

(c) Why didn't God kill Lucifer at the very beginning of his sin?

Answer: If God had done this, He would have nipped Lucifer's sin in the bud, but He would have been misunderstood by the other angels. No satisfying explanation of sin and its consequences could have been given to them at that early stage. They loved and trusted Lucifer, and his sudden and unexplained disappearance would have given rise to uneasiness, suspicion and alarm. Other angels would have asked: "Who will be the next to disappear without explanation?" God would have killed one rebel, but He would have aggravated the spirit of distrust and discontent. So He chose the wiser course—to give sin time to grow, like a seed, and produce its own baleful harvest. Thus Lucifer would publicly expose his true character and condemn himself.

(d) When Satan is finally destroyed, can we be sure that sin will never rise up again?

Answer: Yes, we can be absolutely sure. At the final judgment day, when Satan is about to be cast into the lake of fire, the universe will be in a totally different position from what it was at the beginning. Then, sin was a masked intruder—a dark, inscrutable mystery—and even God could not fully explain its nature or consequences. But at the judgment day, the universe will have seen sin develop, mature, produce its fearful harvest, and thus unmask itself.

Every question concerning the love and justice of God will have been finally answered. Every false accusation of Satan's will have been successfully met. Every shadow of suspicion will have been allayed. Every doubt will have been dispelled. Sin will have given birth to its own antidote—Calvary's Cross—and Calvary will have proved the monstrous cruelty of Satan, on the one hand, and the boundless love of God on the other.

Because of this public demonstration of the true nature of sin, in stark contrast with the true nature of God, the universe will be forever secure.

3.—THE MASTERY OF SATAN

One question remains to be answered—an urgent, personal question: "What about US? Has God left us to fight the battle with Satan single-handed?"

We have been born without option into a world where Satan is master. What chance have we got against such a crafty, super-human foe? Are we just helpless pawns on the Devil's chessboard?

No, thank God! He has provided us with a supernatural armour which makes us impregnable against the assaults of Satan.

Eph. 6:10-17: "The whole armour of God."

Luke 10:19: "Over all the power of the enemy."

1 John 4:4: "Greater is He that is in you."

Conclusion In view of what we have learned in this lesson, our deepest concern should be: "Have we got the armour on? The whole armour? Have we availed ourselves to the full of God's provision?"

No Christian author has written more wisely or positively on this subject of personal victory over Satan than Ellen G. White, in her well-known book, "The Desire of Ages". Her words are worth memorising:

"There are Christians who think and speak altogether too much about the power of Satan. They think of their adversary, they pray about him, they talk about him, and he looms up greater and greater in their imagination. It is true that Satan is a powerful being; but thank God, we have a mighty saviour, who cast out the evil one from heaven. Satan is pleased when we magnify his power. Why not talk of Jesus? Why not magnify His power and His love?" (p 493).

Rev. 12:11: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony."