

SIN/SALVATION

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Take a minute to pray for God to guide you as you study...

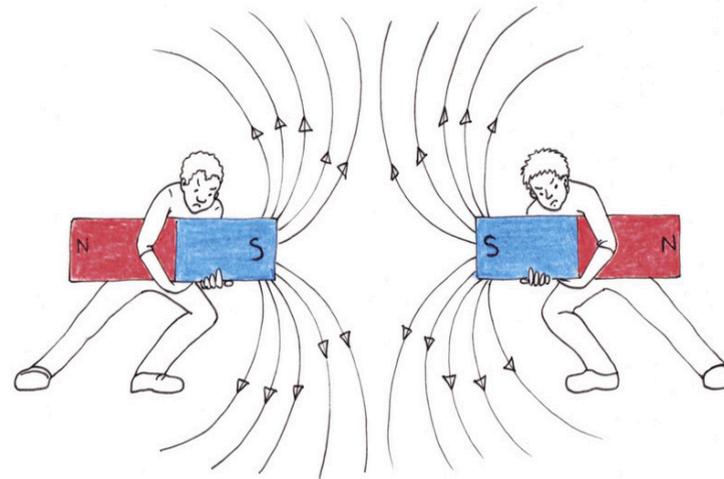
One of the biggest questions that humans ask is, “*Why do bad things happen to good people?*” Maybe you have experienced death or horrible experiences and wondered why that can happen to you. Where does pain come from? Why do people get cancer and Alzheimers? Why are there miscarriages and infant deaths? So often, God gets blamed for the awful experiences that we face, but we must see whom is really to blame... Before humans were created, there was Heaven. It was a perfect place, full of happiness and joy. The angels were singing and playing their harps as they praised God. But something happened as one of the highest angels, Lucifer, began to let his heart fill with selfishness. Here’s how Isaiah records the story.

Isaiah 14:13-14: You (Lucifer) said in your heart, “I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like _____.”

Pride filled his heart, and he wanted to be equal with God. He wanted power. He wanted to be at the top, and so he began to talk to the other angels and asked the question that we still ask today, “*Is God really fair?*” Well, the angels began to believe Lucifer’s lies about who God was, and a battle broke out. Here’s how the book of Revelation tells the story.

Revelation 12:7-9: “Then _____ broke out in heaven. Michael (Jesus) and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in _____. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole _____. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”

Sin had entered the world. Lucifer, Satan, had sinned, and sin cannot be in the presence of God, because God is the opposite of sin. Think of the same two poles of magnets. When they are brought together they push away from each other. They cannot connect or even share the same space.



Sin does the same thing as a magnet when it comes to God. Sin cannot be in the same space as God, because God is holy. Isaiah tells us what sin did to our relationship with God.

Isaiah 59:1-2: “...Your _____ have separated you from your God; your _____ have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.”

Sin is ANYTHING that separates you from God. Sin cannot be where God is, and because of Lucifer’s choice to sin, Lucifer could no longer be in Heaven.

Fast forward to the beginning of the world. God speaks the world into existence, and then, He kneels down on the ground and begins to form and mold something in the dirt. It’s a body! It’s a human body, and after He’s done making it, he bends over and breathes His breath into the nose and mouth of this body, and it comes alive! God calls the first man, Adam, but He’s not done yet. He uses one of Adam’s ribs to create a woman named Eve. They live happily in the Garden of Eden, this beautiful home that is full of happiness. There is no sin. All they know is the goodness of God. Well, God gives some special instructions to Adam and Eve. He tells them that they can eat from any plant and tree that is in the garden...except for one tree. It was the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Well, one day, Eve is by herself on a walk, and she ends up near this tree, the one God has told them not to eat from. Lucifer is there too, in the form of a snake. Eve is mesmerized, and ends up disobeying (sinning) God and eating the fruit. Adam follows her and does the same thing, and all of a sudden they feel far from God. God comes walking in the garden calling for Adam and Eve, and they HIDE from Him. That is what Sin does...it **separates** us from God.

After Adam and Eve had sinned, there was an instant awkwardness and separation that was felt. God comes walking in the Garden of Eden to be with them (remember that God is a relational God and WANTS to be WITH us). As He is coming towards them, they run and hide! They feel naked! They are ashamed of what they have done. They know they’ve disobeyed, and they are scared to admit it to God. Their sin had instantly separated them from God, and because of their sin, they could no longer live in close connection with God. The Bible says they were “banished from the garden.” Their sin-filled life could not be in the perfect presence of God.

BASIC POINT

Sin **separates** us from God, but Jesus died to **reunite** us.

Adam and Eve sinned, and we do too! In fact all of us are sinners. The Bible says,

Romans 3:23: “For _____ have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”

There is no one on earth that has not sinned. **ALL** of us are sinners, which means that none of us can be with God! That’s kind of a terrifying thought. Even worse, there is NOTHING that you can do to get over sin and get back to God. We are sinners! We are separated! In fact, it gets worse, because we are not only separated from God when we sin, but there is another penalty as well...DEATH!

Romans 6:23: “The wages of _____ is _____.”

If you have a job or have ever had a job, you get paid for doing it, right? My first job, I got paid \$7/hour, and I thought it was awesome! I got paid for what I did. I deserved my pay. Pay is another word for wages, so when the Bible says that “The WAGES (pay) of SIN is DEATH,” it means that if we sin, we deserve to die! Kind of a scary thought, but that’s how it is. When we are *separated* from God, the One that gives us life and breath, we naturally die! And because Sin separates us from God, when we sin, we are on an express train for the grave.

But there is more to this sad situation, and I’m so glad! Because God wants nothing more than to be WITH us, He made a way for us to be forgiven and come back to a close relationship with Him. It’s a pretty simple 3-point process: **confession, repentance, forgiveness.** After we sin, we start with confession. Confession is a big word for admitting that you’ve done something wrong. It means that we admit to God that we have sinned and disobeyed Him. The next step is repentance, and this is where we say, “*God, I confess that I have sinned, and I don’t ever want to do it again!*” It’s then that God does something amazing...HE FORGIVES US!

I John 1:9: “If we _____ our sins, He is faithful and just and will _____ us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Acts 3:19: “ _____, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be _____ out...”

What an unbelievable GIFT! What a simple solution to sin! Because God is a God that wants to be WITH us, He made it super simple to come back to Him when we sin and separate ourselves from Him. All we have to do is **ASK.**

Remember how the wages of sin is death? The rest of that verse changes everything, and it tells us how God wanted to bring us back into relationship with Him.

Romans 6:23: “...but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

God’s gift to us is forgiveness through Jesus. His gift to us is a way to close the gap that sin causes and to be WITH Him again.

One of my favorite parts of the Bible is in Revelation 21 where John is describing what he is seeing. He’s viewing The New Jerusalem (heaven) coming down to earth, and he mentions something that is very important. Sin is about to be fully destroyed. There will be no more death or dying or crying or pain. There will never be anything that will ever separate us from God, and John writes,

Revelation 21:3: “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live _____ them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be _____ them...”

I can’t wait for the day when we can be WITH Him forever! God is unwilling to let anything get in between Him and us, the ones He loves. In fact, He tells us this in Romans where it says:

Romans 8:38-39: “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to _____ us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

NOTHING can separate us from God! I’m so glad that God loves us enough to make sure that nothing, not even sin, could keep Him away from us.

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever felt separated and far from God?
 2. How does knowing how much God wants to be WITH YOU make you feel?
 3. What makes confessing, repenting and asking for forgiveness so hard?
 4. What do you need to repent of and ask God to forgive you?
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LESSON 3: GREAT CONTROVERSY/SIN/SALVATION

