



LESSON 39

Foundations Curriculum

Repentance, Part 1

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Introduction

Repentance, Part 1

In this thirty-ninth lesson of the Foundations Curriculum, we will speak about repentance in the light of the Holy Scriptures, examining the attitude of those who, when they believed, publicly showed an act of contrition, of surrender. In addition, we will also speak about the sin that produced the fall of Satan and of man: pride, arrogance, the desire to take the place of God, to be worshiped above the Creator.

1) Understanding the Sin of Man

We must understand well, in the light of the Scriptures, what sin is, and its origins and motivations, so that we may understand the dimension of repentance. The sin of man was expressed in direct disobedience to God. He ate the fruit of the tree that God had forbidden him. But we ask, what motivated him? What was the inward decision made to become independent of God and to do his own will? Man allowed unbelief regarding the clear Word of God to give rise to arrogance and pride. And the consequence of that decision was the sin of disobedience.

It was the ancient serpent, the Devil, who sowed sin in the heart of man, as the text of Genesis chapter 3 proves. There the entrance of sin into the heart of man is recorded. It is also our understanding that this was the same sin that was born and dwelt in the heart of that perfect angel, who afterward became a fallen being, and this produced his fall.

We must turn to the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel to understand a little of what happened with the fallen cherub. It is through them that we have a clue to what was taking place there in eternity, and specifically, in the heart of that cherub.

Let us look at the following text.

You were the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius,

topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.

Ezekiel 28:12–17 (NKJV)

How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.”

Isaiah 14:12–14 (NKJV)

Ezekiel's prophecy is addressed to a certain king of Tyre. However, it is possible to observe that some of the descriptions do not apply to a mere human king. Under no circumstances could an earthly king claim to have been “in Eden,” or to be “the anointed cherub,” or to be on “the holy mountain of God.”

In light of this, we may conclude that this prophecy is intended to describe the character of the anointed cherub who, in falling, became the enemy of God — the Devil, or Satan.

Some versions¹ of the Portuguese Bible use the term “Lucifer” in Isaiah 14:12 in place of “morning star.”²

Let us return to our original question: What sin did Lucifer sow in the heart of man?

Let us examine the expressions contained in the word that the Lord addresses to him.

In the midst of the fiery stones... your heart was lifted up because of your beauty... You have said in your heart: “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation... I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.”

Ezekiel 28:14–17; Isaiah 14:13–14 (NKJV)

¹Almeida Corrigida Fiel; Almeida Recebida; King James Fiel; Bíblia Literal do Texto Tradicional; Tradução O Livro.

²The term “Lucifer” is a term of Latin origin meaning “light-bearer.” It was a term used in Catholic tradition for those who carried candles in a procession, and it was also a proper name. There was a well-known Spanish bishop in the fourth century named Lucifer Calaritanus of Cagliari, who was even canonized and is known as Saint Lucifer. There are also accounts of a Christian martyr called Lucifer. In astronomy, it is the Latin name for the planet Venus. In Roman folklore, Lucifer was the son of Aurora, goddess of the dawn. In the earliest Latin translations of the Bible, the word lucifer was used as a translation for “morning star,” but with a lowercase initial letter, not as a proper name. In the biblical context, the expression “morning star” is a term of honor given to Jesus, and a pejorative term for one who desires to boast or promote himself. The Hebrew term shares the same root as the word “Hallelujah,” used rightly to honor and praise God, but wrongly by one who wants to promote himself.

As we meditate on these expressions, it becomes clear that pride is the sin that precisely defines the deviations of Satan's heart. And it was exactly this sin that he sowed in the heart of man.

Let us return to the text of Genesis: *"and you will be like God, knowing good and evil"* (Genesis 3:5).

When man makes the decision to no longer depend on God to acquire knowledge, it is implied that pride lay behind that desire for independence. It was not something Adam did or said; it was an inward decision, a disposition to be independent, to be master of his own life, to govern his own thoughts and attitudes without depending on God. Pride served as the foundation and gave support to this desire for independence.

When we compare the text of Genesis 3 with the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel, the Holy Spirit helps us understand that there was independence, and He also helps us understand that it was provoked by pride. It is also implied that there was a loss of trust in God, or unbelief.

We can compare the sinner to a tree that, besides its branches, has roots. And just as cutting off branches does not destroy a tree — we must cut it at the root — sin is not resolved merely with external changes. We must go to the origin of the problem.

In this comparison, we have sins that are the consequences of other sins. Jesus said,

But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

Matthew 15:18–19 (NKJV)

In this way, we can imagine that pride, rebellion, covetousness, hatred, and unbelief precede adultery, lying, murder, and so on.

When we speak of sin, we are not referring only to outward acts, but chiefly to inward attitudes, within the heart. In the same way, repentance is a call to changes that go beyond outward acts — a call to change the mind concerning the whole of one's works. We must repent of sinful things, of crimes, of theft, of lies, of sexual impurities; but above all, we need to repent of the inward attitudes that motivate sin. Before God, we need to recognize not merely that we have sinned, but that there is something within us that is corrupted — a nature that loves to sin.

This was the understanding of the apostles, as we can see in Paul's words to Timothy, describing the qualifications of an elder.

not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.

1 Timothy 3:6 (NKJV)

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 16:18 (NKJV)

These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: a proud look...

2) The Contrast of Pride with Contrition

At this point, let us recall the teaching on conviction of sin.

The examples that were used, from Acts 2:37–38, reveal that all those who heard the Gospel, and were convinced by the Holy Spirit of their true condition before God, were seized with a deep sorrow and distress (contrition, fear) because of their sin. We call this feeling conviction of sin.

The text of Matthew 3:5–8 relates that those who came to John the Baptist to be baptized by him in the Jordan River had the same resolve: they confessed their sins (publicly). That was a public place, and those people did not hold back from opening their hearts, from exposing themselves. The same happened with Zacchaeus, the dishonest tax collector. To see Jesus, he did not mind climbing a tree and exposing himself.

In Luke 15 we have the story of the prodigal son and the way he returned to his father's house — repentant, ashamed, willing to be treated as a servant. This only proves that whoever is contrite does not set conditions.

In Acts 19 there is the account of a crowd in Ephesus who came confessing and publicly denouncing their own deeds (their evil deeds, their sins).

The Lord says that He dwells on a high and lofty throne, but also dwells with the contrite and lowly in spirit (Isaiah 57:15). He adds also that His eyes will be on the man who keeps in his heart an attitude of grief, a lowliness of spirit, and who trembles at His word (Isaiah 66:2).

David, while under the judgment of God, when His hand was heavy upon him because of his sin with Bathsheba, learned what sacrifices were pleasing to God and which He would not despise: a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17). It is for this reason that God gives grace to the humble and resists the proud (James 4:6).

In light of these examples, we can affirm that there can be no true conversion if man does not renounce his pride and arrogance.

The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance...

Proverbs 8:13 (NKJV)

Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: pride...

Ezekiel 16:49 (NKJV)

Ceasing to be independent of God and fleeing from the world and its pleasures must be our greatest pursuit and our preaching. Our preaching needs to bring about this impact. Pride and arrogance infect the heart of man toward independence, and from this attitude springs everything else that displeases God. It is necessary to break with this entire chain of sins.

Pride was the first sin in heaven, brought into the heart of man on earth. Many times it remains there, hidden, motivating every kind of vile disobedience. It is necessary to destroy pride through humiliation.

“Repent” is the first direction that Peter gives to those who want to change their lives. In Acts chapter 2, after announcing Jesus and speaking of the iniquities they had committed, they asked what they should do, completely contrite over what they had heard.

Repentance, in the terms of Scripture, is an experience of what God thinks about our iniquity. It is a revelation of the Holy Spirit concerning our condition of degradation and depravity. Man is not changed by means of a moral code and outward disciplines. Only the cross can kill pride to bring forth the new man.

Before I close, let me leave a quote from Andrew Murray, the South African pastor and writer:

All that we have of pride is what we have of the fallen angel living within us. And what we have of true humility is what we have of the Lamb of God living within us.

Andrew Murray

Supplemental Reading:

Matthew 3:2 | Matthew 4:17 | Luke 24:49 | Acts 2:38 | Acts 17:30 | 2 Peter 3:9

Peter comforts and encourages the brothers to persevere. God does not delay; He is longsuffering, that all may come to repentance.

CONCLUSION

In this thirty-ninth lesson of the Foundations Curriculum, we learned about the sin that produced the fall of Lucifer in heaven and, afterward, of man on earth: pride, arrogance. We also came to understand what true repentance is and how it is shown, through a surrendered heart, willing to obey, to confess its wrongs, and to change the course of its life.

CONSIDER CAREFULLY

- 01** Ezekiel's prophecy is addressed to a certain king of Tyre. How can we know that it does not refer to a mere human king?
- 02** When man made the decision not to depend on God to acquire knowledge, what was the sin behind that attitude?
- 03** In light of which texts can we conclude that Lucifer's sin was pride?
- 04** What can we conclude when we compare the text of Genesis 3 with the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel?
- 05** What do we call the feeling of those who were convinced of their sin by the Holy Spirit?

*having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.*

Ephesians 2:20 (NKJV)

