

Study 4 - DOMINION RELINQUISHED AND REGAINED II

“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 fulfil His purposes even in the midst of Satan’s plan of destruction.

Study Questions

... Continued from last week

Part II: The Four Stages of Adam’s Fall

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

1. Which tree in the garden of Eden indicated the existence of evil? (Genesis 2:9)
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Coexisting with evil isn’t the same thing as tolerating it.

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

2. (a) Recall in what manner Adam and Eve had been created. (Genesis 1:26-27a)
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(b) What idea from Satan did Adam and Eve entertain that led to their downfall? (Genesis 3:5)

3. In a comparable example of spiritual from the New Testament, for what reason did Jesus admonish the church at Thyatira? (Revelation 2:20 NIV)

The evil you tolerate will become the evil that destroys you.

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

4. (a) When a person has the fear of the Lord, what will he hate? (Proverbs 8:13a)

(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**

5. (a) What leads us to succumb to temptation? (James 1:14b)

(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.

Part III: The Catastrophic Result of Adam’s Sin

6. (a) What designations did Jesus, and the apostle Paul use for Satan, reflecting his role as usurper of Adam’s earthly dominion? (John 12:31b; 2 Corinthians 4:4a KJV)

(b) List some of Satan's qualities and motivations. (John 8:44b; Revelations 20:10a; John 10:10a)

7. (a) After Adam and Eve sinned, human nature altered – it became “carnal” rather than being in alignment with God's Spirit. How is the “carnal mind” described? (Romans 8:7a)

(b) What is the carnal mind not subject to? Complete the following:

Romans 8:7b: “...it is not subject to _____, nor indeed can be.”

(c) What statement did Paul make about the universality of humanity's fallen state? (Romans 3:23)

(d) List some of the “works” of humanity's fallen nature. (Galatians 5:19-21a)

(e) What will not be inherited by those who practice the works of the fallen nature? (Verse 21b)

The devil's plan was to contain Adam and Eve in sin, keeping them from expanding God's glory throughout the earth. He tries the same thing with us today.

Part IV: Jesus Restored Humanity to Dominion

By God's decree, dominion over the earth had been given to human beings. This is why Satan had to defeat Adam, a man in order to rule the world. It is also why Jesus had to come to earth as a Man to destroy the works of the devil and conquer him forever. Jesus defeated Satan to demonstrate that it is possible for a human being to overcome temptation through the power of the Holy Spirit. Through the Spirit, Jesus accomplished what Adam had failed to do.

8. For what purpose did Jesus, the Son of God, come to earth as a Man? (1 John 3:8b)

9. (a) What method did Jesus consistently use to resist the devil's temptations, in contrast to Adam's response. Which was to tolerate, and later succumb to, temptation? (Luke 4:4, 8, 12)

(b) How did the devil react when Jesus maintained His authority over him in each temptation? (Verse 13)

(c) After His victory over Satan's temptations in the desert, in what manner did Jesus' return to begin His mission of proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom? (Verse 14a)

10. (a) After Jesus' resurrection from the dead, what statement did He make, showing that He had won back dominion of the earth from Satan? (Matthew 28:18b)

(b) What did Jesus say to explain the authority He would grant believers? (Matthew 16:19)

(c) What did Jesus come to earth to bestow on us? (John 10:10b)

Ruling in the spirit realm start with ruling our own spirit.

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.

What Jesus accomplished for us is powerful: it enables us to defeat Satan in the midst of our difficult circumstances in a fallen world. If we know our identity in Christ and are willing to cast Satan out of our "Eden", the enemy cannot defeat us. We must not tolerate sickness, sadness, depression, poverty, fear, or any other evil strategy designed to destroy us. We must be prepared to subjugate and dominate every work of the devil. Let us live in the reality that our dominion has been regained and that God's kingdom will continue to increase for all eternity!

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!

Action Steps

- ▽ If you have allowed the devil to invade your "Eden," ask yourself some hard questions: "How did the enemy gain a foothold in my home life, finances, or business? Have I stopped tithing my income and ceased honouring God with my money?" "How did Satan afflict my body with sickness or disease? Have I tolerated a sickness or mistreated my body so that it became ill?" "How did Satan invade my church, city, or nation? In what way has my community given the enemy the legal right to afflict us?" Seek God with integrity and humility, and He will give you the answers. Then, repent and allow the blood of Jesus to cleanse you. (See 1John 1:7-9.) Recover your Eden and take back the dominion rights the enemy has stolen from you!
- ▽ What sins and wrong elements are you tolerating in your life – evil thoughts, attitudes, actions, and habits; people who are detrimental to your spiritual and emotional health; and so forth? Realize that, through them, you are giving the enemy the right to erode your fellowship with God and undermine your dominion, whether it is dominion over character, your attitudes, or your behaviour. Take back your God-given rule over addictions to alcohol, illegal drugs, or prescription pills; take authority over sickness, illicit sex, fear, depression, anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, a spirit of suicide, bickering, or gossip. Right now, renounce and rule over these things in the power of Christ. God has given you dominion over all of Satan's works and over the sinful nature.