in a way that was intended to confuse them and weaken their spiritual resistance. The devil will not stop trying until he sees you fall down or recognizes that you have the ability to resist him, so do not argue with him or entertain his ungodly suggestions. You must rebuke him – cast him out – immediately! Regardless of how logical or good those ungodly thoughts or arguments might seem as you try to rationalise them, remember that Satan’s goal is always to destroy you.

Conclusion

Because of humanity’s fall from dominion and broken relationship with God, people’s lives have become dominated by many harmful things, such as drugs, bad habits, a lust for money, an unhealthy desire for fame, and the torment of demons. Human beings are mainly dominated by their own fleshly desires. They went from being God’s governors on earth to being ruled, manipulated, and controlled by the enemy of their souls. Yet, ever since Jesus’ resurrection, Satan has been functioning as an illegal ruler on earth. More than that, his power has been defeated. He no longer has authority over us, unless, like Adam, we

grant it to him. In each temptation and circumstance, we face, we face, we have a choice of defeating the enemy or giving in to him. When we give to him, we allow him to gain a foothold in our lives.

Next week, we will examine the powerful work Jesus accomplished for us.

Prayer Activation

Heavenly Father, release over us the spirit of dominion that Jesus regained for humanity in order to bless us and to give us the power to spread Your Kingdom throughout the world, pushing back the kingdom of darkness. We wholeheartedly ask that Your kingdom would begin to reign in our lives right now. May we rule the entire “territory” of dominion that You have given us, beginning with our own spirit, soul and body. Amen!