

LESSON 17

**PREPARE FOR
BATTLE**

**A-B-C
ACCELERATED BIBLE CURRICULUM**



PREPARE FOR BATTLE

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ALL-OUT WAR!

It began in the first book of the Bible at the dawn of creation. God had placed a man and woman in a splendid paradise with a simple command—"Do not eat the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden. If you do, you shall surely die." Only one command. One simple rule.

Immediately, the invisible powers of the Devil went into action. Whatever it took, he was determined to trick the man and woman into eating the fruit. God had emphatically warned against it, so Satan was determined to break His law. Huddling in secrecy, Satan and his highly organized group of fallen angels began to plan their strategy. If the couple could be persuaded to disobey God, they would be forced to join Satan's wicked group. What method of deception would prompt them to "commit an act of disobedience to Divine law" (the basic meaning of *sin*)?

Soon an appropriate scheme had been devised. The Deceiver's first deceptive act was to use the serpent, a stunning creature at the highest level of animal creation, to beguile Eve. Cleverly the serpent cast doubt on God's Word, called God a liar, and then accused Him of selfishness. The serpent implied that God wanted to keep His creatures innocent and ignorant so they wouldn't achieve His wisdom. The wicked one subtly portrayed God as an envious taskmaster to weaken the foundations of the woman's faith and trust.

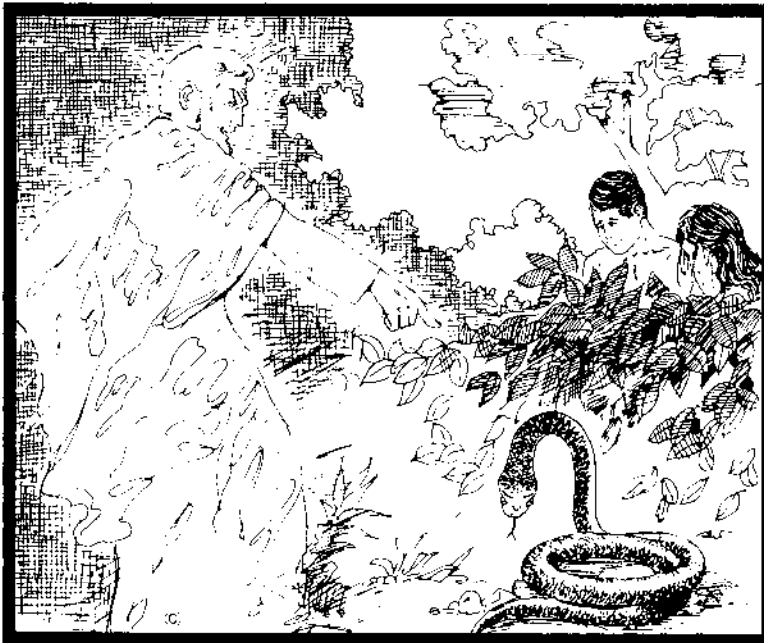
Believing that the serpent had told her the truth, Eve ate the fruit and persuaded Adam to taste it. Instantly the human race was cut off from God. In a moment's time Satan had become ruler of their lives. Now there were two new recruits to promote rebellion against God!

Upon confronting the guilty pair, God pro-

nounced individual judgment on both them and the Devil. In effect, God told Satan that a descendant of the deceived woman would destroy him (or "bruise his head"). From that time forward, the title "Serpent" has been attached to the deceiver and beguiler of mankind.

Satan had momentarily triumphed, but God overruled him:

"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15).



The victim became the vehicle for the Victor! Through Eve, the "Seed of the woman" (Jesus Christ) triumphed over the Devil and his seed. When Jesus proclaimed from the cross, "It is finished!", He had "bruised the head of Satan"! This act of love provided salvation for all mankind. Since then, born-again believers bitterly despise and war

against the serpent-deceiver – Satan.

The story of the ages is the record of such war between these two seeds: the Seed of the woman (Christ and His redeemed, born-again believers) and the seed of the serpent (Satan and all of unregenerated, "once-born" mankind). No tanks, missiles, or aircraft carriers. This was spiritual warfare!

Throughout the Bible, one can trace an unseen host of evil spirit-beings all actively engaged in deceiving and misleading the servants of God.

Job was deceived to believe that his calamities came directly from the hand of God; his wife was Satan's tool to urge the suffering man to curse God and die (Job 1:16; 2:9).

- ☛ Israel was deceived by idol worship—a direct work of Satan—in Moses' day. The whole inhabited earth was thus in a state of deception (I Corinthians 10:20).
- ☛ David was deceived by Satan to number Israel (I Chronicles 21:1).
- ☛ Daniel experienced a further revelation of the hierarchy of evil spirits. The princes of Satan were shown actively opposing the godly messenger sent to help Daniel understand God's counsels for Israel (Daniel 10:12-13).

Other references to Satan, his princes, and his host of wicked spirits are scattered throughout the Old Testament. But their presence is somewhat shrouded until the mighty "Seed of the woman" came in human form to bruise the serpent's head:

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Galatians 4:4).

Suddenly the veil was lifted and the supernatural powers of evil were seen actively working to deceive and triumph over men. Satan, the arch-deceiver himself, appeared in the wilderness to



challenge the "Seed of the woman" (Matthew 4:1-11). Not a Genesis garden scene, now the wilderness of Judea became the testing ground. But this time, Satan utterly failed to deceive and beguile the One who had come as his Conqueror.

Even among the Lord's disciples can Satan's deceptive work be detected. Peter tempted the Lord by suggesting that He turn from the path of the cross (Matthew 16:22-23). Again the same disciple was prompted to lie, "I know not the Man" (Matthew 26:74). And the Apostle Paul was quite aware of:

"... false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness . . ." (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

While in its infancy, the Church was learning the fundamental truths of salvation given to Paul and the other apostles. Then about sixty years after the Lord's ascension, John wrote the Book of Revelation, which for the first time unveiled the war between the Church and evil, supernatural powers.

In John's Book of Revelation, the name and character of the deceiver are clarified. The strength of his forces and the extent of the war are revealed. We learn of an invisible war that rages between the forces of evil and the forces of light. The "dragon"—also called the "serpent"—and his angels are in heavy combat. They are busily engaged in deceiving the nations and world rulers. Their authority extends to every tribe, people, tongue, and nation. Even the saints of God feel the serpent's fury as the Beast (Anti-Christ) wars against them.

War is the keyword of Revelation. War on a scale uncomprehended by mortal man. War between vast angelic powers of light and darkness. War by the dragon and his deceived world-powers against the saints. War by the same world-powers against the Lamb. War by the dragon against Israel. War in all its many phases until the Lamb and His host of "called, chosen, and faithful" followers return to earth and overcome the Serpent.

Our world is approaching the "time of the end" characterized by world-wide deception. Nations and individuals will be deceived on such a vast scale, practically the whole earth will be under Satan's control. Some within and all without the Church will be deceived.

This lesson and the two which follow are to inform you of Satan and his strategy to wreck your Christian life and—if possible—to destroy you! Don't be surprised if you have many distractions and interruptions while studying these lessons. He will do his best to confuse and prevent you from absorbing the information given.

These three lessons are a serious guide to winning your own personal warfare. Ask the Spirit right now to help you understand and assimilate these truths.

True or False?

- ___ 1. The basic meaning of sin is disobedience to Divine law.
- ___ 2. In Genesis 7:39, God told Satan that a descendant of the deceived woman would "bruise his head".
- ___ 3. The descendant, or "seed of the woman" refers to Jesus Christ.
- ___ 4. Satan and his followers are called the "seed of the serpent".
- ___ 5. One of Satan's most useful tactics is deception.
- ___ 6. Two books of the Bible that portray spiritual wars are Genesis and Revelation.
- ___ 7. Satan can transform himself into an angel of light.
- ___ 8. Eventually the powers of the Lamb will overcome the Devil.
- ___ 9. The Book of Revelation calls Satan "the enemy".

AREAS OF ATTACK

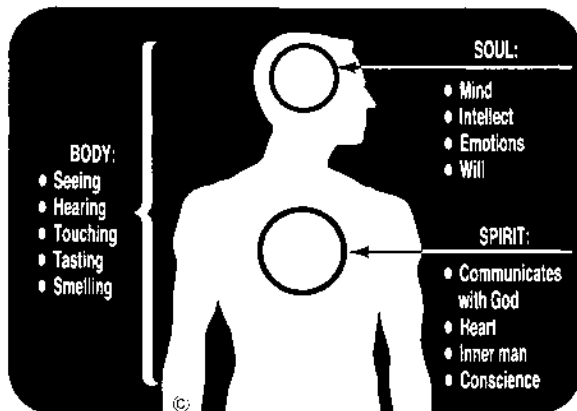
God has designed mankind in a three-part structure. To understand how and where Satan will attack, we must study this three-dimensional nature. Paul explained:

" . . . And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thessalonians 5:23).

We can easily distinguish between the body and

the other two, but how do the spirit and soul differ? God's Word clarifies the meaning of this invisible part of man:

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).



We might classify the spirit, soul, and body like this:

- Spirit – The invisible part of man that communicates with God and the spiritual realm.
- Soul – The invisible dimension of man that thinks and communicates with others—the mental realm. The mind includes the intellect, (thinking, remembering), emotions, and the will (making choices).
- Body – The visible dimension of man governed by the physical senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling. The house in which we live.

THE SPIRIT – DIMENSION NO. 1



Scientists insist that man is an animal. But the Bible teaches that man is a spirit-being who possesses a soul and lives in a body. Made in the

image of God, man is a spiritual being. Let's familiarize ourselves with what the Bible says about these terms and then add to our definitions.

The Greek word for spirit is "pneuma". It literally means "wind" or "breath". In the beginning, God breathed the breath (pneuma) of life into Adam's