



# THE CHALLENGER

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PROCLAIMING THE WORD TO THE WORLD

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## SIN - 1

By Pastor Mike Eccleston

When you want to solve a problem or truly deal with a particular situation, what should we do? The answer is thorough: Get to its roots, rather than deal with the branches; and get to the disease, rather than dealing with the symptoms. It is the only way to achieve lasting results. This is what every believer must do with respect to the sin question.

Sin originated within the foreknowledge of God. He knew that the creation of angels and later, human beings generated the possibility for sin to exist – as a fact. Do you know where the first sin occurred? It was in heaven. Do you know who committed that first sin? It was an angel.

Ezekiel 28:11-17 states,

*“Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfected in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise that have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thy heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.”*

There are two personalities in view here: The literal king of Tyrus, named Ithobal II, and who was representative of pride and self sufficiency; and a supernatural being beyond the natural king.

Verses 1-10 deal with the natural king:

- a. Riches and power so fed his pride that he claimed to be divine.
- b. Self-deification was his greatest sin.
- c. God’s rebuke came as Ithobal II was reminded that he was but man and not God.
- d. Our point being, that though this king thought and acted as if he were God, it did not alter the fact that he was not God!

This brings us to the second personality which orthodox Bible believers hold to be:

- a. the original condition of the Devil, and

*(Profiles—Continued from page 4)*

In his preaching he had few equals, and as pastor demonstrated a tender compassion for his people. His counsel for preachers and pulpit example are worth noticing and doing as he did. He warned against losing out to a **“Monday”** depression, which could ruin a preacher’s week (or anyone’s week for that matter). He was strongly opposed to sensationalism, railed against the promotion of **“self”** in the pulpit, saturated his sermons with Scripture, made a brilliant use of illustrations, and believed that to uplift the spiritual tone of the church, the pastor should provide spiritual nourishment rather than psychological stimulation.

Being a tireless laborer, he rarely took a day off, and at the age of 59, in 1895, he burned himself out in the Gospel ministry, and departed to be with His Lord and Savior.

Shortly after his death, the Clarendon Street Baptist Church began a spiritual and numerical decline from which it never recovered. After numerous location moves and continuing declining membership, it ceased existence in 1985. There is truth to the statement that, **“You are only one preacher away from compromise or apostasy.”**

His gravestone bears the great identifying marks of his ministry: a pastor who loved the truth of Christ’s imminent return. It states, **Pastor A.J. Gordon, 1836-1895, ‘Until He Come.’** Dr. Gordon was truly a pioneer fundamentalist.

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b. speaks to the fall of Satan as well.

People have asked, 'Why did God create the Devil?' He didn't. What He created was a pure spirit-being of great wisdom, beauty and glory. However, this spirit-being conspired to be God and is now the arch enemy of God and mankind. Let's look at some of his characteristics:

1. Vs. 12, "**Thou sealest up the sum**" He was everything, all wrapped up in one angelic being.
2. Vs. 12, "**full of wisdom**" Compare the world's wisdom found in I Cor.1:18, 19, 25 and realize that you can take a great man of the Word and get Him off course through the wisdom of this world, and then watch what he will be able to do for Satan. This being had more than human wisdom – it was angelic.
3. Vs. 12, "**perfect in beauty**" There were no external flaws. It was a complete picture of physical perfection.
4. Vs. 13, "**Thou hast been in Eden**" - From Luke 10:18, it might be possible that Satan was appointed, from the beginning, to take charge of the world.
5. Dr. Harry Ironside suggests that he had charge of the lower creation before man was created.
6. Vs. 13, "**every precious stone**" signifies the beauty and glory ascribed to him.
7. Vs. 13, "**the workmanship . . . was prepared in thee**" It is thought that he was given charge of the music and praises of the heavenly host. Don't miss the connection here to music and the original composer, which was to honor and glorify God. We all need to step aside from our likes/dislikes in music and ask ourselves, to who, with the current music being played today, is being honored and glorified.
8. Vs.14, "**anointed cherub**" He was the angel that attended to the throne of God.
9. He was entrusted with the protection of the holy presence of God, and was set there by God Himself.
10. Vs. 15, "**perfect**" He was complete! That is, UNTIL, iniquity was found in him
11. vs.16 – he sinned
12. vs. 17 – gives the reason (heart lifted up...)

We now move from the origin of sin to its nature. And we go to Isaiah 14:12-14:

***"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."***

We learn that the angelic being of Ezekiel 28, is named Lucifer before his fall. It means, brightness or morning star. Where exactly did he fall from? Heaven, where sin originated. He wanted to rise above the position given him by God, to be like God Himself. In vss. 13-14, we find the famous five, "**I will's**". He is still seeking the fifth, I will, and will briefly receive from lost mankind in the Tribulation what he has been seeking from the beginning. Lucifer is an apostate, a murderer, and a liar. He is Satan incarnate, and has never "**abode in the truth.**" He counterfeits any and all truth of God. How easily he has moved into church movements, ministries and using theological term-switching where there is a lack of discernment of the truth of God's Word, or no discernment at all.

In Part 2 and 3, we hope to explore, Lord willing, the origin of sin on earth. When we are done, you might have a brief, yet concise understanding of the matter of sin, and its insidious nature – bringing the Lord Jesus Christ to earth to redeem a lost mankind through His substitutionary blood sacrifice, death, burial and resurrection, and thus, offering to mankind salvation through His finished work, as we trust Him wholly for paying our debt of sin, and receiving Him by faith alone.

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## THE ACCOMPANIMENTS OF PRAYER

Luke 11:1, "**Lord, teach us to pray.**"

Prayer is a gift which every believer has the privilege of exercising: no special calling or commissioning is required or needed. We need more "**pray-ers**" today than we need preachers. If we had more "**pray-ers**" today, we would have better preachers!!! Prayer is 1) a precept of Scripture (I Thess.5:17); it should be 2) a priority for servants (Acts 6:4); and 3) a pleasure of the saints (Rev.3:20).

In Hebrews 6:9, we read about the "**the things that accompany salvation.**" Not only are there elements that accompany salvation however, there are elements that accompany true prayer as well. Thus, we learn that:

1. **True prayer is accomplished by a liberating from sin** – (I John 1:9/ Prov.28:13) When is it that we feel the least like praying? When un-confessed sin is present in our lives. The believers who sin the least are those who confess their sins the most. The steps to spiritual victory include:
  - a) a loathing of our sin (Psa.51:3-4)
  - b) a letting go of our sin (Psa.66:18)
  - c) a liberating of our sin (I John 1:9)
2. **True prayer is accomplished by a lifting of our spirits** – (Lamentations 3:41) In true prayer we lift our spirit above the strife and sounds of the sphere of this Earthly place, and enter into a "**heavenly**" sphere. There is much too much "**low**" Praying today: we need "**high**" praying, where our spirits are lifted into the "**heavenlies**" with the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph.1:3)
3. **True prayer is accompanied by a looking unto our Savior** – (Heb.12:1-2) We have looked to Christ for our salvation Isa,45:22); Now, a) we look to Christ to supply (Phil.4:19);
  - b) we look to Christ to come again (Phil.3:20); and

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# Personal Word

## ISAIAH 55:11

SO SHALL MY WORD BE THAT GOETH FORTH OUT OF MY MOUTH: IT SHALL NOT RETURN UNTO ME VOID, BUT IT SHALL ACCOMPLISH THAT WHICH I PLEASE, AND IT SHALL PROSPER IN THE THING WHERE TO I SENT IT.

As we wind up the month and get ready for what March has in store for us, several things come to mind to hopefully cause us to think and pause where we are spiritually before the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word at this time.

Pastor Porter is still in rehab. There is progress, but it continues to be slow. There are discouraging times because of the length of his recovery, and there are encouraging times as well. He has taken more steps than the last time we wrote, and earned himself the number one. He joked often about being number one. "I'm number one," he laughs. In his therapy there are levels to get to, number one only being the first of several. After a few minutes of fooling around about the number, I told him that usually that is much of the problem with professing Christians: they think that they

are the only ones to be concerned with, or, that their wishes and desires are greater than God's wishes, desires, and commands for them. God is always the only One to be number One. Anything else is idolatry. Isn't it something to see how often self, family, job, career, fame, a house, recreation, sports, or a host of other things get to be the priority of our lives? But, most would never admit to being idolatrous. Please continue to intercede for our Brother in Christ as he recovers. He is grateful to the many of you who have written him and told him such kind things. They have been such a great encouragement. If you haven't yet written to him, take some time out of your schedule to drop him a line.

I have been privileged to travel out of the country recently on a missionary trip to a land where the truth of God's Word is not only looked down on; it is not allowed to be spoken in public settings. The things that I saw in the country in spite of the warnings and regulations, warmed my heart and made me realize that serving the Lord isn't about being a free people or an enslaved people: it is about our level of commitment to Christ wherever we are. I saw people that were driven to do phenomenal things in order to get and learn the truths of God's Word in order to be pleasing to their Savior and equipped to get the Gospel to others. I was allowed to speak at a gathering of people that assembled together on the Lord's Day. Their singing of hymns was strong and enthusiastic. There was no piano or organ. They were attentive to me in spite of our language barrier and the interpreter sounded forth the same urgency of the message. Later, as many of us were talking, someone came over to me and told me that five people had by faith, accepted Christ as their Savior. How can I explain to you or to anyone, in words, the gratefulness to the Lord for being in the right place at the right time with the right message? During the week there was teaching at another location for those wanting to learn as much as possible about the Bible. The location was isolated and secure and the teaching went for about ten hours each day. They endeared themselves to me, and I did as well to them. There were some that commuted by bus, traveling about two hours. Late at night they did the same to go back to their homes. I asked my church members recently, "How many of you would take a bus for two hours to come to church here?" I am afraid that in spite of all of our freedoms of religion in the United States, we have failed to take advantage of the abilities we have, while another culture without those freedoms, are doing what we should have been doing. We have taken far too much for granted, in our Christian lives, our service, and our witness. Our country is one that has had great light in the past. Compared to many nations, we still have great light. However, the movement of that light is headed toward darkness, with few voices standing in the gap and voicing their concerns. And all the while, with nations in darkness, lost souls are being won, one by one, and are moving in an unseen swell toward the light. You may be able to do much, or you may not be able to do much, but surely you can do something to advance the Gospel, to stand for the truth against an avalanche of compromise and error, or to teach others the simplicity found in God's Word. Please, not for me, but for the sake of the Gospel of Christ, do something, and do it today and everyday that God gives you – both in your personal Christian life and in your local church.

Asst. Editor Dr. T. Michael Eccleston

(Prayer—Continued from page 2)

c) we look to Him now in supplication

4. **True prayer is accompanied by a longing for sanctification** – (Psa.17:15) Beholding the face of Christ in righteousness should not only be a prospective assurance, but a present aspiration. True prayer can be defined as a **“desire for God.”** True prayer does not change the will of God, but it enables God to change the will of man.
5. **True prayer is accompanied by a laboring in supplication** – (Col.4:12) James 5:16, speaks about, **“effectual fervent prayers.”** The effectual fervent means, **‘to energize.’** True prayer is putting forth of spiritual energy, as well as the **“fervent”** (striving, or agonizing) of Col.4:12.
6. **True prayer is accompanied by a linking with Scripture** – (II Thess.3:1-2) There are three important truths to note about the connection between the Word of God and prayer. We must *a) pray with the language of Scripture.* There is not much of that taking place in prayer today; *b) pray in the light of Scripture;* and *c) pray by the Lord of Scripture.* It was said of the man called ‘Praying Hyde,’ that when he knelt to pray, the Bible was always open before him.
7. **True prayer is accompanied with a leaning on the Holy Spirit** – (Eph.6:18) The arm of the flesh will fail us every time; the arm of the Spirit will always prevail.

True prayer never walks or works alone: it has choice companions such as those listed above. I wonder if we are truly **“praying”** or just **“playing at prayer”** when we say that we pray. A prayerful life is always a powerful life, and a prayer-less life is always a powerless life. The disciples asked the Lord to teach them how to pray. He did, not only to them, but to all of His own as well. So, let's be a praying people from here on out.

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**PROFILES IN HISTORY**

DR. A. J. GORDON

The fundamentalist movement in the United States originated in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Among the leading figures in its formation was Dr. A. J. Gordon, of Boston, Mass. During his 25 years as pastor of the Clarendon Street Baptist Church, he became widely known for his expository preaching, his leadership in missionary causes, a strong spokesman for the pre-millennial position, and his strong opposition to apostate modernism.

He was named after the great Baptist missionary to Burma, Adoniram Judson, and was saved at 15 years of age, making a public profession of his call to the ministry the following year. As a student in New London, New Hampshire preparatory school, he took an immediate liking to Greek and became a skillful student of the Greek New Testament. In 1856, he entered Brown University, which at the time was under the leadership of Dr. Francis Wayland, a great apologist for the faith. In 1860, he enrolled at Newton Seminary. His aspiration for Christ-likeness in seminary days characterized the remainder of his life, taking pre-eminence in all his activities.

In June of 1863, he was installed as pastor of the Jamaica Plains Church, in W. Roxbury, Mass., where he served faithfully for six years.

When Dr. Gordon became pastor of Clarendon Street Baptist Church, he found a congregation that was cold, fashionable and formal, with a generous sprinkling of wealthy individuals in the pews. His goal was the removal of dead traditionalism and a return to the simplicity of the local New Testament church. He detested the formalism which had penetrated the many churches of like mind for several years now, calling them *“ecclesiastical corpses.”*

Several years of patient ministering were required before the necessary changes became a reality. To discourage ritualistic tendencies, Gordon edited a new hymnal which became a standard for Baptist church for many years.

Two events helped turn the spiritual tide after several years of faithful labor: 1) the ministry of *“Uncle John”* Vassar, within the congregation; and 2) the D.L. Moody Boston meetings of 1877. His church stood within 300 feet of the Moody Tabernacle and was used from the very beginning of the campaign for overflow and inquiry meetings. The reception of 30 former drunkards into the membership had a dramatic effect on the church’s ministry.

Among the numerous ministries he helped found and promote were; The industrial Temporary Home, a ministry for drunkards and the temporarily destitute; The Watchword, a monthly publication with good exposition, and no advertising; the Boston Missionary School (now known as Gordon College); and the New England Evangelistic Association. It is really unfortunate that 115 years after his death, none of the above ministries that remain are fundamental in nature, having caved in to the new evangelical compromises.

Dr. Gordon had a heartbeat for missions and spent much of his time giving leadership to missionary causes. He served 17 years on the executive committee of the American Baptist Missionary Union. He was strongly opposed to carnal money raising methods for missions, whom he termed, *“cooking stove apostasy,”* and *“amusements heresy.”*

Dr. Gordon believed that the ministry of the local church and the ministry of the missionary should be closely bound to each other. He wrote, *“If somehow the life of the missionary could be bound up with the life of the local church, so that his success should be their success or his failure their failure, what an impulse it would give to their intercessions... I believe that God designed to lay the burden of the whole world upon every church, and that every church might thus find out that it has a whole Lord Jesus Christ with whom to bear that burden. Then would the church not only pray and give, but it would go and send of its own, instead of depending on a central bureau to attend to all this.”*

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