



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

God's Plan of the Ages

"The Origin of Sin"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Heavenly Father we ask a blessing upon us again as we study Thy word. We thank Thee for the eternal character of the redemption we know through Jesus Christ our Lord and we pray that as we study in Thy word we may not only Lord, learn things that will give us an understanding of the plan of the ages but especially come to know the things that concern him who is our life and who gave himself upon the cross at Calvary that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. May this class tonight contribute to our understanding and knowledge of Thee.

And may Lord, this knowledge of Thee be not only knowledge of our heads, but penetrate into our hearts, and begat devotion to Thee and service of Thee in accordance of the truths of holy Scripture. We commit each one in this class to Thee and pray that the Holy Spirit of God may lead and direct, to the honor and glory of Christ. In whose name we ask it. Amen.

[Message] Now tonight we want to take up the subject of the origin of sin, and you remember that last time I reviewed a little, I'll try to do this each time in case we

have some who are coming in for the first time. We've been talking about the revelation of God and we have said that God can only be known through revelation. That men by seeking and searching can not find out God. That the only scientific way to know God is through revelation, for men are finite, and he is infinite. Therefore, we can not find out God, we need help and so God has revealed himself to us. He has revealed himself to us in a two volume book, nature, but in nature we only can learn God's power, and his divinity, this is insufficient for our needs, because we are not only human beings, but we are now sinners, and thus in rebellion against God, running from him.

And so God has further revealed himself in holy Scripture. This is the second volume of the two volume book of Divine Revelation. And in holy Scripture He has revealed Himself as a merciful, loving God who has provided a redemption for us through Jesus Christ. He has shown us in the word how we may have our sins forgiven, how we may learn to fellowship with God and thus know God, and fulfill the purpose planned for our lives which God has for us. Then we made the suggestion that if God has revealed himself in a purposeful way in the first volume of the book of revelation, not the scriptural book of revelation, but the book of revelation of God in nature, if he has revealed himself in a purposeful and in a designed way, we might expect the same thing to be true of the second volume of his book in holy Scripture or to put it this way, if we can see plan and purpose in nature, we should expect to find plan and purpose in the Bible which is the word of God.

And since we do see plan and purpose in nature, the seasons, for example, follow in a very purposeful way and the simplest human being knows that summer is followed by fall, and fall by winter and winter by spring and so on. Since there is plan and purpose in nature we should expect to find it in the Bible. And I refer to just one passage in Ephesians chapter 3 and verse 11 where Paul speaks of the purpose of the ages, and in this particular passage, he states, “According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” or “according to the purpose of the ages which he purposed in

Christ Jesus our Lord.” From this statement of Paul in Ephesians 3:11, “according to the purpose of the ages” now this is the way the Greek text reads, I’m just translating, you have in the English text, “according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” From this text Paul states that God has a purpose, and that this purpose concerns the ages. Now the ages are references to periods of time, in God’s dealings with man there are past ages, there is the present age, and there are ages to come. These expressions are found in the Bible, and that God has a purpose through the ages.

Now this is what we’re studying. We’re studying God’s purpose of the ages, his plan in the ages as he has revealed himself in progressive fashion through these ages, beginning with the beginnings of revelation increasing to the climax in Jesus Christ who is God’s final, ultimate, revelation to man. This is why, of course, we have no further books of the Bible being written, for God has revealed himself in his Son, Jesus Christ.

Last time, we looked at the planner himself, going back beyond chronology into eternity. And we saw from the study of a few passages of scripture that God is a Trinity, that God is one God, that there is one God who eternally subsists in a plurality of persons, three. No less, and no more. God is a Trinity. You can not have Christianity without the Trinity. This is the basic, fundamental fact in the Christian revelation, or the revelation of God, let’s put it that way. God is a Trinity.

Then we began to consider God’s revelation of himself in time by looking at the creation of angelic beings. We saw that angels were created before the material universe, because Job tells us in Chapter 38 in verse 7 that when God laid the foundations of the earth, the morning stars, the angels, were there, and shouted together for joy. We saw that angels were spiritual beings; in fact, the Bible speaks of them as spirits. So we should not expect to see angels walking around in human bodies. Now of course, we do have in the Old Testament certain Theophanies and appearances of angels which are out of the ordinary, but normally we should not expect to meet any angels in Dallas, because angels are spiritual beings and we do not have the capacity for seeing spiritual beings.

We saw that the angels dwelled in Heaven we also saw that they were organized. There is evidence in scripture that they are very carefully organized. Paul speaks of principalities and powers in Heavenly places. There are references in some of the books of the Bible, particularly the Old Testament books and also the New too, to angels who are angels over specific territories or related to specific people, for example, we have the Prince of Greece, an angelic being. We have reference to Michael, the archangel, and by the archangel of course, you can see government among the angels. And furthermore, Michael, the Archangel stands up for the nation Israel, so he is directly related to Israel. His territory concerns Israel as far as the people or objects of his ministry's concern, and he also exercises authority among angelic beings. And we have other revelation with regard to angels in the Bible, but we're just looking at some parts of it, if we were to study this, we would have to study the whole sphere of angelology. Angelology is the study of angels, just like theology is the study of God. We saw that the angels were divided up into two classifications, some were called elect, and others are described as having fallen.

Now the Bible does not give us information about all the details of the past. I'm sure that if we were writing scripture we would like to know about a lot of things that God has kept us in the dark about. I remember there is a text over in the Book of Deuteronomy chapter 29 and verse 29, I can always remember it for that reason, which says something like this, “The secret things belong unto the Lord, but the things that are revealed, unto us and to our children.” So there are some things that we can not know because God has not revealed them to us. So lots of our questions about angels and about eternity in the past and so on are unanswered in the Bible because God does not want to satisfy all of our curiosity this point, what would we do when we got to Heaven if we knew everything now? But really the real reason is that it is not essential for the purpose of Divine revelation which has to do with how men may come into fellowship with God. So we saw that there were angels that were elect and there were angels that

had fallen. Now the Bible says very plainly that angels have fallen it speaks of Satan and his angels. In Jude we read of angels who left their first estate so that they had a particular place in the divine creation but they left there by sin so that apparently in connection with the fall of Satan, certain angels also fell. And this is evidenced by the fact that when Jesus Christ was here, he had a lot to do with demons. Now I know that it is not modern to believe in demons and it seems strange for us. I do not profess to know a whole lot about demons, but the Bible is very plain and clear that there are such beings as demons. Now we must not, when we think of demons, think of the caricatures of demons that have appeared in sculpture and painting down through the centuries. If we look at the biblical revelation of Satan, angels, and demons, we will not have near as much difficulty believing in them. If however we look at human representations of them, we will have difficulty in believing that there are such beings. We'll have more to say about that in just moment.

Now the Bible tells us then that there are angelic beings who have fallen. This brings us to the question within chronology of the fall of Satan himself. Now, I want you to turn with me first of all, to Genesis chapter 3 and verse 1. Next Monday night we will begin with the study of Genesis 1 and go through Genesis 1 and 2. But let me anticipate just a little by referring to Genesis 3 and verse 1 to show you one point, “Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” In Revelation chapter 12 and verse 9 it is stated, that Satan, the devil, the great dragon, and the old serpent are the same individuals. This is a reference to Satan who appeared to the woman in the form of a serpent, who at this time was a very beautiful animal. The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field. You'll notice that the serpent before the fall was a beast of the field, not a wriggling reptile as we know him today that was the result of his judgment. He was a very subtle, or wise, beast of the field, very clever, and Satan used this instrument of the serpent.

Now the thing I want you to notice here, and we’re going to after next Monday, Monday after next, we’re going to talk about Genesis 3 in more detail, but the thing I want you to notice here, is that before man sinned, sin was already in existence, for Satan is already in rebellion against God. “Yea hath God said you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” It’s obvious that before Genesis 3, Satan has had his fall, so that’s the one point I want you to notice from Genesis chapter 3 verse 1. The Bible presupposes the fall the previous fall of Satan before the fall of man, and I put this in the notes I think. This is why Paul says in Romans chapter 5 and verse 12, “For this cause as by one man sin entered into the world.” Adam was not the first sinner, sin entered by means of Adam, but sin was in existence before Adam sinned for Satan had sinned, he had fallen, and angels had fallen with him.

Let’s take a look at John chapter 8 and verse 44 to confirm this. John 8 verse 44. Page eleven twenty-seven in the Scofield edition of the King James Version page eleven twenty-seven. Verse 44, John chapter 8, the Lord Jesus is speaking, speaking to the Jews, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning.” (And notice that.) “He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him.” He abode not in the truth; he did not stand in the truth. Now it seems evident from this that originally Satan was not such a being, there came a time when he did not continue to stand in the truth, but fell. Let’s turn to 1 Timothy chapter 3 this is on into the Pauline epistles, 1 Timothy chapter 3, because Paul here alludes to the Satan, the sin of Satan, and tells us the cause of it. Satan fell, and Paul says, that the cause of Satan’s sin was pride. That’s a rather strange place to find this, you wouldn’t expect to find this reference to the cause of Satan’s sin in the conditions that are set forth for the offices of the church, but this is its place in the word. Now Paul is talking about the office of bishop, which is another term for the office of elder. He says, verse 5,

“For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? Not a novice.” (When you have an officer in the church, he’s not to be a newly planted Christian, newly born again,) “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil”. (In other words, do not appoint a man to office who is a brand new Christian, who is to rule or exercise authority over the people of God, for if you do, he will be lifted up with pride because of his position and thus fall into the judgment of the devil, and so in this statement Paul alludes to the cause of Satan’s fall it was a fall that was due to pride.) “Moreover he must have a good rapport” (and so on. Well I think we ought to read verse 7,) “Moreover he must have a good rapport of them that are without lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

So the devil fell through pride. Now the Bible doesn’t tell us, as I say, everything about these interesting things that we would like for it to tell us. I do think, however that we have some hints in the Bible with regard to Satan’s fall, and so I want you to turn now first to Ezekiel chapter 28 this is a passage in the Old Testament. Ezekiel chapter 28, but in it we do see, I think, a hint at least, of the permission of sin by God in the universe. Now, Ezekiel chapter 28 is a passage that has to do with an historical king of Tyre. The king of Tyre this is a burden addressed against the king of Tyre, a judgment announced by God against him. And as is customary in Old Testament prophecy, the author speaks of the historical personage, and then he goes beyond the historical personage to the spiritual, or spiritual facts beyond the person, sometimes he will go on to the future, sometimes he may go to the past. But in this particular passage, in verses 1 through 10, he talks about the historical personage. Then in verse 11 and following or 12, because 11 is something of an introduction, he goes on to talk about a person whom many Bible students believe is a reference to Satan, notice the verses, verse 11,

“Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; (Now you can see from statements like this that it appears that the author is going on beyond this historical personage, for the king of Tyre was never in Eden, to speak of a being who was in Eden, now he says) every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: (The first time we have discovered perhaps that the carbuncle is really a jewel) and gold, the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; (Now remember a cherub is an angelic being, and when he says anointed cherub, he means that this cherub, or this angelic being has been given authority and the authority specifically to cover, or protect.) The anointed cherub that protecteth, the anointed angelic being that protecteth. (And since the other description pertains to the throne of God, he talks about walking among the stones of fire and so on, Ezekiel elsewhere in his book puts this with the presence of God himself, there seems to be evidence here of an angelic being who was given great authority by God, in fact was designated by God to protect the throne of God.) Thou art the anointed cherub that protecteth or covereth, and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.”

So it appears from study of this passage, that Ezekiel is not only speaking of the historical person, the king of Tyre, but using language that goes all the way back to the event of Satan’s fall in the garden to depict this man and his fall. Now the reason that Ezekiel is doing this, is related to the historical situation, but he is drawing a parallel between the actions of the historic king of Tyre, and the actions of this person whom he

describes here in verses 11 and following. So it appears then, that we do have some hint at least of how Satan originally fell. You will notice a number of things about this particular passage that are stated concerning Satan. He is a created being, we notice, “in the day that thou wast created.” God did not create a devil, Lucifer, the anointed cherub that covereth, became the devil. He was created as an angelic being and a great angelic being and given great wisdom and power and authority but he became the devil a slanderer the serpent and so on.

You will notice that his character is quite a bit different from that which we imagine by looking at the pictures that medieval artists have drawn of Satan. If you’ve gone through art galleries, my wife is very much interested in art, and so when we were in New York, then when we were in Europe, we went in art gallery after art gallery after art gallery and I looked at all the great paintings in these art galleries, and I have just about as much interest in seeing an art gallery as I have in almost any other uninteresting thing, because I was not interested, but I just tagged along with her and she showed me all of the great paintings of the art galleries and you will notice that as you look at these pictures, how, there is one thing that interested me, how unbiblical artists can be, because they paint in accordance with their imagination rather than in accordance with the revelation of God in his word. So you find for example, a picture of Satan, a bestial kind of body with horns and with hooves like a goat and a long tail and this kind of thing. That of course is not a picture of Satan at all; this is the imagination of some medieval artist who did not know the Bible. Satan is not like that, it is no wonder that modern men has said there must not be a devil or a Satan when they see the pictures that artists have drawn of him just as even in the last supper did you know this, I saw a famous painting of the last supper, looked at it, and again, although I had known this before, this is unscriptural in its representation, for Jesus and the disciples did not sit at a table you see, they reclined on the floor and so the famous painting of the last supper is wrong in its detail.

We must, in studying the word of God, forget all these things which are the imaginations of men and go to the word, we have thought of Satan as being some leering, sneering Mephistopheles, something like that you know. But he is not, he is the anointed cherub that covereth, he is a wise angelic being, and this is why Paul says that Satan has his ministers of righteousness, for he is an angel of light. Now he is the anointed cherub that covereth he is an angelic being of great physical, moral and spiritual beauty. In the 15th verse, Ezekiel says, “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” And then in the 16th verse, “By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence”. He is talking about the king of Tyre, and how the king of Tyre through merchandise has produced violence in the city. It is possible, and many bibles students think, most likely that this too is a reference to the sin of Satan, we shall see more detail when we turn to the Isaiah passage but from this it appears, that Satan was guilty of pride. Divinely appointed by God to protect the throne he became guilty of slander of self seeking and ultimately sinned, as 1 John says, he sinned from the beginning. The first sin was not committed on earth; the first sin was committed in Heaven then. Well now this particular passage, in Ezekiel is interesting because it does say that Satan is an angelic being, and furthermore, that his sin consisted in his slander of God and that iniquity was found in him. He was not originally a sinning being.

Let’s turn over to the Isaiah passage now, for this one gives us more details with regard to the character of the sin of Satan. This is a similar passage in Isaiah chapter 14. It is similar in the sense that it is a passage that has to do with an earthly king, in this case with the king of Babylon and the author as in Ezekiel, after describing God’s words with reference to the earthy king of Babylon goes on beyond this to discuss Lucifer who stands behind this earthly king. Isaiah sees in the sin of the king of Babylon, that which is representative of the sin of Satan he sees Satan as the motivating influence back of the king, and so in describing the activities of the king he goes on to describe the activities of

the one who stands behind the king who is the moving power behind the probe so to speak. In verse 12, after describing the historic facts with regard to the king, Isaiah says, “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!”

Lucifer is a term of course the English term Lucifer comes from two Latin words, one meaning light *lux*, and the other meaning to bear, *ferre*. If you had Latin you remember you *lux* and your *ferre*. And so Lucifer is a light bearer the Hebrew word from which this word comes, the word, *helel* is a word that means, most scholars think, shining one, or it has been translated, Daystar, and the following words seem to confirm this “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, Daystar, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!” So in the 12th verse, Isaiah describes his position, “How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” From this it seems evident that Lucifer was an angelic being who had his original dwelling place in Heaven by the side of God, but that he fell from this. I think that we also can discern from these references to Satan and references in the New Testament that he was a being of tremendous authority. Let’s turn over to the next to the last book of the Bible, Jude verse 9. In Jude verse 9 we find the words,

“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil (Let me read that again because, in the English text, the punctuation marks are left out, there should be a comma after the when and then one after the devil to get the sense.) “Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.”

Now it’s evident from this, this very obscure reference, later on we’ll have something to say about it on the course, but notice what we have in the verse that Michael who was the archangel does not dare to bring an accusation against Satan but has

to say the Lord rebuke thee. Apparently in the angelic sphere, Satan stood above Michael and so Michael was not able to bring a railing accusation against him, but must appeal to the Lord, “the Lord rebuke thee”, this is a reference you see implicitly to the position that Satan had in God’s kingdom originally. So when we read, “how are thou fallen, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” We can understand he was the anointed cherub that covereth; he was one who was in the presence of God. He had the right to come in before God. Remember we read the passage in Job chapter 1 and we read about the sons of God who came into the presence of God and Satan was among them. He had the right of access to the throne of God he was the anointed cherub that covereth, he dwelt in Heaven. This was a tremendously exalted position that the anointed cherub that covereth had. This is why Paul calls him the god of this world “in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not”. What does the Lord Jesus call him? Well the Lord Jesus calls him the prince of this world, a word that means ruler, the ruler of this world, so Satan is not a person without authority, and even the implication is that even to the present time that he has a sphere of authority which is still his.

Now let’s turn to chapter 12 of the Gospel of John. I want you to see this with your own eyes, because it’s hard to believe that Satan could be called the prince of this world, that he could be called the god of this age. In John chapter 12 in verse 31 “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” The prince of this world, Now turn to chapter 14 in verse 30, the Lord Jesus says, “Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” Chapter 16 in verse 11, He’s talking about the ministry of the Holy Spirit here and says in verse 11 that the Holy Spirit will convince a judgment of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” Now these are startling statements by the Lord Jesus that Satan is prince of this world. Let’s turn to that passage in Paul too; I want you to read that with your own eyes. 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 3 and 4 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verses 3 and 4. This also helps to explain why when the gospel of Jesus Christ is given,

frequently, men do not heed it, they are blind to it. Verse 3 page twelve thirty-two. 2
Corinthians 4:3 and 4,

“But if our gospel be hid, (Paul says) it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world (Notice that.) in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

Now Satan is called the god of this world. He’s the god of this world, he’s the prince of this world, he was the anointed cherub that covereth, he was Lucifer the son of the morning, the morning star, a very exalted being, originally. What would you think that a person like this would do? Surely a person like this should be grateful that god had created him that God had given him this exalted position, and surely he should be happy to serve God forever. This was not true, Isaiah says in verse 13 of chapter 14,

“For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”

“I will be like the most high” what did Satan do? Satan was guilty of pride, Paul says, this was his snare, being an exalted being and above the angelic creation, men were not created then, being the head of the entire creation of God he was not satisfied, but wanted to be God himself. “I will be like the most high” thus he fell by reason of his pride. I heard a very amusing story about S. Parkes Cadman. Now some of you are not old enough to remember S. Parkes Cadman, but he was a great preacher two or three generations ago. He was one of the early radio preachers and he had an audience that extended all across the United States. Perhaps I ought to introduce this by saying that

Paul’s word for Satan is the prince of the power of the air from Ephesians chapter 2 verse 2. At any rate, Dr. Cadman was to speak at a certain church, I think it was in Boston, and the man who was to introduce him wanted to introduce him in the most flowery way he possibly could, because he was the Billy Graham of his day in different type of way. So he got up and he said, “Dr. Cadman is one of the great preachers of our day, he has an audience that extends all across the United States of America” he said, “I have been in the back in the radio station and have looked at all the machinery that is essential for the putting forth of this message that goes to the ends of our land” he said, “I have the privilege to present to you today Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, one of the great preachers of our time” and then as if almost inspired by another spirit, he said, “I present to you the prince of the power of the air.” [Laughter]

Dr. Cadman who happened to know the biblical reference, in Ephesians, someone who was there said he was staggered by that introduction, he got up and rather weakly walked to the pulpit, and he said, “I’ve had many introductions, but I must say that this is the first time that I have been introduced as his majesty the devil.” [Laughter]

Satan is an angel of light and it is well for us to remember. Well now this is the biblical account of the origin of sin. Let me remind you these things, that there is no question about the fact that sin had it’s origin before the creation of men. We may not know all of the details of Satan’s sin, but we do know, we do know definitely that he sinned through pride, that he wanted to be like God, and this was his snare. This is how sin entered into the universe.

I’d like to say just a few words before we close, about a problem that immediately comes to mind when we consider sin, why didn’t God prevent evil? Why did God not just destroy the devil? When iniquity was found in Satan, why did he not just immediately destroy Satan and begin all over again? Why is it that God has allowed evil to enter into the human race and then down through the years it has persisted it has lead to much sadness, it has lead to much mourning, it has lead to much anxiety, it has lead to much,

well all of the things that are a result of evil in the world. Why is this? Why has God permitted evil? Philosophers have wrestled with this problem, and are still wrestling with the problem of evil, the problem of suffering and we should not dodge this. Although we may admit at the beginning that we can not know everything, we know this: that in the beginning, God determined to save man through Jesus Christ, he determined to have men in fellowship with himself. We have statements like this in the word of God: “According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.” God has plan that goes back beyond the foundation of the world. We have reference made to the fact that before eternal times he determined to bring Jesus Christ to die for man. We have statements made about the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world, the Lamb of God foreordained before the foundation of the world. So we must remember that in eternity past, God determined through Jesus Christ to bring men into fellowship with himself.

Why did he permit evil? I will only make a suggestion or two, from the standpoint of the angels of course, if angelic beings had already been created, and they had been, to permit evil to develop would allow them to learn a very stern lesson, the lesson of the folly of rebellion against God. This is a purpose that pertains to the angels. From the standpoint of man, if God desired to have men in fellowship with himself, he must if he is not to have forced worship, but to have free worship, he must offer men the opportunity of choice, there must be choice, otherwise we will be just robots, machines, and God gets no glory from the worship and fellowship of machines. So he must permit the possibility of evil if he is to have beings consciously out of love for him worship him. In the final analysis, God, if he is to reveal himself fully must permit sin, because one of the characteristics of God is that he is a gracious God if there is no provision of evil or sin there is no possibility for men to know anything about God’s grace.

And so Paul states, and let me ask you to turn to this passage in Ephesians chapter 2. Paul states, that as a result of redemption, God’s grace will be made known down through the ages to come. Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 7, Paul says, “That in the ages

to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” “That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” So God, in the ages to come will be revealing the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus, through the ages to come, there will be this revelation of his gracious dealing with man as represented in his dealing with us, angels could never know that he was gracious if their sin had not been permitted, the universe could not know that he was a gracious God if this sin does not take place, so God has permitted sin that in the ages to come men and the angelic beings might see that he is a gracious God by the way in which he has dealt with us.

This is one reason why God, this is another reason why God has permitted sin in the universe; you might say, “well now, is it worth it?” Is it worth it in the light of the suffering and the evil and the trial that has come to men? Well we’re not qualified to judge this to start with, we’re finite beings, if this has been done by God then we must say that this is right, for God always does right. At any rate, in his mind it is obvious that the good that obtained from this plan overrides the suffering that is caused by it, and so we leave the final decision and the final light on the problem with God. There is a further suggestion in the next chapter of Ephesians too. In 10th verse of the 3rd chapter of Ephesians, Paul is talking about revelation, and he’s talking specifically now about salvation and Christ, and he says,

“To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by means of the church, by means of the church, the manifold wisdom of God”

“Principalities and powers in heavenly places” are angelic beings. Principalities and powers in heavenly places. The church is the group of people who have believed the Lord Jesus Christ. Now in this age in which we live, if you are a believer in Jesus

Christ, you're a member of the church, even though you may not be a member of any organization on the earth, if you have believed in Jesus Christ, you are in the church and by this group, Paul says, by this group known as the church God will make known to principalities and powers in heavenly places his manifold wisdom so that we are in a sense as Paul says elsewhere, a theater by which angels and men and God may see unfolded the wisdom of God, so that believers in Jesus Christ are a revelation of the manifold wisdom of God and of course it will be a revelation of the manifold wisdom of God how he had brought men who were rebels against God, and hated God, and through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary he has spoken to the hearts of men, has shown himself to be a loving God, a God who is willing to give up his dearest possession, Jesus of Nazareth, his Son, to allow him to go to the cross to suffer for the sins of men and then through the ministry of the holy Spirit through the preaching of the word of God to bring men to fellowship with Christ and with God. This is a wonderful revelation of the manifold wisdom of God and down through the years Paul says, he will make known the riches of his grace and his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. All of this tends to reveal to men and to angelic beings the manifold wisdom of God. These are some of the reasons why God has permitted sin in the universe.

Now I want to stop at this point, I should of course say one more thing, if Satan is an angelic being who has fallen because of pride, because he wanted to be like the most high, he is the exact antithesis of the Lord Jesus Christ, for you see Satan had a lofty position, but desired an even loftier position, to be God himself. Jesus Christ, Paul tells us, in Philippians chapter 2 was in the form of God, that's a philosophical expression which means that he possesses the essential attributes of deity, that is Paul's way of saying he was God. He was in the form of God, yet, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, emptied himself because he was God's instrument in the salvation of men, Jesus Christ who was God himself emptied himself came in fashion as a man as a servant, went to the cross Paul says, became obedient unto

death and if that's not enough, he said, obedient to the death of the cross, this was the most humiliating death that a man could die at this time, for it signified to the world that he was a criminal and a curse, and an abomination to men. Jesus Christ was obedient to death, even the death of the cross. So Satan, who had a lofty position desired, by pride a loftier, and sinned, Jesus of Nazareth, who possessed the loftiest position of all left that lofty position, became a servant, did the will of the Father, because he loved us, went to the cross, was obedient to the shameful abominable death of the cross in order that he might redeem us to God. Paul goes on to say,

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, of things on earth, of things under the earth; And that every tongue might confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, (supremely God) to the glory of God the Father.”

Jesus is the exact antithesis of Satan. Ever since Satan sinned in Heaven, there has been warfare between Satan and God, and Jesus Christ is God's instrumentality for the winning of the victory which will ultimately be manifested in the future. Let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Heavenly Father, we're so thankful to Thee for thy word, we're thankful for the revelation that thou hast given us that sin originated in Heaven through the pride of Satan, and we thank Thee Lord for the revelation of the cure of sin through Jesus Christ our Lord. And we pray Lord that Thou will bring us to personal trust in Jesus Christ, who is our redeemer, who died for our sins, that we might have life. Bless us as we continue to study thy word. We ask in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message] For next time be sure and read Genesis one and two we'll start going consecutively through those chapters. Now for those of you who have a question or two you'd like to ask, we have a few minutes, so you may ask. Yes Ma'am.

[Question from an audience member] Why do you think that Michael and Satan contended for the body of Moses?

[Johnson] Michael and Satan contended for the body of Moses because there is a further use for the body of Moses according to scripture and that is found in Revelation chapter 11 most likely. Other questions? No questions?

[Question from an audience member] I've been taught this, but I don't really understand, I don't believe, Did God when he created the world, look into the future, and see who would believe, and those are elect, or did he just select certain people that would be elect?

[Johnson] Well, human reasoning would say that he looked into the future and he saw who would believe and thus he selected them, which of course would not be God's election of man, but man's election of God. And while human reasoning looks at it that way that is a thought that is not found in the Bible at all. That when the expression foreknowledge is used, and foreknowledge is used for example Romans chapter 8 “for whom he did foreknow he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his son” that foreknowledge is not the knowledge of what would happen, but is the knowledge of a person whom he foreknew, not what he foreknew, whom he foreknew. It is the knowledge that is referred to in a statement like this in the Bible, when the Lord spoke to Israel he said, “You only have I known of all the nations on the earth”. Now what did he mean by that? He knew all of the nations on the earth, but he meant, you only have I entered into intimate relationship with, you only have I known, have I become acquainted with experientially, that's the meaning, and to foreknow, is an intimate way, the intimate way of expressing fore-choice. You see, now that is a biblical [unintelligible 59:05] unfortunately, in English, foreknowledge frequently means just knowledge beforehand, while that's true, that is not the biblical picture. It is that God elected and he chose and men come to know God and he comes to know who will believe not because he looked down through the centuries and saw that they would believe, but because he had

planned it that way, and that’s why he knows it. Of course this difficult Miss Shay [ph
59:35] for us to fully understand, and it presents problems to us, but

[Comment from same audience member] It seems sort of

[Johnson] It seems somewhat unfair,

[Comment from same audience member] Yes

[Johnson] And this is you see when you realize it

[Comment from same audience member] And God really isn’t unfair, so I can’t
understand it.

[Johnson] Right, if it were any other way and if you had any other response it
would not be the biblical doctrine and just to show you this I’m going to read the passage
from Romans where Paul is arguing this point. And he’s arguing with people just like
ourselves who are having difficulty with this. And so, he talks about the fact here in verse
13 of Romans chapter 9, I’m reading from the Greek text, but I’ll translate it for you, as it
stands written,

“Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated” and immediately we say, well that’s
not righteous of God and so Paul says, “What then shall we say, there is not
unrighteousness with God, is there?” (You see, he anticipates, he knows that this doctrine
will produce that response, so if this doctrine as I expressed it to you produces that
response, you can know its Pauline, and it’s biblical, you see.) “God forbid” he says, “for
he said to Moses, I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have
compassion upon whom I will have compassion, consequently then, it is not of the one
that willing (notice that it is not of the one that willing) nor of the one that runneth, but of
God who shows mercy.”

Our salvation does not come to us because we will it to come to us or because we
seek after God by running after him, but because he shows us mercy. For the scripture
said to Pharaoh, for this very reason have I raised thee up , that I may show forth in thee

my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. Consequently then, upon whosoever he willeth, he showeth mercy and whomsoever he willeth he hardens.

[Comment from audience member] Well we are really fortunate then.

[Johnson] Now, yes, yes, now wait, you will say, “and whom he will he hardeneth”? Well then if he hardens people, how can they be at fault, if God is responsible for it? Notice what Paul says, “You will say to me, then, why does he still find fault, for who has resisted his will?” And then Paul Goes on to explain that its very difficult for us, and I’m just going to give you two or three illustrations, and maybe this will help, to solve some of the difficulties, it will not solve all of them, because as I said Sunday morning when I was preaching, there is a limit to human understanding and we must acknowledge that. We are finite beings, and we may wrestle with the word of God and with the revelation of God and we may learn much by doing it, but we also must ultimately reach a place where we say, we do not know beyond this. God has told us these facts, they seem to be to us, somewhat contradictory but we can believe that God will reconcile them in eternity.

But let me put it this way; all men deserve to be lost. Every man is a sinner. Every man owes God because of his sin, every man is guilty, every man stands under condemnation every man owes God his life. For the wages of sin is death. All the apples in the barrel are rotten. Now if God, if all of us owe him life or owe him death, if God, out of mercy should deign to bring to life a few, then the others have no complaints of failure to show mercy to them, they were guilty, they have their just desserts. We, we don’t deserve anything he has shown us marvelous grace, so we just thank him and praise him that we are among the elect. We don’t understand we will understand, we will understand fully in the future. To bring it down to practical every day life, if Gordon Wheeler owed me fifty dollars and George Meyers owed me fifty dollars and I went to Gordon Wheeler and said, “you need to pay me that fifty” He could not say that I don’t have to pay you the fifty” because he owes me the fifty, right? You see? It’s hard to

understand, and yet this is what God says in the Bible. Jesus Christ said, “No man cometh unto me except the Father which has sent me draw him.”

In fact all of the doctrine of election in the New Testament goes back to the words of our Lord himself, “all that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will no wise cast out all that the father giveth to me shall come to me. I remember a story. Have I told you this before? I remember a story, its always impressed me, as being very practical in the light of these problems of a young man was a preacher of the gospel and he had difficulty with election, He finally came to an old preacher and he said, “I’ve discovered the doctrine of election in the Bible, and I see it, and so from now on, I’m only going to preach it among the elect , for if I preach it among the non-elect, then I bring further condemnation upon them, because, not being among the elect, they will not receive it, and thus they’ll have greater judgment, so he said, I’m not going to preach it, except among the elect, Of course no one knows who the elect are, or the non-elect are, but anyway, that was what he would say, I suppose he meant in his church he considered them elect. Probably wrong in this case. [Laughter]

But anyway, the old preacher said something very wise to him, he said, “listen, you go ahead and preach the gospel to all” he said, “if you should happen to get someone to Heaven whom God did not elect, that would be alright with God, because he loves sinners. [Laughter] It’s always seemed very appropriate to me from the human standpoint that we do not know who the elect and the non-elect are. Our responsibility as ministers of the word is to preach the word to all, as if everyone is an object of God’s wonderful grace in Christ. And in the audience, the response that you should make is, “I don’t know whether I’m elect or non-elect, but I’ll put my trust in Christ and settle the matter right now because you can do it any one who comes to Christ, he will in no wise cast out. And so this is a purely philosophical thing in the final analysis.

[Question from an audience member] What is that passage in the Bible that says that by faith you can bring your whole family can save your whole family? Explain that

[Johnson] You perhaps speak of Acts chapter 3 verse 31, “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved and thy house” Is that the verse?

[Audience member] Yes that is one of them, and there’s another one that I can’t tell you where it is.

[Johnson] Well, I do not believe that verse, I do not believe that, now when I said I do not believe that verse, I believe that verse. I do not believe that verse means what some have said it means. I believe that that verse means simply this, and I think it can be demonstrated from the New Testament, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved, and thy house, if they believe. In other words, this does not mean that the faith of one person may save others, nor even, that we can be sure that every member of our family will be saved, it’s obvious that this not true in experience down through the ages. Now, we can be sure, however, of this, as a Christian, if we have believed in Christ, we have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us and we have all the promises of God referenced to answered prayer, and if the Holy Spirit leads us to pray for members of our families, and most likely, he will, then we have the promise of God that if he leads us to pray, he will answer our prayers you see, and so we can expect in many case if we are faithful in praying, that God will answer our prayers and bring our loved ones to the Lord. And I’ve seen in my own family this happen more than once and so I know it works, but it can not be said that because one man believes, the whole family must necessarily believe. That’s not the teaching of Paul or any other New Testament writer. Individuals must believe for themselves. And of course, I do not think that that promise means anything more than if you should be lead to pray for a very close friend, the Holy Spirit really led you to pray for them, you can expect him to answer....

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY].