CHAPTER 6
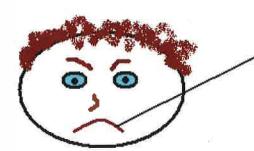
THE PROBLEM OF EVIL IN THE WORLD

As we look at the world around us, read the headlines in the newspapers, and listen to the radio or television news, we must admit that there is plenty of evil in the world. It would be nice if we could say that everything in the world was good and fine, but we cannot say this. All is not well on planet earth. There is sadness and sickness and poverty and disease and death. There are all kinds of troubles and problems. There are people who are suffering because of hunger and disease. Some people have very difficult physical problems. There are others who are born with terrible physical problems and handicaps. Can you think of some examples?

We live in a world which has deadly natural disasters caused by tornadoes, earthquakes, tidal waves, hurricanes, lightning, drought (no rain for a long time), insect pests, and other things. We also live in a world where there are terrible accidents such as car accidents, plan crashes, men trapped in coal mines and great fires that have destroyed huge buildings and many lives.

We also live in a world where crime is common. It is so common that we need to lock our homes and our cars. We live in a world in which men often do violent things such as hurting or harming or even killing. Remember what the days of Noah were like when "the earth was filled with _____" (Genesis 6:11). Today this kind of violence is sometimes called "TERRORISM." We live in a world where wars are common. Nations and kingdoms rise up against each other just as the Bible says (see Matthew 24:6-7). Yes, there is an abundance of evil in the world.

Why doesn't everyone live in peace? Why isn't everyone loving and kind? Why don't nations throw away their weapons and get rid of all of their bombs and guns? Where did all of this evil come from? Who should we blame for all of this evil? Whose fault is it? Many people blame God:

"If God is loving and kind and good, then why would He allow all of these evil things in this world?"

Where Did Evil Come From?

How did evil first begin? Where did it come from? Has evil always been around or did it have a beginning? If we know how something started, then this helps us to better understand why it is here today. For example, did people always play basketball? _____ George Washington was a tall man. Did be play basketball? _____ Basketball was invented in 1891 by James Naismith in Springfield, Mass. If we know about the origin of basketball (how it began) then we can better understand why it is here today. How did evil begin?

God and the Angels

Long ago, even before this world ever existed, God created the angels Psalm (148:2,5). "All things were _____ by Him" (John 1:3), including the angels. How many angels did God create (Revelation 5:11)?

_____

God did not create evil angels! He created good angels and these angels served and worshipped and loved God. They did not fight with each other, steal from each other, or harm each other. They were **happy** and they were **holy**.

One of these angels was a leading angel. He was a special kind of an angel known as a **Cherub** (Ezekiel 28:14). This angel is sometimes known by the name of L_____ (Isaiah 14:12). He was very close to God and he served in the very presence of God. If we were to think of the angels as we would think of a huge army, then we would have to say that Lucifer was one of the "**General**" angels. He was one of the most important angels that God created.

God tells us what this angel was like in Ezekiel 28:11-19. Was this angel created (Ezekiel 28:13)? _____ Was Lucifer a beautiful angel (Ezekiel 28:12)? _____ What else does Ezekiel 28:12 tell us about this angel? _____ Did God create this angel perfect or imperfect (Ezekiel 28:12,15)? _____

The Fall of Lucifer

Something terrible happened to this angel! The Bible tells us what Lucifer said in his heart.

Here is what Lucifer did say (paraphrased):	Here is what Lucifer should have said:
How beautiful I am! How wise I am! How powerful I am! God is not the only One who is great. I'm great too. Why should all the angels worship God? Should they not worship me too? I will be like the Most High (see Isaiah 14:12-24)!	**My beauty and my wisdom and my power have all come from God. God has made me what I am. All that I have I have received from God my Creator. Therefore all I can do is thank Him and praise Him for being such a great God.**

Lucifer never said these words out loud, but he said them in his heart (see Isaiah 14:13). Does God know what people think in their hearts?_____ Does God know what angels think in their hearts? _____ Lucifer was once perfect, but he was perfect no more: "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, until _____ was found in thee" (Ezekiel 28:15).The word "iniquity" means "sin, evil, crookedness." God found evil and sin in the heart of this angel. God found an angel that was filled with *PRIDE* (wanting self to be *BIG* and wanting God to be *LITTLE*). Today we use two other names to describe this angel: the **Devil** and **Satan**!

Satan's Angels

After Lucifer fell into sin, God sentenced him and told him what his punishment would be: Everlasting F_____ (Matthew 25:41). Satan probably said something like this: "That's not fair! How can a loving God send His creature into a lake of fire forever and ever?" This is why he is called the Devil. The word devil means "one who accuses" and soon after his sin he accused God of being unfair.

Now the other angels had to make a choice: "Should we remain loyal to God or should we follow Satan? Should we agree with Satan that God is unfair or should we stay on God's side?" Every single angel had to make this choice: "Should I be for Satan and against God, or should I be for God and against Satan?" The word "Satan" means "adversary, enemy." Satan is God's enemy, and those angels who became Satan's friends would become God's enemies.

Many of the angels chose to follow Satan, and as soon as they made this *wrong choice* in their hearts, they sinned too. Revelation 12:3-4 seems to indicate that one third (one out of every three) of the angels decided to follow the dragon who is the Devil. These angels are called Satan's angels (see Revelation 12:7 and Matthew 25:41). These evil angels are also called demons or unclean spirits.

Satan was the first creature to sin. This is where evil began. It began right in the heart and mind of Lucifer. It then spread to the other angels who followed Satan. All of this took place before planet earth was even created. Evil originated with Satan.

For more information on the fall of Satan, see our study entitled **The Origin of Sin--Part 1 (the Fall of Satan).**

The Fall of Man

Not only did God create the angels, but who else did He create (Genesis 1:27)? _____ Did God create a sinful man? _____ Did God create an evil man? _____ No, God created a good man, but this man also fell into sin. Man had to make a choice just like the angels had to make a choice. Man's choice was a very simple one: **to eat or not to eat, to disobey or to obey God** (Genesis 2:17). Did Satan want man to obey God (Genesis chapter 3)? _____ What choice *should* man have made? _____ What choice did man make (Genesis 3:6)? _____ The moment Adam ate that fruit, evil entered the world: "Wherefore, as by one man _____ entered into the world and death by sin" (Romans 5:12). Adam was the first man to sin. This is how evil entered the human race.

Every person that is born into the human race receives **an evil Adam nature** (we studied this in Chapter 3). So as I think about the problem of evil in the world, I need to realize that **I am part of the problem**! I am evil and I have an evil heart! Are unsaved people evil (Jer.17:9; Matthew 7:11; Mark 7:21-23)? _____ Are saved people evil? Do they still have sin dwelling in them (Romans 7:17-21)? _____

Should We Blame God?

Is God to blame for the evil that is in the world? Was God to blame for the evil that was found in Lucifer? Was God to blame for Adam's sin? Is God to blame for the evil that is found in my own heart? Many people try to blame God for the evil and the wrong that is in the world. Should they really do this? Answer the following with either a TRUE or FALSE:

_____ God made and created an angel known as Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12 and Ezekiel 28:12-13).

_____ God made Lucifer become proud and God made him sin. [Remember, God made Lucifer but God did not make the Devil. Lucifer **became** the Devil because of his sin.]

_____ Many of the angels chose to follow Satan because God forced them to make this wrong decision.

_____ Sin originated (started) with Lucifer.

_____ God tempted Eve and tried to make her sin (Genesis 3).

_____ The Serpent (Satan) tempted Eve (Genesis 3).

_____ After God had finished creating the earth and everything on it (including man), He saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very bad and very evil (Genesis 1:31).

God is not to blame! God is *not* the Author of sin. God never created sinful creatures. But God gave to Lucifer and to Adam the **freedom of choice**. Lucifer chose to become proud and to rebel against God. Adam chose to disobey God's command. You and I sometimes choose to disobey God. Who is to blame for this? _____

Why Did God Allow Sin?

God is not the Author of sin, but God did allow sin. God allowed Lucifer to fall and He allowed Adam to fall. God could have made creatures who would never sin. God could have made robot-like creatures that would only do what God wanted them to because they were programmed in that way. God could have made creatures with no freedom of choice. Why did God allow sin?

God wants His creatures (angels and men) to know WHO HE IS and WHAT HE IS LIKE. God is so great that He can even use sin and evil to show how great He is! In fact, if there were no such thing as sin, then there would be many things that we would not know about God. To show you this, think about the following questions and discuss them in class:

Can God show how forgiving He is if there is no one to forgive? Can God show how much He hates sin if there is no sin to hate? Can God show what a fair and righteous Judge He is if there is never anyone to judge? Can God show His great love for sinners if there are no sinners to love and to die for? Can God show the riches of His grace if there are no undeserving sinners to save (see Ephesians 2:7-8)? Sin gives God a wonderful opportunity to show angels and men what kind of a God He really is. Suppose that you were always good and obedient and perfect from the time you were a baby until the time you were an adult. Can you think of some things that you would never know about your parents because you were always good?

A Sin-Cursed World

After Adam sinned, a great curse was put upon planet earth. You can read about this curse in the last part of Genesis chapter 3. This curse directly resulted from Adam's great sin. Because of this curse we live in a world of death and disease and sorrow and suffering. These things are the **fruits of sin**. If Adam had not sinned there would have been no curse. God knew all about this even before He created the angels and men, and God allowed all of this to happen.

Why did God put a curse upon the earth? Actually the curse was a blessing in disguise. The curse was sent to contain evil and to correct the problem. For example, in Genesis 3:17-19 we see that man would have to work very hard (sweat!) in order to have food and live. In many ways this was really a blessing. If sinful men did not have to work hard then they would have lots of free time to carry out their evil plans and wicked deeds. One of the best things God ever did for sinful man was to keep him busy with hard work!

Will God's curse last forever (Revelation 22:3)? _____ Will these things (sorrow, death, pain, tears) someday pass away (Revelation 21:4)? _____ Someday there will be no curse, but today there is, and we live right in the middle of a sin-cursed world!

The Evil Around Us

There is plenty of evil and wickedness all around us. Sometimes when we watch a show on television there are the "good guys" and the "bad guys." In our world, there are plenty of "bad guys" around! Do you know of any? All around us there are E_____ men (2 Timothy 3:13) and W_____ men (2 Thessalonians 3:2). Evil is for real! There is really evil in this world! There is really a Devil. What do the last four letters in the word DEVIL spell? _____ There are really evil spirits or demons. There are really evil men. In Luke 10:30 what evil thing happened to this traveling man?

_____

Have your parents ever told you to never allow a stranger to pick you up in a car and give you a ride? Why do they tell you this? Has something very terrible and very evil ever happened to you? Has something evil ever happened to your family? to your friends?   On the news, do we learn about evil things that are taking place in our world?

What about the crook who robs the bank and shoots the teller at the window? What about the judge who says that the guilty criminal is innocent? What about the parents who beat their children in the wrong way and abuse them even to the point of harming their bodies? What about the athlete who accepts a gift of money on the promise that he will try to lose the game for his team? What about the rich who are cruel to the poor (see 2 Samuel 12:1-6)? What about those who hate certain people because of the color of their skin? What about the school teacher who favors one student but not another student? Can you think of other examples of evil things that

are done all around us? Let's face it! The evil is there! People do bad things and people are bad! This is why we need a Saviour.

What should I do about all of the evil? Do I stand a chance against it? Should I be afraid and hide under my bed and never leave my house? How do I live with all of this around me? Can I survive?

1. I must remember that God allows these things and God is greater than these things. No evil person can ever harm me unless God allows it, and if God does allow it, then God has a purpose for it.

2. I must remember that God prevails over the evil. There is evil in the world and plenty of it, but there is also a great God and a good God. Good will eventually win over evil! The devil is not the winner, God is. The victory is His. Your baseball team might be losing during most of the game, but they could win the game at the end. It may look like God is losing, but in the end He will win!

3. I must remember that God is the Judge. God will take care of the evil that is done. There is much that is wrong, but God will make it all right. God does not go around judging people every time they sin. There are many crimes that take place in which the guilty person never gets caught. Shoplifting is one example. But God sees all crimes and all sins, and no one really gets away with anything. Sin does not pay. It never has and it never will. God is on the job and God is doing His job well! God is the greatest Policeman of all!

4. I must remember that God hates the evil so much that He died for it. When Christ died on the cross God was judging sin and evil. This same God is the One who is able to save me out of the evil and to save me from the evil and from the evil one (Satan – see John 17:15). The God who saves me from evil is also the God who protects me from evil. David was able to say, "The LORD is my Shepherd...I will fear no _____ " (see Psalm 23:1, 4)

WHO'S FOOLING WHO ?

"...SIN, WHEN IT IS FINISHED, BRINGETH FORTH DEATH" — JAMES 1:15

EVERBODY IS ENTITLED TO A LITTLE WRONG-DOING, AND I HAVEN'T GOT MY SHARE OF IT YET

" FOOLS MAKE A MOCK AT SIN" — PROVERBS 14:9