

## Questions / Answers

1. Does the Bible teach that a powerful, supernatural being tempts us?  
*No. The Bible never says that a supernatural being tempts us.*
2. Where does sin come from?  
*Inside our minds and hearts.*
3. How does temptation grow and lead us to sin?  
*We are tempted. We let it fill our minds. We finally give in and sin.*
4. Is temptation wrong?  
*It is not wrong to be tempted if we put the temptation out of our minds. It is only wrong if we keep thinking about it and let it grow.*
5. Why does the Bible sometimes speak about sin as if it was a person?  
*It helps us understand how powerful and deceitful sin is.*
6. What does the word satan mean?  
*An adversary—one who opposes someone or is an enemy.*
7. What does the word devil mean?  
*One who speaks evil of someone or falsely accuses them.*
8. What does it mean that by his death Jesus destroyed the power of the devil?  
*The devil is a symbol of sin. Jesus destroyed the power of sin by overcoming sin and giving his perfect life as a sacrifice.*
9. What was the devil that tempted Jesus?  
*The thoughts that came from his own mind and heart.*
10. Who is the only great, eternal power in the universe?  
*God.*

## Memory verses

James 1:14—15      Hebrews 4:15      Isaiah 45:5—6

## Discussion

Discuss why the Bible uses the picture of a powerful supernatural being to describe sin. What sort of things tempt us? How can we stop evil thoughts growing in our minds?

## Writing

Read James 1:14—15. Explain how temptation grows into sin.

# CBM Senior Lessons

## Lesson 48 The Devil and Satan



**READING** 1 John 3:8; Hebrews 2:14; Mark 7:21—23;  
Jeremiah 17:9; Hebrews 4:15; Isaiah 45:5—6

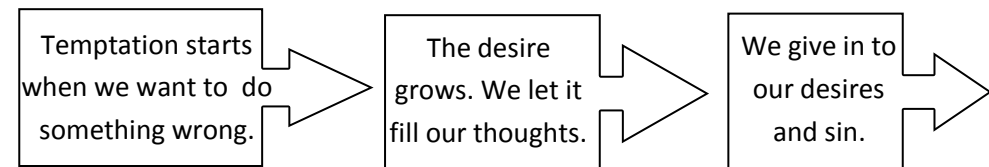
## LESSON

The Bible explains the origin of sin in the world. The idea that a supernatural being (the devil or satan) tempts people to do wrong, or even causes all the evil in the world is wrong.

The Bible teaches that sin comes from inside us, not from a tempter outside. This means we are responsible for our own sins. We sin because we enjoy doing what we want to do. It is much easier to give in to our own selfish desires than to follow God's ways.

The Bible teaches that sin comes from our own minds and hearts. Jesus said, "From **within, out of men's hearts**, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit ... All these evils come **from inside** and make a man unclean." Jeremiah said, "The **heart** is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick."

James 1:14—15 explains how temptation grows into sin. "Each one is tempted when, **by his own evil desire**, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."



We are tempted by our own desires. The temptation itself is not sin—that is part of human nature. It becomes wrong when we allow the desire to sin to grow in our minds. We think more and more about the wrong thing that we want to do. We think less and less about doing what God wants us to do. If we allow the desire to grow in our minds then, finally we will sin.

In the Bible the devil and satan are used as symbols of human sin. The Bible sometimes speaks about sin as if it was a person. It is using a picture of a powerful superhuman being so that we can understand just how powerful and deceitful sin is. The temptation to sin which comes from within us is so strong that sometimes it seems like a powerful enemy making us do what is wrong.

The word Satan means an adversary — one who opposes someone or is an enemy to them. It is often used about an ordinary person who opposes someone or is an enemy. Sometimes the word is used about a person who is usually good. Jesus called Peter ‘Satan’ when he opposed Jesus by trying to turn Jesus away from doing God’s will. (Matthew 16:23). In Numbers 22:22 we are told of a prophet called Balaam, who was going on a journey to curse Israel. “God’s anger was kindled because he went, and the angel of the Lord stood in the road as an adversary (original word is satan).” The angel was opposing Balaam’s wrong action. The angel was acting for the good of Balaam but he was called satan.

Neither Peter nor the angel were a powerful evil person. Satan means enemy. Man’s greatest enemy is his own sinful self. So the word satan is often used in the New Testament as a picture of sin. It is used as a symbol for anything that opposes God.

The word for devil means one who speaks evil of someone or falsely accuses them. The word devil is only used in the New Testament. Devil is never mentioned in the Old Testament. The word devil is sometimes used to speak about ordinary people who say unkind or untrue things about other people. e.g. 1 Timothy 3:11.

Like the word ‘satan’, the devil is also used as a symbol of human thinking that is opposed to God’s will. Hebrews 2:14 helps us to understand this. These verses tell us that Jesus was born as a human being so that he could destroy the devil by dying on the cross. Many people believe that the devil is an immortal being who tempts people to do evil. How could Jesus, a human being, by his death, destroy a powerful superhuman being? It does not make sense!

Hebrews 2:14 says that by his death Jesus “destroyed him who has the power of death—that is the **devil**.” Compare this with Hebrews 9:26 which says, “Christ has appeared ... to do away with **sin** for the sacrifice of himself.”

Both verses are saying the same thing. The power of sin or the devil was destroyed when Jesus died because we can be forgiven through his sacrifice. So the devil is the symbol of sin. Jesus overcame sin in himself and conquered sin.

### Sin and the devil are the same thing

<i>The devil is the enemy of God</i>	<i>Sin is the enemy of God</i>
<i>The devil tempts men</i>	<i>Sin tempts men</i>
<i>The devil is deceitful</i>	<i>Sin is deceitful</i>
<i>The devil causes death</i>	<i>Sin causes death</i>
<i>Jesus overcame the devil</i>	<i>Jesus overcame sin</i>

*The devil is the sinful force within human nature*

Some people find it hard to think that Jesus was tempted as we are. Temptation itself is not sin. It is only when we give way to temptation that it becomes sin. Hebrews 4:15 tells us that Jesus can sympathise with us when we are struggling with temptations because he was tempted in exactly the same way as we are—but he never gave in to temptation and sin.

Jesus was tempted by the devil. He had just been given the power of the Holy Spirit after his baptism. Note that it was the Spirit of God (not the devil) which took him into the desert to be tempted. Jesus had a tremendous work to do in teaching the people and giving his life on the cross. He needed to battle with sin in himself. He needed to overcome the temptations to use God’s power for himself. He needed to overcome the temptation to take the easy road instead of the road of suffering and pain that led to the cross. The temptations of Jesus came from his own mind and heart. But he overcame them all.

God is the great power in the universe in control of all things. He is the one great Creator who keeps everything alive by His power. There can be no other supernatural power challenging Him. God says, “I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God ...there is none besides me. I am the Lord, and there is no other.” (Isaiah 45:5—6).

- ◆ The Bible never says people are tempted by a wicked supernatural being.
- ◆ Sin comes from within our own minds and hearts.
- ◆ Sin is a powerful force in our lives, tempting us to do evil.
- ◆ The word ‘satan’ mean adversary—one who opposes or is an enemy.
- ◆ The word ‘devil’ means one who speaks evil of someone or falsely accuses them.
- ◆ The words devil and satan are sometimes used of ordinary people like Peter.
- ◆ The devil and satan are used as a picture of a powerful superhuman being to help us understand how powerful and deceitful sin is.