



# Theology Corner

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*Theological Reflections by Paul Chutikorn - Director of Faith Formation*

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## **“Is Satan Still Sinning Even Now?”**

Since I have been on the topic of Satan lately (this will be the last one for a while, I promise) a question came up regarding whether Satan is still sinning in hell. This is a fascinating question, and one which requires further understanding of what sin is and a brief distinction between time and eternity. Picking up from last week, we know that heaven (the beatific vision) is simply a state in which one is perfectly united with God in eternal life. Hell, then, is a state in which one is eternally separated from God. Because of the nature of heaven and hell, it is not something that is temporal, meaning that it does not consist of time. So, in one aspect, we would answer that Satan does not “stop” sinning because by rejecting God due to his pride and envy, he eternally separated himself from God and therefore he always remains in a state of sin. Recall from last week when I was talking about how the angels make a free-will choice to accept God and receive the beatific vision, or they reject him and will never receive the beatific vision. For the latter scenario, they are then thought of as being cast into hell in the sense that they will never be united with God for all eternity.

The other aspect of this is from the definition of sin itself. We know that sin is a disordered act by which we make the free will choice to disobey God – to willingly act contrary to His will. When we as human beings sin, since we are not living in an eternal state, we have the ability to stop sinning because when we sin in time, we can then make a choice at another time to cooperate with God and accept His grace. Accepting His grace is the only way to come out of a state of sin and move into a state of grace. Thus, being eternally separated from God, Satan cannot possibly come out of a state of sin since that would require some form of participation with God’s divine nature. But with Satan being outside of time, once he fell from grace, there is no “going back” so to speak. Similarly, after our human death, when we are no longer subject to time, we are either going to heaven or going to hell (purgatory is simply a state where we are awaiting final purification). For example, once we are in heaven, we no longer have the ability to sin because we have already attained eternal life (happiness), and once we are in hell, we no longer have the ability to be virtuous since we are in eternal death entirely separated from God.