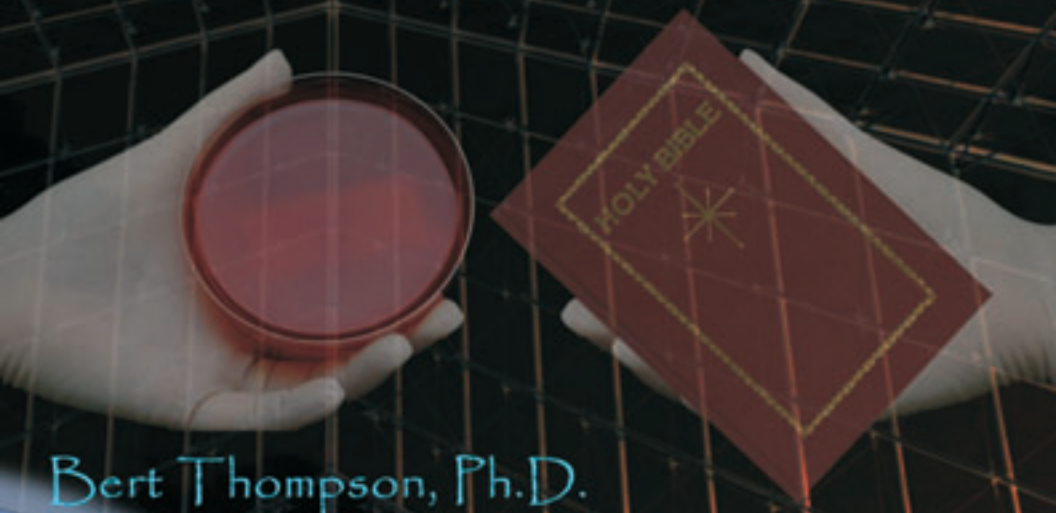
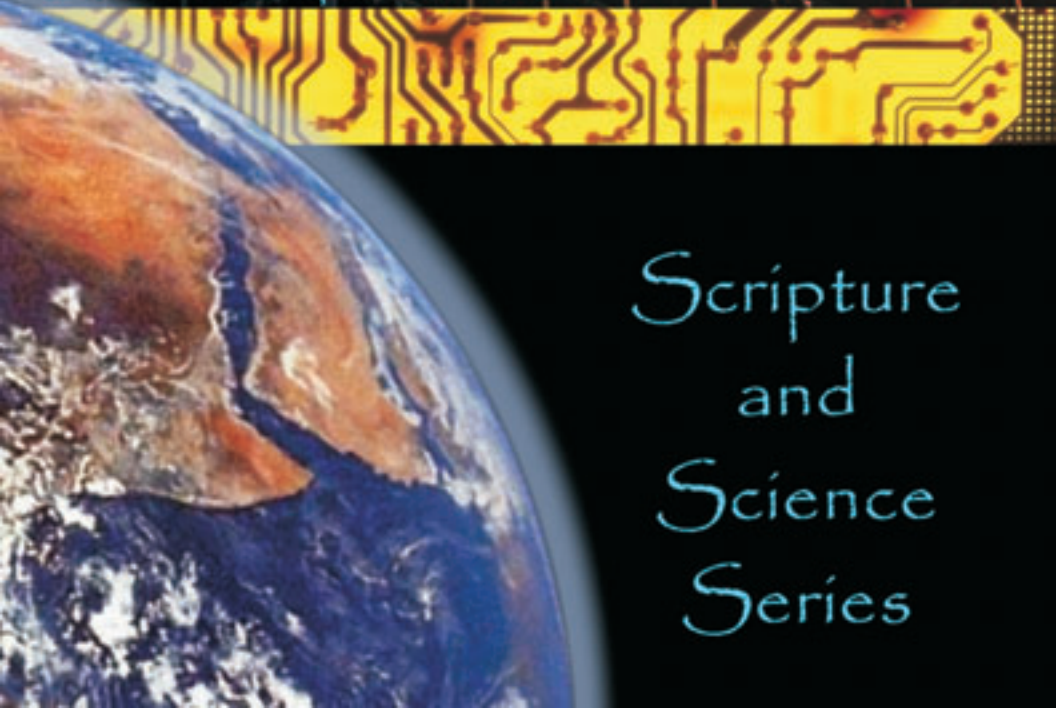


Satan —

His Origin and Mission



Bert Thompson, Ph.D.



Scripture
and
Science
Series

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SATAN— HIS ORIGIN AND MISSION

As we make our way through this pilgrimage called “life,” surely we would count among the strongest aspirations of the human heart the desire to be content and happy—not in the mediocre sense of those words, but instead to be genuinely fulfilled and at peace both with ourselves and with the world in general. Oh, how we would like to be able to say with the writer of old (and actually mean it): “This is the day which Jehovah hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24).

But, as each of us knows all too well from personal experience, not every day causes us to “rejoice and be glad.” The simple truth is that things do not always go our way. Plans go awry. Fortunes are forfeited. Friendships are broken. Lives are lost. To echo the words of that ancient patriarch so famous for his perseverance in the face of adversity, “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble” (Job 14:1).

Facing the routine vicissitudes of life would be difficult enough on its own, without any outside force “stacking the deck.” Unfortunately, however, there **is** an outside force marshaled against us. Within the pages of Holy Writ, that “outside force” is identified by a variety of designations, but likely the best known and most widely used is the name: **Satan**.

In the Old Testament (where we first are introduced to the word, and where it is used approximately nineteen times), etymologically the Hebrew term *satan* is related to an Aramaic verb that means “to lie in wait,” “to oppose,” or “to set

oneself in opposition to.” On occasion the term was employed to describe in non-specific terms any adversary, but whenever it was accompanied by the definite article (i.e., **the** adversary), it always indicated a proper name associated with mankind’s greatest adversary, Satan (Hiebert, 1975, 5:282).

In the New Testament (where the term Satan is used thirty-six times), the Greek word for Satan (*satanas*) indicates an adversary, opponent, or enemy, and “is always used of ‘Satan,’ the adversary...” (Vine, et al., 1985, p. 547). Another designation for our Great Adversary—“devil”—is used thirty-three times in the New Testament, and “...came into English through the German language from the Greek word *diabolos*. *Diabolos* means a slanderer, treacherous informer and, traitor” (Overton, 1976, 5[4]:3).

Exactly who is this devil, Satan, who has established himself as God’s archfiend and mankind’s ardent foe? Is he real? If he is, what is his origin? Why has he arrayed himself against both God and man? What is his mission? What are his powers? And what is his ultimate destiny? These are questions that cry out from the human heart for answers. Fortunately, God’s Word provides those answers.

IS SATAN REAL?

Throughout history, both those who do not accept the Bible as the Word of God (unbelievers), and those who accept it but only marginally so (religious liberals), have disavowed the existence of Satan as a real, personal, spiritual being. Rather, they speak of him as a “myth,” and of his dealings with mankind as “legends” invented as vehicles of “moral teaching” intended to impart great spiritual truths. But neither he nor his activities is accepted as historical reality. For example, atheistic writer Isaac Asimov, who was serving as president of the American Humanist Association at the time of his death in 1992, wrote:

By New Testament times, the Jews had developed, in full detail, the **legend** that Satan had been the leader of the “fallen angels.” These were angels who rebelled against God by refusing to bow down before Adam when that first man was created, using as their argument that they were made of light and man only of

clay. Satan, the leader of the rebels, thought, in his pride, to supplant God. The rebelling angels were, however, hurled out of heaven and into Hell. By the time this legend was developed the Jews had come under Greek influence and they may have perhaps been swayed by Greek myths concerning the attempts of the Titans, and later the Giants, to defeat Zeus and assume mastery of the universe. Both Titans and Giants were defeated and imprisoned underground. But whether Greek-inspired or not, the **legend** came to be firmly fixed in Jewish consciousness (1968, p. 540, emp. added; see also pp. 408-410).

The assessment of liberal-leaning religious writers does not sound much different. Andrew Zenos of Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Chicago suggested:

The apparent incongruity of a person (i.e., Satan) with such a frame of mind consorting with the other “sons of God” in the courts of heaven, giving an account of himself to, and speaking on familiar terms with, God, disappears when the narrative is seen to be constructed, not as a picture of realities, but as a vehicle of moral teaching... (1936, p. 811).

Forty-five years later, Neal D. Buffaloe and N. Patrick Murray co-authored a text in which they wrote: “By contrast [to the literal, historical view of Genesis–BT], the mainstream of Biblical scholarship rejects the literal historicity of the Genesis stories prior to Chapter 12, and finds the literature of parable and symbol in the early chapters of Genesis.” Later, in referring to the events of these chapters, including Satan’s temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden, the authors stated that “these things never were...” (1981, pp. 5,8).

Because unbelievers reject belief in the spirit entity known as God (and, not coincidentally, the Bible as His Word), it hardly is shocking that they simultaneously repudiate belief in the spirit being known as Satan (whose actual existence can be documented only within God’s Word). Skepticism of, and opposition to, spiritual matters on the part of unbelievers should be expected. Skepticism of, and opposition to, such matters on the part of those professing to be believers should not.

The same Bible that informs the religious liberal about the existence of the God in Whom he proclaims **to believe**, also informs him of the existence of Satan—in whom he does **not believe**. Where is the consistency? Furthermore, consider the emphasis on Satan within the whole of the Sacred Text, the importance placed on the fact of his existence by both the biblical writers and the Son of God Himself, and the critical role he has played in the necessity of God’s great plan of salvation for mankind.

The Reality of Satan in the Old Testament

From the first book of the Bible (Genesis) to the last (Revelation), the existence of the devil as a real, literal adversary is affirmed. Our first introduction to Satan occurs in Genesis 3 as he arrives on the scene in the form of a serpent to tempt Eve. Speaking of the historical nature of this account, Melancthon W. Jacobus observed:

That there was a real serpent in this transaction cannot be doubted any more than we can doubt the real history throughout. Here, where the facts speak, further explanations are not necessary, nor fitted to the time of the beginning. (1) The real serpent is contrasted with the other animals (vs. 1). (2) In the New Testament, allusion is made to a real serpent in referring to the history (2 Cor. 11:3,14; 1 Jn. 3:8; Rev. 20:2). Yet (3) that there was in the transaction a superior agent, Satan himself, who made use of the serpent, is plain from his being referred to as “the old Serpent, called the Devil and Satan” (Rev. 12:9)—“a murderer from the beginning” (Jn. 8:44) [1864, 1:112].

Additional Old Testament testimony addresses the historical existence of Satan. In 1 Chronicles 21:1, the text states: “And Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.” Six verses later, this simple statement is found: “And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel” (1 Chronicles 21:7). Israel suffered as a direct result of Satan’s workings in the life of her monarch.

In the book of Job, Satan retains a place of great prominence—more, perhaps, than in any other Bible book. In the first two chapters alone, he is mentioned at least fourteen times.

In fact, Job 2:1-2 records a conversation between this mendacious despot and God:

Again it came to pass on the day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah, that Satan came also among them to present himself before Jehovah. And Jehovah said unto Satan, "From whence comest thou?" And Satan answered Jehovah, and said, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

The entire theological thrust of the book of Job is utterly dependent upon the actual existence of Satan, his adversarial nature toward God and mankind, and Heaven's ultimate superiority over him. Further, the New Testament book of James boldly refers to Job's dealings with Satan: "Behold, we call them blessed that endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful" (5:11). What possible meaning could this have had to first-century saints who were enduring extreme persecution and intense suffering as a result of their faith? An imaginary fight between a non-existent devil and a mythical patriarch could not, and would not, provide much comfort to those whose lives were in imminent danger. But a promise that "the Lord is full of pity, and merciful"—based on literal, historical events—could, would, and did provide such comfort in times of peril.

In Zechariah 3:1-10, the prophet recorded a vision "...intended to show that Jehovah's people, conditioned upon a moral and spiritual reformation, could again enjoy prosperity" (Jackson, 1980, p. 75). In Zechariah's vision, Satan appeared as an adversary of Joshua the high priest, who was clothed with dirty garments that symbolized "the sins of the whole nation, of which he was the representative" (Hengstenberg, n.d., p. 972).

And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of Jehovah, and Satan standing at his right hand to be his adversary. And Jehovah said unto Satan, "Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan; yea, Jehovah that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (3:1-2).

In describing the spiritual importance of this scene, one writer commented: “Satan was ready to challenge the Lord’s own institution for the forgiveness of sin, to deny the right of God to pardon the sinner. He seeks to overthrow the Throne of Grace, so hateful to him, and to turn it into a seat of judgment and condemnation” (Laetsch, 1956, p. 422; cf. also Psalm 109: 3-8). Satan’s part in this scenario cannot be overstated. Without his act of overt condemnation, and God’s response to it, Zechariah’s message would be lost. The activity and historical reality of Satan in the Old Covenant set the stage for the urgency of God’s plan of salvation in the New.

The Reality of Satan in the New Testament

Within the pages of the New Testament, the existence of Satan is reaffirmed, and more of his cunning, deceit, and hypocrisy is revealed. Of paramount importance is the record of his temptation of the Son of God (Matthew 4: 1-11; cf. Luke 4: 1-13). Erich Sauer has noted:

The whole story of the temptation of Jesus proves beyond all doubt that we are here concerned with a factual and personal conflict between two protagonists. The accounts of the evangelists and the behaviour and words of Jesus show clearly that we are not here concerned with a mere “principle” of evil, but with a real, factually present, speaking and active person, not “the evil” but “the evil one” (1962, p. 64).

A few chapters later, Jesus referred to Satan as “Beelzebub” (Matthew 12:27), a term that originally meant “lord of refuse,” “lord of the flies,” or “lord of dung” (Easton, 1996). As such, it was an expression of contempt signifying all that was the opposite of holiness and purity—hardly a name the Lord would apply to some harmless, legendary, mythical character of antiquity. Wayne Jackson has suggested:

As the serpent seduced Eve (Gen. 3:6) through the manifold channels of the lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and the vainglory of life (I John 2:16), so he sought to solicit Christ to sin similarly (Matt. 4:1-11). Interestingly, he is denominated “the tempter” in that narrative. The Greek term is *peirazon*, a present tense participle—literally expanded, “the always tempting one”—

which suggests his characteristic activity. Had the devil succeeded in causing Christ to sin, the Lord could not have served as the blemishless sin-offering (I Peter 1:19; II Cor. 5:21), and the entire human race would have been forever lost! (1980, p. 76).

Christ's apostles also addressed the fact of Satan's existence. And certainly they knew of which they spoke, since Satan is depicted within the pages of the New Testament as their ardent enemy. For example, the Lord informed Peter: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you that he might sift you as wheat" (Luke 22:31). A fact often overlooked within this text is that the pronoun "you" in the Greek is plural, indicating that Satan wanted **all** of the apostles (see Jackson, 1980, p. 76). The apostle Paul spoke of "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2) who has his "devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11), and even "ministers" who disguise themselves as righteous (2 Corinthians 11:15). The apostle John noted that "the devil sinneth from the beginning" (1 John 3:8), and lamented the fact that "the whole world lieth in the evil one" (1 John 5:19). Further, Paul's thorn in the flesh was said to have been "a messenger of Satan" (2 Corinthians 12:7). But perhaps most sinister is the fact that it was Satan who "put into the heart of Judas Iscariot" the idea to betray his Lord (John 13:2).

In addition, various New Testament writers referred to Satan as the author of sin (1 John 3:8), sickness (Acts 10:38), and death (Hebrews 2:14), as well as the one who leads men astray (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10). The authors of *Vine's Expository Dictionary* made an important observation when they stated:

"Satan" is not simply the personification of evil influences in the heart, for he tempted Christ, in whose heart no evil thought could ever have arisen (John 14:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15); moreover his personality is asserted in both the OT and NT, and especially in the latter, whereas if the OT language was intended to be figurative, the NT would have made this evident (1985, p. 547).

What the New Testament makes evident, however, is exactly the opposite—i.e., that Satan is **not** figurative, but very real.

SATAN'S ORIGIN

The Bible does not address specifically the origin of Satan, yet there is adequate information to draw a logical, well-reasoned conclusion as to how he came into existence. Consider, for example, the following.

Is Satan Deity?

Although quite powerful, Satan does not enjoy the status of deity. Clues to this fact are scattered throughout the pages of Holy Writ. Deity is **eternal**. Scripture speaks of “the eternal God” (Deuteronomy 33:27) Whose “years shall have no end” (Psalm 102:27), and Who is “the Alpha and the Omega..., who is and who was and who is to come” (Revelation 1:8). Deity is **omnipotent**. He is referred to as “God Almighty” (Genesis 17:1) Who cannot “be restrained” (Job 42:2). By “the thunder of his power” (Job 26:13-14) He has the might to create (Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 45:12) or destroy (2 Peter 3:10). He alone retains the power to instill life (Genesis 2:7) and to raise the dead (Ephesians 1:20). Deity is **omnipresent**. “[T]here is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:13). He is “at hand” and “afar off” (Jeremiah 23:23-24). He is able to “bring every work into judgment...every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14). Deity is **omniscient**. The psalmist wrote:

O Jehovah, thou hast searched me, and known me.
Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising;
Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou searchest out my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Jehovah, thou knowest it altogether.... Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it (139:1-6).

God not only knows the past and the present, but the future as well (Acts 15:18). Indeed, “how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out” (Romans 11:33).

Satan, by comparison, does not possess these qualities. For example, he is not omnipotent. Scripture affirms: “Greater is he [God] that is in you than he [Satan] that is in the world” (1

John 4:4). When he sought to “sift” the apostles as wheat, he first had to “ask” for them (Luke 22:31). Satan is not omnipresent. His position as “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4) was “delivered” unto him (Luke 4:6). When he eventually is cast permanently into his place of eternal torment, the devil will be powerless to resist (Revelation 20:10). In discussing the apocalyptic literature of the book of Revelation, which speaks of Satan’s being “bound” (20:2), Hardeman Nichols observed: “The binding of Satan, we conclude, equally means that his work will be restrained in a certain realm...” (1978, p. 262). Omnipresence, by definition, is not restrained. Further, Satan is not omniscient. If we are sufficiently knowledgeable of the Word of God, and carefully wield that knowledge to resist him, the devil does not possess a superior knowledge sufficient to overcome us, but will “flee” (James 4:17; cf. Matthew 4:4). He is not intelligent enough to outwit us in order to “snatch” us from the Lord’s hand (John 10:28).

The only possible conclusion one can reach regarding Satan is that he is not deity. But such a conclusion has serious implications. If Satan does not partake of the nature of deity, then he cannot be eternal. Thus, he must be a **created being**. That, as Wayne Jackson has explained, is exactly what he is.

...[S]ince the devil is not of the nature of deity, it is obvious that he is a created being, for **all** things and beings (outside the class of deity) are the result of creation—“for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers” (Col. 1:16); this would include Satan as he originally was (1980, p. 78; emp. in orig.).

Was Satan Created “Evil”?

But what was Satan originally? When was he created? And was he created “evil”? The biblical evidence may be summarized as follows. The Scriptures categorically state that all things, as they had been created originally, were good. Genesis 1:31 records: “And God saw **everything** that he had made, and, behold, it was **very good**” (emp. added). In their Old Testament commentary on the Pentateuch, Keil and Delitzsch have observed:

By the application of the term “good” to everything that God made, and the repetition of the word with the emphasis “very” at the close of the whole creation, the existence of anything evil in the creation of God is absolutely denied, and the hypothesis entirely refuted, that the six days’ work merely subdued and fettered an ungodly, evil principle, which had already forced its way into it (1968, 1:67).

Thus, whatever else Satan may have been originally, he was **good**. God did not **create** Satan as an evil adversary; rather, Satan **became** evil. Some, however, have suggested that God’s statement in Isaiah 45:7—“I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and **create evil**. I am Jehovah, that doeth all these things”—indicates that God does, in fact, create things that are evil. This view results from a misunderstanding of the use of the word “evil” within the context of that passage. The statement obviously can have no reference to moral evil, since such is contrary to God’s holy nature (see Isaiah 6:3). Deuteronomy 32:4 describes Jehovah as the “God of faithfulness and without iniquity.” An in-depth examination of the passage in Isaiah reveals that God, through the prophet, was announcing to the (as yet unborn) Cyrus, king of Persia, his intention to use the monarch as an instrument for punishment. Notice in Isaiah 45:7 how the word “evil” is employed in direct contrast to “peace.” God’s point was this: “I form light and create darkness [viz., I control nature]; I make peace and create evil [viz., I also control nations]; I am Jehovah that doeth all these things.”

Later in chapter 47, there is a commentary that further explains how the word “evil” is used in chapter 45, verse 7. In verse 11, as he described the coming judgment upon Babylon, Isaiah said:

Therefore shall **evil** come upon thee; thou shalt not know the dawning thereof: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it away: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou knowest not (emp. added).

The “evil” that God “created” was **desolation** due to the wickedness of the Babylonian empire. In Isaiah 31:1-2, God simi-

larly warned Israel that if the Hebrew nation forged an unto-ward alliance with Egypt, He would bring “evil” (i.e., punish-ment) upon them. “Thus, scholars have observed that ‘evil’ can be used with a purely secular meaning to denote physical injury (Jeremiah 39:12), or times of distress (Amos 6:3), and that is its significance in Isaiah 45:7” (Jackson, 1984, 1:84). When Job’s wife proposed that he curse God and die, his re-joinder was: “Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive **evil**?” (Job 2:10; emp. added). Job’s meaning is clear: shall we not receive **punishment and cor-rection** from the hand of Jehovah, as well as innumerable blessings? The late Rex A. Turner Sr. noted:

Solomon wrote: “A prudent man seeth the evil, and hideth himself; But the simple pass on, and suffer for it” (Prov. 22:3). The meaning of this statement from Solomon is that the prudent man sees public calam-ity approaching, and he uses all lawful means to se-cure himself. Evil here is put for dangers and calami-ties that befall men. Thus, God creates evil only in the sense that he brings punishment or calamity upon those who do evil. In no sense, therefore, has God cre-ated criminal or moral evil. In no sense has God pro-voled or brought about evil in any angel or man (1989, p. 79).

Is Satan a Fallen Angel?

There is compelling textual evidence within the Bible which indicates that originally Satan was one of the angels who in-habited the heavenly realm, and that he (along with others) departed from a righteous state and rebelled against God. There is a hint of this in the Old Testament book of Job. Eliphaz said of God: “Behold, he putteth no trust in his servants; and his angels he chargeth with folly” (Job 4:18). In discussing this wording, renowned commentator Albert Barnes wrote:

Language like this would hardly be employed unless there was a belief that even the holiness of the angels was not incorruptible, and that there had been some revolt there among a part, which rendered it **possi-ble** that others might revolt also (1949, 1:lxiii; emp. in orig.).

Indeed, the New Testament seems to confirm that such a revolt **did** take place. In two separate passages, reference is made to just such an event. The apostle Peter said that “God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (2 Peter 2:4). Another inspired New Testament writer wrote: “And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6). Since the Bible also refers to Satan as “the prince of demons” (Matthew 12:24), and speaks of “the devil and **his** angels” (Matthew 25:41, emp. added), “...the only possible conclusion is that the devil is the leader of a group of angels who rebelled against God and were therefore expelled from heaven to eventually spend eternity in hell” (Workman, 1981, 1[5]:4).

From references such as these, it is clear that God created angels (just as He has men) with the powers of reason and free will, which made it possible for them both to think and to choose. Turner commented:

This is to say that angels had the freedom of choice—the freedom to fear and serve God, and the freedom to refuse to fear and serve God. Without intellect and freedom of absolute choice, angels could not be holy as God is holy. In the absence of free will, coupled with responsibility, there can be no true holiness (1989, p. 82).

But, as Lloyd Ecrement has noted:

They, therefore, have the ability to choose good or evil. It is possible, but certainly not necessary, for them to sin. If they choose evil rather than good, that is no reflection upon their Creator, but simply a rebellion against Him—they abuse the powers of reason and a free will given to them by God (1961, p. 33).

Apparently, certain of the angels chose wrongly, which is why Peter referred to the “angels when they **sinned**.” But John wrote that sin is “lawlessness” (i.e., transgression of God’s law; 1 John 3:4). In some fashion, then, the angels’ sin consisted of breaking God’s law by not keeping their “proper habitation,” but instead departing from whatever appropriate position it was that God had established for them.

Since Scripture speaks of “the devil and his angels,” it becomes reasonable to suggest that Satan was either the instigator, or leader (or both), of this heavenly revolt. What brought about this Satanic rebellion? Nichols, in speaking about sedition against legitimately established authority, has suggested that “...rebellion is generally attempted only by the headstrong and obstinate” (1978, p. 262). Henry M. Morris similarly observed:

The root of all sin, in both man and angels, is the twin sin of unbelief and pride—the refusal to submit to God’s will as revealed by His own Word and the accompanying assertion of self-sufficiency which enthrones the creature and his own will in the place of God. This was the original sin of Satan, rejecting God’s Word and trying to become God Himself (1971, pp. 214-215).

Victor Knowles added:

Perhaps Satan became proud of his position as an angel and reached out, wanting more power and authority. What else could there be in heaven to battle for? It is possible that he may have harbored bitter envy and selfish ambition in his heart, for James says that such “wisdom” is “of the devil” (Jas. 3:14,15) [1994, p. 70].

When did Satan Become Evil?

But when, exactly, did all of this take place? Numerous conservative scholars have suggested that likely the creation of the angels occurred during the first day of the Creation week, but prior to the creation of the Earth itself (see Jackson, 1980, p. 78; Kelly, 1997, p. 93; Knowles, 1994, p. 69; Turner, 1989, p. 80; Whitcomb, 1972, p. 43). In speaking of God and His original creation, Knowles has commented: “Before creation of the world He created the angels, for they observed the process and rejoiced over it (Psa. 148:2,5)” (1994, p. 69). John C. Whitcomb concurred when he wrote that the angels “must have been created at the very beginning of the first day of creation, for Job 38:6,7 tells of their singing and their shout for joy at the creation of the earth” (1972, p. 43). Douglas Kelly also has advocated such a position, but stressed caution, when he wrote:

Neither Genesis, nor any other text in Scripture, states when the angelic beings were actually created. What is definite is that angels are creatures, and thus do have a beginning. They are immortal, but only the Triune God is eternal, without beginning or endings. Reserve is necessary on such a speculative subject that has not been revealed to us by God in his Word....

Perhaps the angels were brought into being on the very first day of creation. In Job 38:4-7 we are told that the angels were present when the foundations of the earth were laid, and were rejoicing over it all. Psalm 104:2-5 speaks of the shining of God's light during the original creative process, and mentions the angels just before reference to "laying the foundations of the earth." Thus they appear after the creation of all things and before the earth is made a solid body.... These passages from Job and Psalms are certainly poetic, and are presumably not meant to be interpreted in the same precise, chronological sense required by Genesis 1 and 2. Poetic though its literary form is, it must mean something, and bear reference to a true state of affairs. Such passages may take us as far as we can go safely in consideration of the question: when were the angels first created? (1997, pp. 93,94).

It is significant to remember, of course, that angels are finite, created spirits who were (and are) amenable to God's law. Regardless of the exact time of their creation, the fact remains that certain of the angels, Satan among them, disobeyed that law, and as a result were cast from their spiritual abode. It is accurate to state, therefore, that Satan, and those dismissed from the heavenly realm with him, are fallen angels, and that their creation and transgression occurred sometime prior to God's bringing the Earth into existence.

WHY HAS SATAN ARRAYED HIMSELF AGAINST BOTH GOD AND MAN?

In any study of Satan, the question is bound to arise: **Why** has Satan established himself as God's archfiend and man's ardent foe? No doubt a portion of the answer can be found in

the fact that he, too, once inhabited the heavenly realm but, as a result of his defiant rebellion against the great “I Am,” was cast “down to hell” (2 Peter 2:4). Satan’s insurrection failed miserably, and that failure had dire, eternal consequences. His obstinate attempt to usurp God’s authority cost him his position among the heavenly host and doomed him to “everlasting bonds under darkness” (Jude 6). In the end, his sedition gained him nothing and cost him everything. Regardless of the battle plan he adopted to challenge the Creator of the Universe, regardless of the battlefield he chose as his theater of war, and regardless of the strength or numbers of his army, the simple fact of the matter is that—in the most important contest of his existence—**He lost!**

The conditions of his ultimate surrender were harsh. Although his armies had been thoroughly routed, although he had been completely vanquished, and although the Victor had imposed the worst kind of permanent exile, Satan was determined not to go gently into the night. While he had lost the war, he nevertheless planned future skirmishes. Vindictive by nature (Revelation 12:12), in possession of cunning devices (2 Corinthians 2:11), and determined to be “the deceiver of the whole world” (Revelation 12:9), he set his face against all that is righteous and holy—and never once looked back. His anger at having been defeated fueled his determination to strike back in revenge.

But strike back at whom? It was futile to attempt a second mutiny. God’s power was too great, and His omnipotence too all-consuming (Job 42:2; 1 John 4:4). Another target was needed; another repository of satanic revenge would have to be found. And who better to serve as the recipient of hell’s **un**righteous indignation than mankind—the only creature in the Universe made “in the image and likeness of God” (Genesis 1:26-27)? As Turner has suggested: “Satan cannot attack God directly, thus he employs various methods to attack man, God’s master creation” (1980, p. 89). Sweet revenge—despoiling the “apple of God’s eye” and the zenith of His creative genius! Thus, with the creation of man, the battle was on—and has been ever since. Basil Overton warned: “Satan is out to get us. He will take advantage of us if we let him. It is a fight to the finish!” (1976, 5[4]:3).

It was through mankind that Satan would exact his revenge—the emphasis here being on the word “through.” As the apostle Paul stated in Romans 5:12: “Therefore, as **through** one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned” (emp. added). Man thus became the agent who caused sin to be in the world. Richard Batey wrote: “Paul’s point is rather that since the power of sin is a universal human experience (Rom. 1:18-32; 3:9-23), this power must have come into the world through the representative man, Adam” (1969, 1:72). As the “prince of this world” (John 12:31), Satan stalks about “as a roaring lion,...seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). He, and his ignominious band of outlaws (“sons of the evil one”—Matthew 13:38), have worked their ruthless quackery on mankind from the moment the serpent met Eve in the Garden of Eden. Their goal is the spiritual annihilation of mankind, which, no doubt, is why Satan is identified within Scripture as the “king of the abyss,” the “Destroyer” (“Apollyon,” Revelation 9:11; see Easton, 1996), and the “wicked one” (“Belial,” 2 Corinthians 6:15; see Vine, et al., 1985, p. 60).

In his war against Heaven, Satan will stop at nothing; it is a “no holds barred/winner take all” battle. Witness, for example, his cruel deception of Eve (Genesis 3:1-6) with its temporal and eternal consequences of physical/spiritual death (1 Corinthians 15:21; Ezekiel 18:20). Recall the trials, tribulations, and tragedies visited upon the Old Testament patriarch, Job (Job 1-2). Take notice of Israel’s beloved monarch, King David, being tempted and convinced to sin (1 Chronicles 21:1,7). Remember the devil as Joshua’s adversary (Zechariah 3:1ff.). Commit to memory Beelzebub’s part in Paul’s thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7), or how he hindered the apostle’s missionary efforts (1 Thessalonians 2:18). Cower in fear (as the early church did—Acts 5:11) at the results of his having persuaded Ananias to lie to the Godhead (Acts 5:3). Weep in sadness at the Great Adversary’s so successfully convincing Judas to betray His Lord (John 13:2) that Christ referred to him as “the devil” (John 6:70).

Or, tremble in dismay at the potential ruin of humanity, had Satan succeeded in causing Christ to sin when he tempted Him in the wilderness those many years ago (Matthew 4:1-11). Had Jesus yielded, there would have remained “no more a sacrifice for sins” (Hebrews 10:26), and man would have been doomed—destined to inhabit forever the “blackness of darkness” (Jude 13) in the eternal **presence** of his most vituperative enemy, but, more important, in the eternal **absence** of His Creator-God.

Make no mistake about it. Satan **has** arrayed himself against both God and man. He **is** God’s archfiend, and man’s ardent foe. Nothing short of an absolute victory will assuage him; nothing short of a hell filled with every single member of the human race will dissuade him. He is, indeed, “the enemy” (Matthew 13:39).

WHY HAS GOD ALLOWED SATAN TO CONTINUE TO EXIST?

As we study this enemy, another question comes to mind: **Why** has God allowed Satan to continue to exist? Since he is denominated within the pages of Scripture as “a murderer” (John 8:44), why not simply impose on him the same death penalty that civilized nations have imposed on murderers from time immemorial (cf. Numbers 35:16)? What possible justification could God have for allowing one so wicked to continue to live?

The answer, I am convinced, has to do with the nature of God, and the nature of the spirit beings (angels) that He created. There is a clue regarding this point in the text of Luke 20:33-36. Within this passage, Jesus spoke of the righteous who one day would inhabit heaven, and stated that “neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels.” If righteous humans who will inhabit heaven cannot die, and if they are equal to the angels, then it follows logically that angels cannot die. While the Godhead is eternal, humans and angels are immortal. As Douglas Kelly correctly observed, angels (and this certainly would include Satan prior to his fall) “are immortal, but only the Triune God is eternal” (1997, p. 93).

In his thought-provoking work, *Systematic Theology*, Turner addressed the issue of Satan's continued existence when he wrote:

Why did God not destroy Satan when he sinned? Why let Satan continue to exist and influence others to sin? The answer here lies in God's nature—his eternal nature which he has passed on to angels as well as to men—for there will never be a time when the spirits or angels, the evil as well as the good, will cease to exist. Punishments and prescribed limits have been passed upon evil spirits, and the more will be passed upon them, but they will always exist (1989, p. 83).

Scripture delineates angelic beings as immortal; thus, they—whether righteous or sinful—never will cease to exist. However, there may be more to Satan's continued existence than simply the angels' immortal nature. In addressing the question of exactly why Satan persists, Lloyd Ecrement has suggested:

Perhaps the reason might well be expressed in the words the Lord asked Moses to say to wicked Pharaoh: "For by now I could have put forth my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth; but for this purpose have I let you live, to show you my power, so that my name may be declared throughout all the Earth" (Exodus 9:15,16) [1961, p. 33].

Indeed, from a purely human vantage point, the continuation of evil—even for a brief period—generally is not viewed as either desirable or ideal. But, as T. Pierce Brown has proposed, God may have "allowed Satan to retain his power, temporarily, until he is through using him to test and purify a people for his ultimate glory and purposes" (1974, 91[16]:245). Certainly, God's glory was exemplified by mankind's creation because Isaiah, speaking for Jehovah, said that man was "created for my glory" (Isaiah 43:7).

In John 9, the story is recounted of a man who had been born blind. When Jesus' disciples inquired as to the reason for his predicament, He responded that it was so that "the **works of God should be made manifest** in him" (John 9:3, emp. added). What all this entails, we may not profess to

know, realizing that the “secret things belong unto Jehovah our God” (Deuteronomy 29:29). But the Scriptures **do** reveal enough information for us to conclude that Satan’s continued existence follows logically from the immortal nature of angelic beings. They also reveal that the devil’s existence is not at variance with Heaven’s eternal plan, since at times it affords opportunities for mankind to witness God working amidst His creation.

WHAT IS SATAN’S MISSION?

Were Satan made of flesh and bone, we might employ an oft-used phrase and describe him as “a man with a mission.” But do not let the fact that he is spirit rather than flesh trick you into thinking he has no mission. He most certainly does—and has since the day he was cast from the heavenly portals. Simply stated, that mission is the complete destruction of all humanity in hell.

Within Scripture, Satan (i.e., our “adversary”; Zechariah 3:1) routinely is denominated by such unseemly designations as: (a) the devil (i.e., slanderer; Matthew 4:1); (b) “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4); (c) “the prince of the powers of the air” (Ephesians 2:2); (d) the father of lies (John 8:44); (e) the “Great Dragon” (Revelation 12:9); (f) “Beelzebub” (i.e., prince of demons; Matthew 12:24). (g) the “wicked one” (Matthew 13:38); (h) “the prince of this world” (John 12:31); (i) the ruler of darkness (Ephesians 6:12); (j) “the tempter” (1 Thessalonians 3:5); (k) “accuser of the brethren” (Revelation 12:10); (l) a “murderer” (John 8:44); (m) “the enemy” (Matthew 13:39); (n) “a roaring lion” (1 Peter 5:8); (o) a “serpent” (2 Corinthians 11:3); (p) “Belial” (i.e., “wicked one”; 2 Corinthians 6:15); and (q) “angel of the bottomless pit” (Revelation 9:11).

After even a cursory glance at these appellations, surely we could agree with L.O. Sanderson when he wrote: “These alone should make us fearfully concerned” (1978, 120[43]: 678). Satan’s names describe his mission. His primary goal is to alienate men from God by causing them to sin. His main objective is to make men his slaves, thereby robbing them of the freedom that God’s Word alone can impart (John 8:32). But how, exactly, does Satan do this?

HOW DOES SATAN CARRY OUT HIS MISSION AGAINST HUMANITY?

The Bible makes it clear that the devil is the originator, the father, of sin. John wrote: “[H]e that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning” (1 John 3:8). In speaking to this point, Wayne Jackson has written: “Disease, infirmity and death are ultimately the responsibility of Satan, for by his introduction of sin into the world, he brought about such woes and hence he is really the murderer of the human family (John 8:44)” [1980, p. 76].

However, it is important to recognize that while Satan is the **originator** of sin, he is not the immediate **cause** of sin.

Satan tempts, but he cannot compel men to do evil against their wills. A man must yield to Satan’s temptation and desire before he becomes guilty of sin. To be tempted is not sin, but to yield to temptation is sin. We are answerable and responsible for our own sins, notwithstanding the temptation and influence of the devil. God endowed us with reason and a free will, therefore we have the ability to choose good or evil; in other words, we are free moral agents. So our sins are our own, and our own responsibility (Ecrement, 1961, p. 34).

Satan’s constant coercion and tantalizing temptation do not, and cannot, override man’s free will. James affirmed this in his epistle when he wrote:

But each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death (1:14-15).

As an example of this point, consider the apostle who betrayed the Son of God. Overcome by the grotesque nature of his dastardly deed, Judas eventually lamented: “**I** have sinned in that **I** betrayed innocent blood” (Matthew 27:4). Even in his final hours, he did not attempt to lay the blame for his sin at someone else’s feet.

Similar lessons are taught in Acts 5 and 2 Samuel 12. In Acts 5, when Ananias and Sapphira lied about the amount they had received from the sale of a piece of land (and the

amount they subsequently professed to have donated to the church), Peter inquired of Ananias: “How is it that **thou** hast conceived this thing in **thy** heart? **Thou** has not lied unto men, but unto God” (Acts 5:4, emp. added). The apostle wanted Ananias to know that he, personally, bore the guilt for his sin. He could not claim (with any legitimacy): “The devil made me do it.” In 2 Samuel 12, the prophet Nathan was sent by God to convict King David of the sin of adultery with Bathsheba, wife of Urriah the Hittite. This he did. After hearing the evidence against him, “David said unto Nathan, **I** have sinned against Jehovah” (12:13). To his credit, David realized that not even powerful potentates are immune to the personal responsibility that accompanies transgression of God’s law.

If we are responsible for our own actions, how, then, does Satan influence us to sin? In 2 Corinthians 2:11, Paul spoke of the fact that “no advantage may be gained over us by Satan: for we are not ignorant of his devices.” The word “devices” in this text derives from the Greek *noemata*, which “refers to intelligent notions, purposes, designs, devices, etc.” (Overton, 1976, 5[4]:3). In Ephesians 6:11, Paul admonished Christians to “put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” The word “wiles” derives from the Greek *methodeias*, from which we get our English word “methods.” *Methodeias* “is from the Greek verb that means to trace; to investigate; to handle methodically; to handle cunningly.... The devil is a skilled artisan. He will deceive you if you do not work at the job of fighting back at him” (Overton, 5[4]:3).

Indeed, deceit is perhaps Satan’s most powerful tool. Through his “devices” and “wiles,” Satan pressures us “with all deceit of unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:10). Sanderson has suggested that Satan’s traits “clearly show the Devil to be a cunning, deceitful hypocrite. He is truthless, dishonest, and fraudulent in every possible way” (1978, 120[43]:678). Adding to this assessment, L.M. Sweet wrote: “Satan’s power consists principally in his ability to deceive. It is interesting and characteristic that according to the Bible Satan is fundamentally a liar and his kingdom is a kingdom founded upon lies and deceit” (1939, 4:2693). The New Testament provides ample ev-

idence to substantiate such a conclusion. Wayne Jackson summarized some of that evidence when he acknowledged that the deceiver:

(1) Delights in blinding the minds of the unbelieving that the light of the gospel should not dawn upon them (II Cor. 4:4). (2) To accomplish this he does not hesitate to transform himself into an angel of light along with his ministers who pretend to be ministers of righteousness (II Cor. 11:14,15). (3) When people are inclined not to believe the truth, the devil takes the gospel from their hearts (Luke 8:12). (4) He is full of trickery. He has his snares (I Tim. 3:7), and employs his “wiles”—a deliberate planning or system (Eph. 4:14; 6:11) [1980, p. 81].

But what power does Satan have that allows him to accomplish his task of deceiving humanity? How extensive is that power, and how is it wielded?

WHAT ARE SATAN’S POWERS?

There can be no doubt that, as “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4), Satan is powerful in his own right. When the devil tempted the Son of God in the wilderness, he offered Him all the power and glory of the kingdoms of this world, if only He would fall down and worship him (Matthew 4:9). His justification for this insidious offer was based on his claim that, as the lord of this planet, he could offer its possessions to “whomsoever I will” (Luke 4:6). Interestingly, Jesus refuted neither Satan’s position as “god of this world” nor his ability to impose his will upon it. Erich Sauer therefore concluded:

This whole offer would have been unreal from the first for the Lord as a temptation, if some such legal basis for Satan’s dominion in the world had not existed. Otherwise Jesus would only have had to point out that the necessary presuppositions for Satan’s legal claim to and ability to dispose of the glory of the world simply did not exist. The Lord however left this claim of the devil’s uncontradicted and merely declared that man should worship and serve God alone (Luke 4:8). With this He recognized in principle the tempter’s right to dispose of the kingdoms of

this world in this present age. This same thought lies behind the various sayings of Jesus in which He calls Satan “the Prince of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) [1962, p. 66].

We would do well to recognize the same thing the Son of God recognized: **Satan is an important and powerful foe!**

As powerful as he is, however, Satan is not omnipotent—a fact that even he recognized. During his temptation of Christ, he admitted that his earthly reign “hath been delivered unto me” (Luke 4:6). When the devil robbed Job of his family and earthly possessions, and even when he afflicted Job physically, he did so only with the expressed permission of God (Job 1:12; 2:6). When he sought to “sift” Christ’s apostles as wheat, he first had to “ask” for them (Luke 22:31). The Scriptures make it clear, therefore, that his powers do have limits.

But what powers, exactly, are in his possession? When T. Pierce Brown observed that “apparently he is able to make some sort of suggestions to the heart” (1974, 91[16]:5), he provided a picture window into which we may peer to observe the way Satan works among men. Among Satan’s impressive powers are these. He perverts the Word of God (Genesis 3:1-4). He instigates false doctrine (1 Timothy 4:1-3). He blinds men to truth (2 Corinthians 4:4). He sows tares among God’s wheat (Matthew 13:24-30,36-43). He steals the Word of God from human hearts (Matthew 13:19). He lays snares for men (2 Timothy 2:26; 1 Timothy 3:7). He tempts (Matthew 4:1; Ephesians 6:11). He afflicts (Job 2:7; Luke 13:16; Acts 10:38; 2 Corinthians 12:7). He deceives (Revelation 12:9; 20:8-10). He undermines the sanctity of the home (1 Corinthians 7:3-5). He prompts both saints and sinners to transgress the laws of God (1 Chronicles 21:1; Matthew 16:22-23; John 13:2; Acts 5:3). He hinders the work of God’s servants (1 Thessalonians 2:18). And he even makes accusations against God’s children before Heaven’s throne (Job 1:6-11; 2:3-6; 21:1-5; Zechariah 3:1-4; Revelation 12:9-10).

Satan employs his power of “suggestions to the heart” to pervert the truth. In his book, *Get Thee Behind Me Satan*, Virgil Leach assessed our much-feared, other-worldly adversary in these words:

He is the great pretender and the first liar and hypocrite with special skills in deception.... No one escapes his trickery; every man knows something of deception. He will influence men to conceal or distort truth for the purpose of misleading, cheating and fraud. If he cannot overthrow truth he will neutralize it, water it down to dilute it. Qualities of guile, craftiness, dissimulation and pretense are used in all his maneuvers. Satan is a master of deceit and is well aware that half lies mixed with half truths more often do the trick and will more easily be swallowed and digested, not that he will not use an out-and-out lie should it fit the occasion. Loving darkness, he would prefer a tree to hide behind than an open field and would prefer an ambush over an open warfare. Our adversary would desire to plant his "Judas kiss" on the cheek of every man (1977, pp. 14-15).

Like a carnivorous lion ready for the hunt (1 Peter 5:8), Satan waits to devour us via his "suggestions to the heart." Like a well-hidden, coiled snake (Revelation 20:2), he is able to strike in an instant, injecting the poison of his venom into the minds of men. Or, using what is perhaps the most insidious disguise at his disposal, he even may portray himself as an "angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14) who feigns humility, piety, and righteousness, yet whose intentions all the while are as insincere as they are sanctimonious.

What awesome powers the devil commands! What subtle meanness he exhibits! One moment he presents himself as an innocent-faced, sweet-talking "angel"; the next he is a ravenous mammal or slithering reptile. Little wonder Paul wrote to the Thessalonians:

For this cause I also, when I could no longer forbear, sent that I might know your faith, lest by any means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor should be in vain (1 Thessalonians 3:5)

The apostle's inner stirrings on behalf of those he had worked so long, and so hard, to wrest from the devil's grasp were based on his knowledge that they faced daily a formidable foe who was more than capable of ravishing both their bodies and their souls.

WHAT IS SATAN'S ULTIMATE DESTINY?

Is all lost, then? Hardly! Although the Scriptures repeatedly affirm Satan's immense power, they likewise affirm that "he [God] that is in you is greater than he [Satan] that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). We know this to be the case because the Scriptures testify eloquently to the fact that Satan—far from having free reign—has been "bound."

The concluding book of the New Testament, Revelation, was written to offer encouragement to first-century Christians who, because of their professed faith in the Son of God, were threatened hourly with severe persecution "even unto death" (Revelation 2:10). Within this book, which is written in apocalyptic literature that is highly figurative, the message is one not only of comfort, but also of ultimate victory over the devil and his forces. The twentieth chapter, especially, presents a vivid picture of God's archfiend and man's ardent enemy, Satan, as being "bound" (vs. 2) and "cast into the abyss" (vs. 3). As Hardeman Nichols has suggested:

If in our study of Revelation 20 we fail to see the final overthrow of Satan and his collaborators, we have missed a major truth. If we do not appreciate the final triumph of every righteous person, we have not been sufficiently blessed by this study (1978, p. 260).

Concerning the devil, Nichols went on to write that "[w]hen, in the unspecified eternity before the world he initiated his rebellion, God put a restraint upon him" (p. 263).

That restraint never has been removed. And, in fact, it has been tightened. While it is true that in the first century the devil and his minions were able to affect people **physically** (cf. Luke 4:41; 8:26-33), fortunately that no longer is the case. For example, when the prophet Zechariah foretold of the coming of the Messiah and spoke of the blessings that would attend His reign, he stated that eventually the Lord would "cause the prophets and the **unclean spirit** to pass out of the land" (13:1-2). Concerning Zechariah's prophecy, Homer Hailey remarked:

Likewise, unclean spirits, the antithesis of the prophets, would cease. In the conquest of Christ over Satan

and his forces, unclean spirits have ceased to control men as they did in the time of the ministry of Christ and the apostles (1972, p. 392).

L.M. Sweet correctly observed that in our day and age there is no evidence that “Satan is able to any extent to introduce disorder into the physical universe or directly operate in the lives of men” (1939, p. 2694). [For a more in-depth discussion of these points than the limited space here will allow, the reader is referred to Jackson, 1990, 1998.]

CONCLUSION

God not only “bound” Satan, but also sealed his ultimate doom. Our Lord will be victorious over Heaven’s Great Adversary, for “to this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). It is via the power inherent in His own death and resurrection that He will “bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14). The fate that awaits this traitorous tyrant is clear:

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Revelation 20:10).

Eternal punishment in hell has been “prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).

God’s covenant pledge, made with our forefathers in Genesis 3:15, then will be fulfilled once and for all: “He [Christ] shall bruise thy [Satan’s] head.” The paradise lost of Genesis will have become the paradise regained of Revelation. With the earthly reign of Satan brought to an end, and the eternal bliss of God’s saints secure, then we shall be able to say with the psalmist of old: “This is the day which Jehovah hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it” (118:24).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

IS SATAN “LUCIFER”?

It is sad, but nevertheless true, that on occasion Bible students attribute to God’s Word facts and concepts that it neither teaches nor advocates. These ill-advised beliefs run the entire gamut—from harmless misinterpretations to potentially soul-threatening false doctrines.

Although there are numerous examples from both categories that could be listed, perhaps one of the most popular misconceptions among Bible believers is that Satan also is designated as “Lucifer” within the pages of the Bible. What is the origin of the name Lucifer, what is its meaning, and is it a synonym for “Satan”? Here are the facts.

The word “Lucifer” is used in the King James Version only once, in Isaiah 14:12: “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!” The Hebrew word translated “Lucifer” is *helel* (or *heylel*), from the root, *hâlâl*, meaning “to shine” or “to bear light.” Keil and Delitzsch noted that “[i]t derives its name in other ancient languages also from its striking brilliancy, and is here called *ben-shachar* (son of the dawn)...” (1982, 7:311). However, the KJV translators did not translate *helel* as Lucifer because of something inherent in the Hebrew term itself. Instead, they borrowed the name from Jerome’s Bible translation (A.D. 383-405) known as the *Latin Vulgate*. Jerome, likely believing that the term described the planet Venus, employed the Latin term “Lucifer” (“light-bearing”) to designate “the morning star” (Venus). Only later did the suggestion originate that Isaiah 14:12ff. was speaking of the devil. Eventually, the name Lucifer came to be synonymous with Satan. But is Satan “Lucifer”?

No, he is not. The context into which verse 12 fits begins in verse 4 where God told Isaiah to “take up this parable against the **king of Babylon**, and say, ‘How hath the oppressor ceased!

the golden city ceased’!” In his commentary on Isaiah, Albert Barnes explained that God’s wrath was kindled against the king because the ruler “intended not to acknowledge any superior either in heaven or earth, but designed that himself and his laws should be regarded as supreme” (1950, 1: 272). The chest-pounding boast of the impudent potentate was:

I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; and I will sit upon the mount of congregation, in the uttermost parts of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High (vss. 13-14).

As a result of his egotistical self-deification, the pagan monarch eventually would experience both the collapse of his kingdom and the loss of his life—an ignominious end that is described in vivid and powerful terms. “Sheol from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming,” the prophet proclaimed to the once-powerful king. And when the ruler finally descends into his eternal grave, captives of that hidden realm will taunt him by saying, “Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?” (vs. 16). He is denominated as a “man” (vs. 16) who would die in disrepute and whose body would be buried, not in a king’s sarcophagus, but in pits reserved for the downtrodden masses (vss. 19-20). Worms would eat his body, and hedgehogs would trample his grave (vss. 11, 23).

It was in this context that Isaiah referred to the king of Babylon as “the morning star” (“son of the morning”; “son of the dawn”) to depict the once-shining-but-now-dimmed, once-lofty-but-now-diminished, status of the (soon to be former) ruler. In his *Bible Commentary*, E.M. Zerr observed that such phrases were “...used figuratively in this verse to symbolize the dignity and splendor of the Babylonian monarch. His complete overthrow was likened to the falling of the morning star” (1954, 3:265). This kind of phraseology should not be surprising since “[i]n the O.T., the demise of corrupt national powers is frequently depicted under the imagery of falling heavenly luminaries (cf. Isa. 13:10; Ezek. 32:7), hence, quite appropriately in this context the Babylonian monarch is described as a fallen star [cf. ASV]” (Jackson, 1987, 23:15).

Nowhere within the context of Isaiah 14, however, is Satan depicted as Lucifer. In fact, quite the opposite is true. In his commentary on Isaiah, Burton Coffman wrote: “We are glad that our version (ASV) leaves the word *Lucifer* out of this rendition, because...Satan does not enter into this passage as a subject at all” (1990, p. 141). The Babylonian ruler was to die and be buried—fates neither of which Satan is destined to endure. The king was called “a man” whose body was to be eaten by worms, but Satan, as a spirit, has no physical body. The monarch lived in and abided over a “golden city” (vs. 4), but Satan is the monarch of a kingdom of spiritual darkness (cf. Ephesians 6:12). And so on.

The context presented in Isaiah 4:4-16 not only does not portray Satan as Lucifer, but actually militates against it. Keil and Delitzsch firmly proclaimed that “Lucifer,” as a synonym, “...is a perfectly appropriate one for the king of Babel, on account of the early date of the Babylonian culture, which reached back as far as the grey twilight of primeval times, and also because of its predominate astrological character” (1982, p. 312). They then correctly concluded that “Lucifer, as a name given to the devil, was derived from this passage...without any warrant whatever, as relating to the apostasy and punishment of the angelic leaders” (pp. 312-313).

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APPENDIX II

“RESIST THE DEVIL...”

The warfare for the souls of men has continued ever since Eve first fell prey to Satan’s deceit in the great long ago (Genesis 3:1-6; cf. 1 Timothy 2:14). At times, it seems that humanity has taken one step forward and two steps backward in this critical conflict between good and evil. One ancient, inspired writer lamented: “[F]or all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23), with the end result being that “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). One modern, non-inspired writer lamented: “Even now there are millions who consciously worship Satan and many more millions who are increasingly open in their hatred of God” (Morris, 1971, p. 215).

Not a very pretty picture, is it? Is our battle against God’s archfiend and man’s ardent enemy a losing one? Are Satan’s powers too great for us to overcome? Shall we simply give in, give up, and raise the white flag in ultimate surrender, knowing that we are beaten down and destroyed by a foe whose powers know no limits? What shall be the end of this matter?

While we never should underestimate Satan’s power and ability, neither should we underestimate the power and ability of our great God and His Word. Satan may have the power to ensnare us, but Jehovah has the power to remove us from that snare (2 Timothy 2:26). Truly, “the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation” (2 Peter 2:9).

But we have a part to play in that deliverance. Steadfast, unmovable faith is the key (1 Peter 5:9; 1 Corinthians 15:58). John wrote: “For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4). We must not, we cannot, be “ignorant of his devices” (2 Corinthians 2:11). Neither can we be double-minded (James 1:8), nor lukewarm (Revelation 3:15-

16). Rather, we must be alert to the ever-present danger that our enemy represents. Like Abraham of old, we must stand firm. Abraham, “looking unto the promise of God, wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform” (Romans 4:20-21).

But how do we accomplish this? What weapons may be found in our arsenal? And how may they be employed successfully against this, the most pervasive and powerful of enemies? First, we need battle armor, which is why Paul wrote:

Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand (Ephesians 6:10-13).

What, exactly, is the “whole armor of God”? The apostle went on to explain himself in the same context when he wrote:

Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints (Ephesians 6:14-18).

Is not this the exact same weaponry employed by our Lord in His spiritual struggle with Satan in the wilderness? Each time the devil tempted Him, the Lord’s resistance was couched in the repetitive refrain: “It is written...” (Matthew 4:4,7,10), after which the Scriptures state simply: “Then the devil leaveth him” (Matthew 4:11).

Seizing upon Christ’s example, years later the inspired James would write: “**Resist the devil, and he will flee from you**” (James 4:7, emp. added). If we steep ourselves in a work-

ing knowledge of God's Word, if we take courage and press on, if we adamantly refuse to give in or give up, we, like Paul, can say:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:35-39).

Second, we must realize that while God will not necessarily act to prevent our temptation by Satan, neither will He allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to endure. Paul wrote: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Third, we should remember that while Satan indeed may be the "accuser of the brethren" (Revelation 12:10), we have an Advocate—Jesus the Christ—Who stands with us, pleads our case, protects us, and refuses to forsake us. The same apostle that wrote the beautiful book of Revelation to comfort first-century saints who were losing their lives daily to the "evil one" also wrote: "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). The Hebrew writer said that "he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (7:25). What a great consolation—to know that the Son of God stands before the great white throne in the city set four-square to plead our case before the "Judge of all the earth" Who will "do what is right" (Genesis 18:25).

Fourth, let us never forget that victory is within our grasp. The outcome of the battle for the souls of men already has been decided. As Paul said: "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan

under your feet shortly” (Romans 16:20). We may defect from God’s army if we so desire, and become “AWOL” as a result. Through the millennia, many have done exactly that. They grew weary of the battle, and gave up. They set aside the “whole armor of God.” They stripped away the loincloth of truth. They discarded the breastplate of righteousness. They took off the shoes of the gospel of peace. They laid down the shield of faith. They removed the helmet of salvation. But they did so at their own peril.

Judas, for example, became so filled with the essence of Satan that Jesus referred to him as the “devil” (John 6:70). When Paul wrote the Ephesian Christians, he warned: “Leave no loop-hole for the devil” (4:27, NEB). But some did. Two early Christians, Hymenaeus and Alexander, were so overcome by the devil that Paul told Timothy he had “delivered [them] unto Satan” (1 Timothy 1:20). When God spoke through John to the church at Thyatira, He indicated that some of those Christians had become so wicked as to know the “deep things of Satan” (Revelation 2:24). What a horrible indictment!

And what a needless waste! Obviously, these individuals had ignored the Lord’s admonition: “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation” (Matthew 26:41). As a result, they never would be able to say with the great apostle to the Gentiles, and with the faithful of all the ages: “But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57).

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