

Adult Sunday School Class

Objective: Increase understanding of false prophets, the indicators that point to them and the consequence of their actions.

Opening Prayer: Thank you Father, we pause now to acknowledge your presence..... I thank you that you always hear me. That you never leave me or forsake me and that you are an ever present help. I ask for a special anointing on this lesson plan and the time we will spend together today. Bless all who will come in contact with this lesson plan, speaker(s) and listener(s). Open our hearts to receive a fresh revelation from your Spirit. I bind forces that would hinder and welcome the Holy Spirit as our teacher today. In Jesus name!

Read: II Peter 2

Q – Which of the events mentioned in this chapter did Peter attribute to the judgment of God?

- Noah's flood.
- The destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah.
- Satan and his angels being held for judgment in chains of darkness.

Q – How do you explain the statement he makes about Satan and his angels being held for judgment in chains of darkness?

- I don't fully understand the implications of this statement. Since Satan and his demons are active in the world in which we live.
- The level of confinement mentioned must be in a dimension other than what we normally envision as that of a physical “prison”.
- Perhaps they are deprived of levels of spiritual insight (held in darkness) they had previously enjoyed or are restricted from certain areas to which they previously had access.

Q – What would the people of our society call a flood like that of Noah's or the destruction of a city by fire and brimstone? - Acts of God.

Q – What is meant by the term “acts of God” as used in legal documents such as an insurance policy?

- It means what is commonly referred to as natural disasters.
- For example, an earthquake, volcanic eruption, tornado or severe weather events.

Q – Are these kinds of events really acts of God? By that I mean God initiated them or God was the source from which they came?

- I don't believe the scriptures spell this out in a way that would allow an absolute answer but it does provide some insight.
- Recall Elijah was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind.
- In addition there are several examples of God controlling the weather by either causing rain or drought.
- In one case He even caused the sun to stand still.

Q – What are your views of the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah and the flood of Noah's day? - Allow the class to answer or express their views.

Q – What did these people do that is so different than what is occurring today?Or..... Why is God's grace extended to the peoples of today while His judgment fell on them?

- I'm not sure, perhaps it could be described in degrees of knowledge or evil.

- To whom much is given, much is required.
- Then again our knowledge of what is accurately classified as God's judgment is fragmentary at best.

Q – Did God change when he vowed to never again destroy sinful mankind by a flood?

- My short answer is no and it is based on the scripture(s) that state or reinforce the concept that “I am the God who changes not”.
- God cursed the earth twice in history as a result of the sin of mankind.
- By doing so, I believe he revealed significant dimensions of His character for us.
- Even as he revealed His great love for us at Calvary,
- He also reveals His intolerance for some levels of rebellious and sinful behaviors.
- It's my view, like Calvary, these events were preplanned and one time occurrences designed to be both punishment and “teachable moments” about the absolute righteousness of God and the consequence of sinful human behaviors.
- However I also will readily admit I am not aware of any scriptural reference to this event being preplanned before the foundations of the earth.
- You are encouraged to allow the Spirit of God to guide you in establishing your own views in this matter.

Q – Why do you believe the flood was necessary?

- Again, the scriptures do not spell this out for us in a text book like cause and effect explanation.
- Perhaps it was to demonstrate the significance and intensity of the judgment of God or it may have another explanation like, preventing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases that mankind was not yet prepared to deal with.

Q – Does God meter out judgment today or is He holding it in reserve for the end of time? - Yes and yes.

- I don't presume to be able to accurately classify catastrophic events between those that can be attributed to natural causes, including human ignorance and those that fall in the category of the judgment of God.
- What we do know is that God is a God of absolutes:
 - God's is love. He always has been love and always will be love.
 - God respects life and honors human choice & decisions.
 - It is not His will that any should perish but that all would come to repentance.
 - God does NOT violate human choice.
 - He is long suffering, more gracious & tolerant than most humans can understand.
 - God is kind and He is always kind.
 - God is good and He is always good.
 - His motivations and actions are always good and well intended. .
 - He is good, even when we humans don't understand, refuse to accept it or can't see it clearly.
 - God's purposes are always intended for our good.
 - His grace is without measure. He longs to see the repentant heart, like the prodigal son, turn toward home.
 - However sin has consequences both to individuals and to collectives, families, cities, nations, nationalities, etc.

Q – What does scripture tell us about the calamities that came on Job and his family? Let's read about them in Job chapters 1 and 2.

- Job 1:9) Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied.....10) “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. 11) But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.” 12) **The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.” Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.** 13) One day when Job’s sons and daughters

were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, 14) a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, 15) and the Sabeans attacked and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" 16) While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" 17) While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" 18) While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, 19) when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you

- Job 2:3) Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason." 4) "Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life. 5) But now stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face." 6) **The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life."**

Q – What were the calamities that came on Job and his family that we just read about?

- An attack by human enemies, the Sabeans. Or perhaps he might say, people who didn't like him.
- Fire from the sky, most likely a volcanic eruption.
- Another attack by human enemies, the Chaldeans.
- A severe wind storm, perhaps a tornado or straight-line winds.
- Sickness attributed to many simultaneous boils, most likely a severe bacterial infection.

Q – How would the news media classify the calamities of "fire from the sky" and the "mighty wind"? - As natural disasters or perhaps "acts of God".

Q – What or who was the source of those two calamities? - Satan, In both cases, God replied to Satan "very well then everything he has is in your power or in "your hands".

Q – How can you determine if a calamity has some natural explanation or if it's from Satan or God?

- Natural disasters are predictable if adequate and accurate information is available on a timely basis.
 - Volcanic eruptions and earthquakes are preceded by warning signals.
 - Violent weather is also predictable although some would take issue with the accuracy of the forecasting technology of our day.
 - Medical science can predict cancer and other life shortening illness from certain abuses.
 - Sexual promiscuity destroys marriages and relationships. It's totally predictable in the lives of both believers and unbelievers.
 - God is love, however as stated earlier, His judgments are designed to be fair and appropriate, devastating to the offender but also instructive to mankind. We can learn from them and if we do we're better off because of them.
 - Satan's mission is described in scripture. He comes but to kill, steal and destroy. One area of primary focus is the destruction of the faith that resides in the hearts of Believers.

Q – Is all sickness and disease from Satan? - There are some natural explanations for what we classify as sickness and disease however Satan is responsible for most of the conditions that contribute to them.

Q – Can Satan cause a tornado or hurricane?

- I believe he can, allow me to give you my rationale.

- Jesus Himself referred to Satan as the prince or god of this world and he appears to have caused the mighty wind that destroyed the home of Job's children.

Q – Are addictions a human weakness or a spiritual force?

- Some have been attributed to a genetic predisposition, others to uncontrolled desire and still others to demonic forces.
- There are many stories of demonic deliverance or spiritual transactions like someone getting born again that have broken addictions.
- In addition, I've been told that chemical addictions are purged from the body in ~ 72 hrs but emotional and spiritual addictions can last a lifetime.
- In my own case, after many attempts to quit smoking I finally succeeded and for months did not crave a cigarette.
 - However about a year later I had one 24 hour period when I craved cigarettes so intently it was as if I had not been smoke-free for the previous year.
 - I got through that day without yielding and now some 50 years later have never desired to smoke again.
 - I have concluded the source of that temptation was a spiritual force from Satan.

Q – Are all addictions from Satan? - No, but I believe he is behind most of the conditions that lead to them.

Q – What do you derive from the statement “we are slaves to whatever masters us” and do you consider it to be a positive or negative statement?

- It can have either positive or negative connotation. Examples might be:
 - Substance abuse, pleasure, money, power or position, lust ,etc. (obvious negative connotations)
 - A sense of the presence of God, a strong desire to worship and meditate on His word, intense sensitivity to being led and taught by the Holy Spirit.
 - Oh Lord, let this be our portion. Amen!

Q – What are some of the indications that a person may be a false prophet?

- A tendency toward greed.
- Excess, a flair for the extreme.
- Pride and assertions of exclusivity, (God tells me things that He does not share with others.)
- Disproportionate financial emphasis.
- Taking scripture out of context or ignoring the full council of scripture.
- Significant “gaps” or an absence of the fruits of the Spirits in their lives.
- Does the person's life generally display evidence that God is working in and thru them?

Q – What weakness does Satan target with false doctrines?

- Lust of the flesh, lust of the eye and the pride of life.
- As was stated earlier, money, power, possessions, pleasure and lusts.

Q – What does verse 20 tell you about false prophets? - Most start out as true believers.

20) If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and are overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. 21) It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them.

Q – Where else in scripture do we find similar statements to those contained in verse 20 & 21?

- Hebrews 6:4) It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, 5) who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age 6) and who have fallen away, to be brought back to

repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace. 7) Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. 8) But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.

Q – How many items of qualification did the writer of Hebrews attribute to the faith of the person described? - Five (5), the person being describe here is not a new Christian or novus believer.

- Once been enlightened.
- Tasted the heavenly gift.
- Shared in the Holy Spirit.
- Tasted the goodness of the word of God.
- And the powers of the coming age.

Q – How do you explain the following statements Peter makes given our observations of the longevity of some false prophets and the existence of demonic activity?

- Verse 1) Bringing swift destruction on themselves.
- Verse 3) Their destruction has not been sleeping.
- Verse 4) Putting them (rebellious angels) in chains of darkness to be held for judgment.
- Verse 9) Hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.
- These statements are similar to God's statement to Adam and Eve.
 - He told them “the day you eat there of you shall surely die”.
- God's perspective is eternal, ours is temporal.
- We humans tend to tie His statement exclusively to physical death while the true meaning was;
- Spiritual death as well as the seeds of earthly decay.
 - Aging or the deterioration leading to physical death.
 - I believe Adam and Eve would have lived forever in their current state of health had they not disobeyed God and violated His command.
 - They would have enjoyed a “heaven like” environment right here on planet earth.

Q – Speaking of Lot, Peter says in verse 9) if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment. What scripture does this statement remind you of?

- For me it's I Corinthians 10:13) No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.
- Also, Psalms 46:1) God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.