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What Does the Bible Teach About Satan the Devil?



by
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will ultimately be destroyed in this “lake of fire”—and Satan will intimately witness this, his utter defeat.

But note again the last part of Revelation 20:10—“and they, *Satan and the demons*, shall be tormented day and night into the ages of eternity.” Once its purpose is accomplished, the “lake of fire” will be extinguished—just prior to the full establishment of the *new* heavens and the *new* earth (Rev. 21:1). So this verse does *not* say that Satan remains forever in the “lake of fire”; rather, it simply says that he and his demons are *tormented*—forever.

How can a spirit being be tormented? Only *mentally*—by depriving them of two things: 1) A physical body in which to dwell. Apparently, disembodied demons (not righteous angels) are miserable, frustrated, restless (compare Luke 11:24 and Mark 5:10-12). And 2) a sense of purpose. Faced with the stark reality of their total failure, Satan and his demons will be eternally cut off from both God and man—forced to wander aimlessly in the “blackest darkness” forever (Jude 13). Such isolation will be *utter torment* for these evil beings.

Looking again at Ezekiel 28, some conclude that Satan will be *destroyed* (verse 16). But the Hebrew word here for “destroy” can have the meaning of simply being brought to ruin, or made void. Verse 16 does not say God will destroy Satan himself, but that He would bring him to nothing—“I will expel you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones” in heaven. Thus, God anciently cast Satan from His presence. A similar passage is found in Mark 1:24, where a demon asks Jesus if He had come to “destroy” him. But here, the word translated *destroy* can also mean “to bring to nothing”—an appropriate description of Satan’s coming eternal isolation.

And that is Satan’s ultimate fate—to be forever cast from the presence of God!

What Does the Bible Teach About Satan the Devil?

To millions of people today, the devil is but a fairytale character—a blood-red grotesque creature with horns, a pointed tail, and dragon-like wings. As such, he is viewed as the mythical embodiment of evil. Few, however, take the idea of a *real* devil seriously.

But the Bible teaches that there really *is* a devil—known as Satan, meaning *enemy* or *adversary*. And not only is he very real, he is very dangerous.

But where did Satan come from? Did God create him? And if so, why? What is Satan’s purpose? Is he actively involved with humanity? Could he affect you and your life?

Satan loves the popular view that he is but a mythological creature, because this keeps people *unaware* of the reality that he is the “god” of this present age (II Cor. 4:4). The Bible shows Satan to be a powerful spirit being with a great deal of influence over humanity. In fact, Satan is *actively* “deceiving the whole world” (Rev. 12:9). And that *likely* includes you!

The apostle Peter warns Christians that the devil is prowling around looking for someone to “spiritually devour” (I Pet. 5:8). Indeed, Satan—along with his demon cohorts—is mentioned numerous times in Scripture. To understand his origins, we must look to the beginning—even before the universe was created.

CHAPTER ONE

The Origin of Satan the Devil

We know from Scripture that God must have created the angels *first*—for they all *shouted for joy* when God laid the foundations of the earth (Job 38:4-7). The earth was created as a jewel adorning the heavens—a spectacular planet that inspired awe in the angels.

The angels—who typically accompany God in heaven (Rev. 4; etc.)—shouted for joy because the earth was a *perfect* creation. Strangely, however, we read in Genesis that the earth was “without form and void”—with only darkness covering the planet (Gen. 1:2). The Hebrew words used here refer to something that is waste, *vain*, in absolute chaos. Did God actually create the earth as a chaotic wasteland? What happened to the earth that inspired *awe* in the angels?

We know that God is not the “author of confusion” (I Cor. 14:33). Indeed, in Isaiah 45:18 God declares that He did *not* create the earth *in vain*. The Hebrew word used here in Isaiah is one of the same words used in Genesis 1:2—meaning waste, empty, confused, chaotic.

So what happened? A proper rendering of Genesis 1:2 helps us to understand: “And the earth **became** without form and void...” (Gen. 1:2). The Hebrew verb used here is in the specific form that means *came to be*; so the earth “came to be without form and void.” Thus, the earth was created *perfect*—but was later defiled, becoming a vast wasteland, void, chaotic.

But how did this happen? If God did not create the earth as a wasteland, how did it come to be in that condition? Who caused the earth to become “without form and void”?

the matter: “And the Devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *had been cast*; and they, *Satan and the demons*, shall be tormented day and night into the ages of eternity.”

Satan Not to be Destroyed

The beast and the false prophet are but flesh. They will quickly *perish* (John 3:16) in this “lake of fire”—which apparently continues to burn throughout Jesus’ thousand-year rule, serving as a place of destruction for those who refuse to turn from their wickedness. During first-century Judea, a fire was kept burning in the Valley of Hinnom, just south of Jerusalem. It was used to destroy refuse, dead animals—and the bodies of criminals. It is from this valley of Hinnom that the idea of *Gehenna* (Greek) fire is derived: “Do not be afraid of those who [can] kill the body, but do not have power to destroy the life; rather, fear Him Who has the power to destroy both life and body in Gehenna [fire]” (Matt. 10:28). The notion of an “ever-burning hell”—ostensibly supported by KJV translation errors—actually stems from pagan mythology. *Gehenna*, however, simply means “valley of Hinnom”—and the fire kept burning there was but a *type* of the greater “lake of fire” to which Jesus was actually referring. The prophet Isaiah also alluded to this fire (Isa. 66:24), indicating that it will serve as a witness to those who might tend toward evil.

But Satan is a spirit being. He is not harmed by fire. As Luke 20:36 shows, he cannot die. Yet Satan and his demons are thrown into the “lake of fire”—where the beast and the false prophet *had perished* a thousand years earlier. The event is largely symbolic: Satan cannot be harmed by fire, but his presence in this “lake of fire” serves to demonstrate the futility of all his efforts to oppose God. All the evil and wickedness caused by Satan

CHAPTER FOUR

Satan's Ultimate Fate

Many people are confused about the ultimate fate of Satan and his demons. Influenced by mythical teachings, they believe that Satan will eventually be confined to the fires of “hell” for eternity—where he will continually torment the wicked. As we will see, much of this confusion stems from a faulty translation of a single verse, Revelation 20:10.

The Bible clearly lays out what will happen to Satan. Following Jesus’ return, Satan will be bound in an “abyss”—a place of restraint—unable to influence the nations for the duration of the millennial reign of Christ. But at the conclusion of that period, Satan will be released for a brief time—when he will once again set about to deceive the nations (Rev. 20:1-3).

Satan will successfully deceive certain nations into mounting one final attack against Jerusalem, an attack that will lead to their swift destruction (verses 7-9). God then deals once and for all with Satan: “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (verse 10; KJV). Note that the word “are” is in italics—“where the beast and the false prophet *are*.” Remember, italicized words are added words—they are not found in the original Greek. This translational bias is based on the assumption that this is a reference to a mythical eternally burning “hell fire.” The beast and the false prophet were cast into this “lake of fire” one thousand years earlier, at the *beginning* of Jesus’ millennial reign (Rev. 19:20). Thus, it is assumed that the beast and the false prophet have been under torment in this fire throughout the Millennium.

However, a proper translation of verse 10 clarifies

A Fallen Archangel

Scripture shows that God created *three* archangels—Gabriel, Michael, and Lucifer (see Luke 1:19; Jude 9; Dan. 10:13; 12:1; Rev. 12:7). These archangels had special positions at God’s throne in heaven (see Ezek. 28:14, 16). Apparently, Lucifer was eventually assigned to oversee the earth, a position he later came to *resent*. We can deduce this from several biblical passages.

The prophet Ezekiel was given a prophecy concerning the wicked king of *Tyre*, a Phoenician city on the Mediterranean coast. However, when we read this prophecy it becomes clear that Ezekiel was actually addressing the *spirit power* behind this king: “You seal up the measure of perfection, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. You have been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone *was* your covering, the ruby, the topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the turquoise, and the emerald, and gold. The workmanship of your settings and of your sockets was prepared in you in the day that you were created” (Ezek. 28:12-13). Notice that this cannot literally refer to the human king of Tyre, as this being was *perfect*, had been *in the Garden of Eden*, and was “created.” Humans are not created, as such, but produced through procreation. Here, Ezekiel is revealing the *spirit power* behind this wicked king. The following verses make this clear: “You [Lucifer] *were the anointed cherub that covers* [God’s throne in heaven], and I set you so; you were upon the holy mountain of God; you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire [in heaven]. You *were* perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, **until iniquity was found in you**” (verses 14-15).

This archangel not only once “covered” God’s throne—just as the Temple “mercy seat,” a type of God’s throne in heaven (Heb. 8:5), was covered by two angels’ wings—he also later appeared *in* the Garden of Eden as a

seducing “serpent.” This being was extraordinary, *perfect*, until *iniquity* was found in him; pride corrupted his wisdom, and his heart became filled with *vanity* (verse 17).

In a similar passage, the prophet Isaiah writes a proclamation against the wicked king of Babylon (Isa. 14:4-11). But starting in verse 12, the prophet is clearly addressing the true power behind Babylon—*Satan*. In verse 13, Lucifer muses: “I will ascend *into* the heavens [from earth], **I will exalt my throne**”—this shows that Lucifer had a dominion, a responsibility, *on earth*—“above the stars [stars symbolize angels, Rev. 1:20] of God; I will also sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north [the location of God’s throne]. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High” (Isa. 14:13-14). Lucifer apparently attempted to exalt himself above God—to take control of heaven.

War in Heaven

As Revelation brings out, this resulted in a *war* in heaven in which Lucifer—now called the Enemy, or Satan—and his angels (now called demons or devils) were cast out: “And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels warred against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels warred. But they did not prevail, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, who is [actively] deceiving the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him” (Rev. 12:7-9).

Jude 6 proves that these rebellious angels had *abandoned* their original assignment on earth. “And the angels who **did not keep their own original domain, but deserted their habitation**, He [God] is holding in eternal bonds under darkness unto the judgment of *the* great day.”

God is dwelling in you, and you have overcome the wicked one” (1 John 2:13-14).

The *key* to overcoming Satan is to have the Word of God—Jesus the Messiah, as the living embodiment of God’s inspired Word—*actively living in us!* Indeed, without Him, *we can do nothing* (John 15:5; Gal. 2:20).

do what God allows, and God does not allow him to harm us physically. As long as we do not *invite him* into our lives by becoming involved with drugs, the occult, or certain vile forms of entertainment, Satan is limited primarily to tempting us, trying to deceive us, or distracting us from what truly matters.

Satan is especially deceitful in the area of religion, and few realize just how deeply the devil's deceptions have infiltrated even so-called "Christianity." He has the *entire world* duped as to the identity of the true God and how to rightly follow and worship Him. Though he is actually the prince of darkness, Satan *presents himself* quite successfully as an "angel of light" (II Cor. 11:14). He even has his own ministers who look and sound like true ministers of God—but they are deceptive *counterfeits* (verses 13, 15). These "false ministers"—and they are quite numerous—lead people into false forms of worship and into false relationships with God. They call out to Jesus as "Lord, Lord"—but do not actually follow His teachings (Luke 6:46). This is why Jesus said, "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?' And then I will confess to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness'" (Matt. 7:22-23).

Indeed, we must fight the good fight and overcome Satan. It is difficult—but with God all things are possible (Matt. 19:26; Mark 9:23; 10:27; Luke 18:27). John writes these words of great comfort and encouragement: "I am writing to you, fathers, because you have known Him Who *is* from *the* beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because **you have overcome the wicked one**. I am writing to you, little children, because you have known the Father. I wrote to you, fathers, because you have known Him Who *is* from *the* beginning. I wrote to you, young men, because you are strong, and **the Word of**

Peter, writing of God's judgment for sin, notes that God "did not spare *the angels who sinned*, but, having cast *them* into Tartarus [a condition of restraint], delivered *them* into chains of darkness to be kept for *the* judgment [of the great day]" (II Pet. 2:4).

This powerful spirit entity—accompanied by a third of the angels (Rev. 12:4)—decided to challenge God for control of the universe! Looking again at Isaiah 14, the prophet writes, "How you are fallen from the heavens, O shining star [the meaning of the name *Lucifer*], son of the morning! *How* you are cut down to the ground, you who [then] weakened the nations!" (verse 12).

It was this great "war in heaven" that resulted in the earth becoming a vast wasteland! When Satan and his demons were cast out of heaven—*cast down to the earth*—one of two things happened that resulted in the destruction of the surface of the earth: 1) The earth was devastated by the war itself; or, 2) Satan, in his intense anger, purposely inflicted massive damage on the earth. Either way, the earth *became* "without form and void."

Lucifer had been a beautiful, immensely talented spirit being with tremendous authority and responsibility in God's angelic order. Through sin—jealousy, envy, pride, which quickly led to hatred and deceit—this powerful being turned against God. He became *Satan*—the Adversary of God and man. He hates God and His plan for man—and will stop at nothing to defeat God and ruin His plan for humanity.

Thus, God did not *create* the devil. He created a wonderful, perfect angel who—of his own choosing—*became* Satan the devil. He is a liar and deceiver, a slanderer and accuser—dedicated to destruction.

CHAPTER TWO

Satan—“God” of this Present Age

Genesis 1:2 shows that the formerly perfect earth had been subjected to a great cataclysm of some kind—some event that left it “without form and void.” That event was Satan’s *great rebellion*. The remainder of Genesis 1 describes a *recreation*—a preparing of the earth to be a beautiful home for man. However, the surface of the moon was not restored, and its massive craters remain as evidence of that ancient cosmic battle.

Following his attack on God’s throne, Satan was cast back down to the earth where he and his demons are now sequestered—although God does allow Satan limited access to heaven (Job 1:6-7). Eons of time may have gone by before God finally recreated the earth in preparation for man. And Satan wasted no time in attempting to thwart God’s plan of producing for Himself a *family* through humankind. Remember, Ezekiel says Lucifer had been *in Eden*. Indeed, this still-dazzling angel—symbolized because of his cunning as a vile serpent—immediately went after Eve, using guile to deceive her into disobeying God. Satan’s goal was to wreck havoc on God’s plan—and he succeeded!

Despite his fall, Satan had remained by God’s design as the *ruler* of the earth. Adam and Eve, however, were intended by God to ultimately exercise full dominion over the earth (Gen. 1:26)—but their sin disqualified them. Thus, while man does seemingly rule the earth, Satan remains in place as the unseen “god” of this present age (II Cor. 4:4). (There are three biblical ages: the past pre-Flood age, II Peter 3:6; this present evil age, Galatians 1:4; and the messianic age yet to come.) Indeed, Jesus referred to Satan three times as the “prince” of this present age or society (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).

CHAPTER THREE

The Christian’s Struggle Against Satan

As Christians, we are called to be *overcomers* (Rev. 21:7; also see Rev. 2-3). We must constantly fight against our own carnal nature—being diligent to “walk in the Spirit” so that we do not yield to the pulls of the flesh (Gal. 5:16). We are also to have *no part* in this world and its ways—its culture, its morals, even its religions. Yes, we live *in* this world—but are not *of* this world (John 17:14-16). Jesus said, “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it *hated* you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have personally chosen you out of the world, the world hates you for this” (John 15:18-19).

We also must be aware of Satan’s efforts to trip us up, to deceive us, to distract us from what matters. We are to be careful to never “give the devil even an inch” (see Eph. 4:27). We must “put on the whole armor of God” so that we are able to “stand against the wiles of the devil” — because our real struggle is not against men, but “against principalities *and* against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual *power* of wickedness in high *places*” (Eph. 6:11-12). With God’s help, we can “quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one” (verses 13-18). Peter adds, “Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour—whom [you are to] resist, steadfast in the faith...” (I Pet. 5:8-9). James says that if we diligently resist Satan, *he will flee from us!* (James 4:7).

It is important to understand that we need not live in *fear* of Satan. We must be keenly aware of his cunning and his deep hatred for God’s people. But Satan can only

pure and bright; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints” (Rev. 19:7-8).

Meanwhile, Satan’s primary goal is to destroy the Church—to *disqualify* the “second Eve” just as he did Eve in the Garden of Eden. But God has determined that this will never happen, for even the “gates of the grave” will not prevail against the body of Christ (Matt. 16:18)—and it is our Father’s *good pleasure* to grant us a place in His Kingdom (Luke 12:32).

Satan is also out to destroy *physical Israel*—because he fully understands that establishing the Kingdom of God in the age to come *hinges* on a restored Israel. As Messiah, Jesus will rule over the Kingdom of God forever. And in Luke 1:32-33, the angel Gabriel identifies that kingdom as the *house of Jacob*—Israel. He tells Mary, “He [Jesus] shall be great, and shall be called *the Son of the Highest*; and *the Lord God shall give Him the throne of David*, His forefather. And He shall *reign over the house of Jacob* into the ages, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.” So Jesus’ kingdom, the Kingdom of God, is actually a restored Kingdom of Israel—destined to eventually fill the earth (Acts 1:6; 3:21; Matt. 13:31-33).

This is Not God’s World

Revelation 12:9 says Satan continues to *actively deceive* the whole world. In fact, the Bible makes it clear that all of human society is broadly and powerfully influenced by Satan. The apostle John writes that “**the whole world lies in the power of the wicked one**” (1 John 5:19). Jesus labeled him for what he is—the “father of lies” (John 8:44). And from Eden to today, all mankind has been seduced by this cunning being through his deceptive lies. Under Satan’s deception, people have willingly followed a wrong way of life—one that naturally appeals to man’s sinful proclivities. Collectively, we have chosen a way that *seems good and right*, but it is a way of life that only leads to suffering and ultimately death (Prov. 14:12; 16:25). Jesus likened it to choosing a “wide gate” and a “broad way”—one that is *easy* and seemingly right—but one that “leads to destruction” (Matt. 7:13). Rather, we are to choose the “narrow gate”—the difficult road that leads to eternal life (verse 14). Indeed, mankind’s misguided choices have resulted in thousands of years of human misery and suffering!

Again, Paul calls Satan the “god” of this present world: “But if our gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those who are perishing; in whom **the god of this age has blinded the minds** of those who do not believe...” (II Cor. 4:3-4). For Paul to use such powerful language demonstrates the magnitude of Satan’s pervasive influence over mankind. In fact, Satan and his cohorts exercise enormous sway over human governments. For example, we see in the book of Daniel that the righteous angels Gabriel and Michael were called upon to fight against the “prince of the kingdom of Persia” (Dan. 10:13, 20)—clearly an evil *spirit power* behind the physical throne of Persia.

Jesus said in John 18:36, “My kingdom is not of this world.” Yet God maintains overall control as “Lord of

heaven and earth” (Matt. 11:25). King David recognized God’s sovereignty: “The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all” (Psa. 103:19). And Jesus told Pontius Pilate that even his power was “allowed from above” (John 19:11). So while God gives Satan considerable latitude in what he does, God retains the right and power to intervene at any time to further His plan.

God’s supremacy over Satan is illustrated in the story of Job. God allowed Satan to afflict Job—but only to a point. God remains in ultimate control.

Spirit “Power of the Air”

The Bible further identifies Satan as the “prince” of the “power of the air”—a spirit that works within people to cause disobedience to God’s ways. Paul understood this aspect of Satan’s power, reminding us that as Christians we in times past lived “according to the course of this world [society], according to [the influence of] the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2).

What is this “power of the air”? Apparently, Satan is able to continually “broadcast” on a spirit level in such a way that negatively affects human minds. Much like a TV or a radio can be tuned in to a certain frequency, our minds are naturally “tuned in” to this spiritual “broadcast.” It is a “broadcast” of selfish attitudes and rebellious moods. Verse 3 shows the results of our being “tuned in” to this “power of the air” from childhood. Before becoming converted to God’s way of life, we lived our lives “in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the [carnal] mind.” Under this pervasive unseen influence, the unconverted person is fully at odds with God and will not, *cannot*, submit to His laws (Rom. 8:7).

We cannot see Satan or sense his “broadcasting,”

but his influence is real; it is powerful and pernicious—especially on the *unsuspecting* mind.

Having rejected God’s revelation in Eden, mankind has chosen to go its own way—with devastating results. Under Satan’s influence, whole societies and civilizations have been built on wrong foundations. Indeed, Satan is the *primary cause* behind the wickedness that dominates human life—the *cause* of all the suffering and tragic circumstances that afflict so many. But the Bible reveals that Satan’s days are numbered—and that God’s plan for mankind will be realized!

Replacing Satan

Jesus spoke of the devil as a real being, one with great power—but also one who could be *defeated*. Jesus Himself faced and defeated Satan (Matt. 4:1-11). Notice in verse nine that Satan offered Jesus a chance to *rule the world* under him. Indeed, such authority was Satan’s to give—because, again, God has allowed Satan to continue as ruler over this world, during this age. Whereas the first Adam and Eve failed to qualify to *replace* Satan, the “second Adam” and the “second Eve”—Christ and His bride, the church—will most certainly replace Satan!

Jesus has already qualified. He said “all power” in heaven and earth has now been given to Him (Matt. 28:18). Satan will be *removed* by Christ shortly after His coming (Rev. 20:1-3, 10), and rulership of this world will then fall to Jesus as King of kings (Rev. 19:16) and to the then spirit-composed saints (Rev. 5:10; 20:4, 6).

All that remains, ultimately, is for the “second Eve” to qualify. And she *will*—for the Church will be glorified as Jesus’ return, having *made herself ready*: “ ‘Let us be glad and shout with joy; and let us give glory to Him [God the Father]; for the marriage of the Lamb [Jesus] has come, and His wife [the Church] has made herself ready.’ And it was granted to her that she should be clothed in fine linen,