

Did God Create Satan and Evil?

People often ask questions about the origin of Satan, sin and all evils. Not a few will say it is God who created them, but that is not true!

The Scriptures admonish us not to think of God as the author of evil. James 1:13 says, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." God never tempts man, either by presenting any enticement or persuasion to sin, or by infusing him with evil thoughts, inclinations and desires. He places no temptation in the way of anyone to induce him to sin.

Furthermore, God is "the Holy One" (Psalms 71:22; 78:41; 89:18; Isaiah 43:15), implying that He is absolutely and infinitely holy. There is no evil in Him. "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deuteronomy 32:4). "... the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him" (Psalm 92:15). "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

God, who is perfectly holy, pure, true and good, neither thinks, acts nor creates evil. All His deeds are in undeviating correspondence with His perfect purity. Creating evil and tempting man with sin would be to act in direct contrariety to His own nature.

Some may try to rationalize, saying, "If all things were created, except the self-existing Triune God, then there must be a beginning for Satan." This subsequently leads to the conclusion that God must have created Satan, otherwise he cannot exist. There may be some logic to that line of thinking, but it also misses out some very important facts about the origin of Satan.

In the beginning, Satan was not at all created as an evil angel or spirit. He was created as a holy angel and then he rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven. He was not even known initially as Satan, which means "adversary". He was not made an adversary of God.

In fact, all that God had made were good. Genesis 1:31 makes that very clear: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good..." There was no indication whatsoever of anything evil in His creation.

God in all His works and ways stands perfectly clear of all moral evil. He is not, even in the least degree, an accessory to any sinful act of any creature.

The Origin of **SATAN**

Introduction

Genesis, the book of origin, gives us no clue concerning the creation of Satan. His sudden appearance in the third chapter of Genesis awakens our curiosity concerning his origin. There we see him as God's adversary and a tempter of man. How did this evil being appear all of a sudden in God's perfectly created world?

We know that Satan cannot be a self-existing being because only God is self-existent. So he must have had a beginning. Did God create him? Could God have created him as an evil being?

Though Genesis provides little clue to Satan's origin, there are two passages that cast light on the origin of Satan. They are Ezekiel 28:11-17 and Isaiah 14:12-15. From these passages, we learn that God created him as a magnificent angel, but he rebelled against God and that brought about his expulsion from heaven.

An overview of Ezekiel 28

Ezekiel 28 appears in a section of the book that pronounces God's judgment on Israel's enemies. In verses 1 to 10 of this chapter, Ezekiel delivered a message of judgment against the land of Tyre, a proud city-state. But in verses 11 to 17, he moved beyond the physical "prince of Tyre",

the king of that nation, and pronounced judgment on the one who controlled the "prince of Tyre", even Satan. Here are the reasons to believe that verses 11-17 of Ezekiel 28 points to the origin of Satan.

In verses 1 to 10, "the prince of Tyrus" is addressed as a "man" (vv. 2, 9) while verses 11-17 focus on a different personality who is identified as "the anointed cherub" (v. 14) and the "covering cherub" (v. 16). Superlatives used here to describe this creature far surpass that of a human being. He is said to be "full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty" (v. 12) and "perfect in [his] ways from the day that [he] was created" (v. 15).

He was also mentioned as one who had been in the garden of Eden (v. 13). Apart from God (who spoke through Ezekiel the prophet), there were only three other characters in the garden. They were Adam, Eve and Satan. At the time of this prophecy, Adam and Eve were long dead, and hence neither of them could be the one addressed here. So the only logical conclusion is that this must be a reference to Satan who was there in the garden and now in Tyre working through the prince of Tyre.

Satan works through governmental leaders on many occasions. That he was the one behind "the prince of Tyre" in this instance is just one example. The arrogant Gentile

nation of Tyre and her leader were working out the philosophy and agenda of Satan (without recognising or realising it). The proud and defiant prince of Tyre was actually under a greater force, even Satan. So as the prophet pronounced judgment upon Tyre, the enemy of Israel, in verses 1-10, he also uttered a curse upon the one who controlled the Gentile prince.

Satan's remarkable origin

He was created by God as a cherub

Cherubim (plural) were a special class of angels. They are understood to be the guardian angels of God's holiness and glory. They live under the glory of God's throne (Ezekiel 10:1-4) as well as around it (Psalms 80:1; 99:1). With a fiery sword, they were appointed to guard God's holiness in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:24). In Exodus 25:17-22, they appear in the form of golden images upon the mercy seat which is the lid of the ark of the covenant in the tabernacle of worship. In this connection, they were called "cherubims of glory" (Hebrews 9:5).

These cherubim are probably of the greatest class and of the highest order among the angels. Among them, Satan was "an anointed cherub that covereth" (vv. 14, 16). The word "anointed" suggests that Satan was the God-appointed leader of the cherubim. According to Isaiah 14:12, he was originally known as "Lucifer, son of the morning" – a name that reflected his beauty and glory.

He was magnificent in beauty and wisdom

"Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty" (v. 12). This

summarises his original splendour. He had the beauty like those of precious stones, for the prophet said, "...every precious stone was thy covering" (v. 13). These stones include: (1) sardius (reddish-brown in colour), (2) topaz (golden yellow), (3) diamond (colourless, reflecting all colours), (4) beryl (dark red), (5) onyx (multicoloured), (6) jasper (bluish-green), (7) sapphire (deep, rich blue), (8) emerald (scintillating green), (9) carbuncle (or garnet, which is deep blood-red) and (10) gold. What a rainbow of brilliant colours! What a spectacular and colourful being Lucifer was indeed! Truly, he was just as his name meant – Lucifer, son of the morning.

Dwight Pentecost commented, "But, of course, a gem stone has no light of its own. If you were to take any gem stone into a dark room, it would not shine. It would not glow. Its beauty is not in itself. Its beauty is in its ability to reflect light from without. When God created Lucifer, God created him with a capacity to reflect the glory of God than any other created being. All of the beauty that was seen in this highest of angelic beings was a beauty that was given to him by creation, not a beauty that was innately his own. It was a reflected beauty. God in His holiness was the light that made Lucifer radiate and scintillate the glory that was His. It could be said that Lucifer was perfect in beauty, for no creature so fully reflected the glory of God."

He was a musically-gifted creature

"The workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created" (v. 13). Musical instruments were originally designed to be the means of praising and worshipping God. Lucifer, because of the manner by which he

was created, did what a musical instrument would do in the hands of a skilful musician – bring forth anthems of praise to the glory of God. It appears that he himself was an organ! That is what the prophet meant when he said, "...the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created."

Lucifer was created for the glory and praise of God. He must have been the leader of the heavenly choir of angels. He was called the shining one, the light-bearer, like no other angel was.

He was originally in God's presence

"Thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire" (v. 14). Lucifer was not only a chief cherub, perfect in beauty and wisdom with an enviable talent for music, he also literally lived in God's presence before his fall. It is really a wonder how this most wonderful creature with a remarkable origin can turn out to be a most dreaded adversary!

Satan's outrageous rebellion

In spite of all the wonderful traits that God had bestowed on Lucifer, he rebelled against God, being lifted up with pride. Hence the Lord rebuked him, saying, "...iniquity was found in thee" (v. 15). We are also told that he was "lifted up" (v. 17; cf. Isaiah 14:13) because of his splendour and beauty.

The Apostle Paul referred to this sin that caused the downfall of Satan while explaining why a novice should not be appointed to become an elder: "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with

pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Timothy 3:6).

The rebellion in heaven was first and foremost a rebellion of the heart because God said, "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God" (Isaiah 14:13). A heart lifted up in pride against God's glory is a detestable thing to God. An arrogant heart is deceitful and makes a man foolish enough to utter execrable words and do abominable deeds.

The five statements of "I will" uttered by Lucifer (Isaiah 14:13-14) exposed his arrogance and evil desire to rise above the sphere in which he was created and placed that he might usurp God's glory.

- "I will ascend into heaven." He exalted himself and desired to have equal recognition with God. The chief guardian angel of God's glory attempted to steal the divine glory for himself!
- "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God." Some Bible teachers suggest that "the stars of God" is a reference to the angels, and therefore this statement implies usurping God's authority over the angels. The phrase "the stars of God" may mean another thing but it is evident that he defied God's supremacy.
- "I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north." By this statement, Lucifer mounted a challenge to God's sovereignty over His people.
- "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds." The word "clouds" is used here to represent the *Shekeinah* glory of God (cf. Exodus 13:21; 40:28-34; Job

37:15-16; Matthew 26:64; Revelation 14:14-16). Though Satan was a magnificent creature, he arrogantly desired to claim God's glory for himself.

- "I will be like the most High." This was the ultimate defiance against God! This was the climax of all his self-assertions. He refused God's dominion over him but desired to control and rule over everything, even God.

Satan's banishment from heaven

Thus, Lucifer, aka Satan, was banished from heaven as recorded 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 beauty of his character became totally corrupt and he is destined to "be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit" (Isaiah 14:15; cf. Revelation 20:3). His rebellion also caused a group of angels to fall with him (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:9) and severe destruction awaits all of them as well as those who will follow in their footsteps.

Ever since he rebelled against God, Lucifer has been known by the name Satan, which means "adversary". The Bible is not without warning that God's people should be wary of him: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Let every Christian take this warning seriously!



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(Continued from page 11)

of the devil, (v) helmet of salvation, (vi) sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:14-17). As the whole armour of God is put in place, the Christian's triumph is sure and victory secure.

Conclusion

The believers' protection and final victory in Christ

is assured because He has promised these faithful words of truth from Romans 8:37-39: "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 powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 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."

Again, the Word of God in Romans 16:20 asserts: "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen" (cf. Revelation 12:10-11).

God Declares War against the Adversary

Introduction

Christians, prior to regeneration, were Satan's allies who served his devilish purposes (Ephesians 2:2, 3; Acts 26:18; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 3:8). Upon conversion to Christ, however, they instantly became Satan's enemies (Job 1:7-12; Zechariah 3:1; Luke 22:31). The reason for this is because Satan hates the fact that their loyalty is with Christ. Satan will stop at nothing to win them back (1 Peter 5:8) though it is impossible to snatch away a genuine Christian from Christ's mighty hand (John 10:28, 29). Every Christian will have to face ferocious attacks by Satan and his demonic forces and he will find himself in a spiritual conflict that rages throughout his lifetime here on earth. It is warfare on a large scale.

But how, where and when did man ever get into this battle with the devil? To

have a correct perspective of it all, we need to consider certain events in the garden of Eden which led to it.

Satan instigates man to rebel against God (Genesis 3:1-6)

Upon the creation of man, God placed him in the garden of Eden and made a covenant with him. According to this covenant, man would have dominion over all of God's creation in obedience to His will and commands, specifically the command not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 1:26-29; 2:15-17).

Having been cast out from his glorious position in heaven, Satan became all the more determined to continue his fight against God. He chose mankind, God's special creation, to perpetuate this rebellion against the Creator. He plotted to deceive man to rebel against God. He

targeted Eve and deceived her into disobedience; and upon seeing Eve's disobedience, Adam did likewise and also sinned against God's command.

The devil tempted the woman by twisting the Word of God and causing her to doubt. He asked, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (3:1). He then totally denied God's Word with a blatant lie by telling Eve, "Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (3:4-5).

The woman gave in to the temptation and ate of the forbidden fruit (3:6a). Likewise, Adam chose to sin though he was not the one directly deceived by the devil (3:6b; cf. 1 Timothy 2:14). Thus Satan, by his wicked ploy, instigated man's rebellion against God.

God intervenes to redeem fallen man (Genesis 3:7-24)

As Adam and Eve fell into sin, guilt and shame filled their hearts (3:7, 10), and soon enough they were confronted by God (3:9-13). There were very serious consequences for Adam and Eve because of their disobedience. The woman will thenceforth suffer pain in conception and childbearing (3:16). The ground had become cursed and man must now work to till the ground with his hands so that it may produce food for subsistence (3:17-19). Worse still, his physical body is subject to decay until it returns to the ground where it came from (3:19b).

Furthermore, both Adam and Eve were banished from their Edenic paradise and would no longer gain access to the “tree of life” (3:22-24). They learned a little too late that indeed, the Word of God is truth as it was told unto them “for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (2:17). Because of sin, death entered into the world of mankind.

During His confrontation with the fallen man and

woman, God also gave a hint of His plan of redemption. Popularly known as the *Proto evangelion* or “The First Gospel”, Genesis 3:15 reads: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

The woman’s seed refers to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23). He would be the one to deal the deadly blow to Satan in bruising his head. But it would come with the price of the lifeblood of God’s only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus, whose heel shall be bruised. He would be crucified on the cross at Calvary as the sacrifice for redemption from the curse of sin (cf. Galatians 4:4-5). But Christ would rise again from the dead in victory over sin and Satan. This reveals God’s covenant of grace to redeem fallen mankind.

God intimates the beginning of spiritual warfare (Genesis 3:7-24)

There appears to be an irony in God’s

pronouncement of the first Gospel in Genesis 3:15. Though it is an announcement of God’s covenant of grace, it is also a pronouncement of His judgment. As much as it is a declaration of redemption, it is also a declaration of war and doom. The Gospel is usually understood in terms of reconciliation and making peace with God. Yet, the first Gospel message is couched in terms of enmity and battle. Though it was good news of salvation for Adam and Eve, it was also bad news of war and curse for the devil and his allies.

God will not leave the whole of mankind whom He created to the deception and dominion of Satan. He promises to win through His Son everyone whom He has chosen and keep him victorious in the battle till the end.

God declared “war” by saying to the serpent, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed...” Let us take note that “the battle is the Lord’s” (1 Samuel 17:47; 2 Chronicles 20:15). The Lord who is with us is “the Lord of hosts” (Psalm 46:7, 11). So Christians who are now

in the spiritual battle have nothing to fear, for the Lord's declaration of war also pronounces absolute victory over the devil. The enemy's defeat is certain and our victory is sure. God will not allow the enemy to win the battle.

God declared war between Satan and the woman (a representative of all those who will believe): "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." To this statement, Matthew Henry comments, "A perpetual quarrel is here commenced between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the devil among men; war is proclaimed between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent."

The words of the Apostle John in 1 John 3:8 clearly define who Satan's seeds are: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (cf. John 8:44). Continuing further, John reveals to us the protagonists in this war: the children of God on one hand and the children of the devil on the other. "Whosoever is born of God

doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (1 John 3:9-10).

God inflicts the final defeat of Satan

Christ has already won the battle on the cross as He crushed Satan's power over His people. Hebrews 2:14-15 will help us to understand this: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

The preaching of the Gospel of salvation in Christ is intended to break the power of Satan over souls in bondage to sin and to bring them to Christ for deliverance and salvation. Acts 26:18 testifies this truth: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from

darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

Nevertheless, the devil still continues to fight and try to harm God's people. Thus Christians are warned in 1 Peter 5:8: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

Christians can be sure that this battle will not be an easy one. Nevertheless, the Word of God has not left us without instruction with regard to the weapons that we must use to fight this battle. Drawing strength from the Lord and in the power of His might, Christians are instructed to "put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11).

The Christian's armoury includes the following: (i) truth that is girt about the loins, (ii) breastplate of righteousness, (iii) Gospel of peace shod on the feet, (iv) shield of faith to parry the fiery darts

(Continued on page 8)

37:15-16; Matthew 26:64; Revelation 14:14-16). Though Satan was a magnificent creature, he arrogantly desired to claim God's glory for himself.

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(Continued from page 11)

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The Assaults of the Enemy

In opposing and rebelling against God, Satan and his demons target their attacks at the believers. It is because of their hostile activities that Christians are caught in that intense struggle mentioned by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:12: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” These satanic forces are unleashed against us to accomplish “the wiles (schemes) of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11). Satan and the demons are constantly conniving to discourage and defeat the saints in their individual and corporate life and ministry.

Scripture does not say that all our struggles with evil come directly from demons. Much of these also stems from our own evil nature (Romans 7:21-24; James 1:14-15) and from the world of lustful men around us (Ephesians 2:2-3; 1 John 2:15-17). Nevertheless, we must recognise that there are a great number of unseen hosts of evil spirits arrayed against us and we must prepare for this battle by putting on the whole armour of God (Ephesians 6:11).

The devices of the devil against God’s people and the church are many. It is not possible to describe all of them in this article but some of the more common ones are mentioned here.

Against individuals

Assault on the spiritual life of believers

The armour of God reflects the kind of spiritual attacks we may expect. Ephesians 6:14-18 suggests that Satan and the demons will hit us at the most crucial points in which our usefulness to God will be greatly affected.

They attack our confidence in God’s truth and promises as well as our stand for righteousness (v. 14). These demons will also seek to cripple our Gospel efforts (v. 15). Our faith in Christ would be threatened as fiery darts of trials and testing are hurled at us (v. 16). Lastly, our assurance of salvation will be under siege as they try to cloud our minds and cast doubt on the Word of God.

Assault on the physical body of believers

The battle may also shift to the physical realm as demons can attack by inflicting Christians with various maladies. Satan afflicted Paul with a “thorn in the flesh”. Paul pointed out this physical difficulty or sickness in 2 Corinthians 12:7 and referred to it as “the messenger [angel] of Satan to buffet” him. Most likely a demon caused his affliction, but only because God allowed it according to His sovereign purpose.

The same affliction can also be seen in the life of the Old Testament saint named Job. Satan had probably used demons to afflict Job to get him to turn against God (Job 2:7-9).

Against the church

Satan and the demons seek to oppose the main purposes of the body of Christ. The church is to glorify God, extend the Gospel and be edified in God's truth (Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:7-11). These activities are likely to draw the attention of the devil and his minions. Hence, believers can expect the demons to spare no effort in frustrating these purposes in many ways.

Doctrinal and practical schisms

The church is to keep the unity of the Spirit in the body of Christ, and such unity is to be maintained in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3-6). Demons would love nothing better than to divide the church, whether locally or universally.

They will seek to create schisms within the church by promoting doctrinal divisions. Speaking through false teachers (1 Timothy 4:1-3), they will generally deny or cloud the truth of Christ's deity, humanity, or His substitutionary sacrifice and its appropriation by faith (1 John 4:1-4). In view of this, God's ministers should gently teach and correct those who are influenced by them that they may repent "to the acknowledging of the truth" and escape from the snare of the devil (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

Demons will promote practical divisions too. Because of earthly, sensual and even devilish wisdom that can pervade the lives of God's people, jealousy, selfishness,

arrogance and a contentious spirit would arise (James 3:14-16). Demons can exploit the fleshly lusts of Christians to create strife among the believers (Galatians 5:19-21, 26). They may even cause believers who are filled with carnal wisdom to rally around God's servants to stir up partisan feelings (1 Corinthians 3:1-4).

Their evil work can include causing one to harbour hard feelings towards a sinning brother and inciting differences of opinion as to his treatment. As a result, an attitude of resentment or a lack of full forgiveness among the brethren may open the door for Satan to cause further conflicts (2 Corinthians 2:5-11).

Hindrance to the Gospel ministry

The Satanic hosts have always sought to hide the Gospel message from lost sinners, so they blind their minds (2 Corinthians 4:3-4) and pervert the Gospel message (Galatians 1:7-8). They will strive to hinder Gospel preachers from performing their responsibilities (1 Thessalonians 2:17-18). As a result, they sometimes cause the Gospel efforts of the minister to be misunderstood (vv. 2-16). Believers ought to pray for deliverance from such evil plots so that the Gospel ministry may extend rapidly and God be glorified (2 Thessalonians 3:1-2).

Persecution of God's people

Christ warned the church in Smyrna of satanic persecution that would result in imprisonment for some of them, bringing about tribulation and possibly death (Revelation 2:8-10). Demons would be involved in this. They can play out this persecution through religious sources such as "the synagogue of Satan" (v. 9).

(Continued on page 14)

the power he wields. Paul called him the “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

While he is thus portrayed in the Bible as a very powerful and dangerous adversary of God's people, Satan is never depicted as equal to God. In fact, Scripture clearly teaches that Satan is far weaker than God, and an enemy doomed for eternal destruction. We must remember that Satan is only a creature, whereas God is the omnipotent Creator. He is finite and limited; he can operate only when and where he is allowed to by God (Job 1:10-12).

Conclusion

These images of Satan's character as vividly painted in Scripture are more than enough for Christians to realise that we are not up against an ordinary opposition. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities,

1 C. Fred Dickason, *Angels Elect and Evil*, 122.

2 *Ibid*, 122

against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

Having to fight a constant spiritual battle against a powerful foe, God's people are not destined to journey ever so smoothly in this life. Remembering this will keep us from becoming lax and complacent. It will also help us to be all the more sober and vigilant.

At the same time, we also need not be overcome by fear in facing our adversary, for Scripture did say, “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4). If we abide in the Lord, Satan will have no control over us whatsoever. “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). Indeed, with the Lord's help, we will be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.



The Assaults of the Enemy

(Continued from page 23)

Jesus has warned His disciples to be wary of some religious fanatics who may think that in opposing true believers, they are doing God a service (John 16:1-3). This will be the scene in the last great apostate ecumenical religion. Demons will be moving men to persecute and kill true believers (Revelation 18:24).

Conclusion

Since his incursion into the garden of Eden, the perfect world of God's creation, Satan and his demons have always been

on the prowl looking to frustrate God's people in their desire to live godly lives. Our Christian faith is constantly being sifted as we go through trials, temptations, attacks and assaults from demonic beings.

Therefore, we must be vigilant against our enemy and his ploys and resist him (1 Peter 5:8-9). As the Apostle Paul admonishes us, let us “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” and “put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:10-11).

Names of Satan

Not a few terms have cropped up to become pet names for Satan, most of which have post-medieval and modern folklore origins. Cute names such as Old Nick, Old Boy, Harry, Old Scratch, Auld Hornie, Lilith and Cloutie are listed down as some of the synonyms for the word “devil” in Roget’s Thesaurus.¹ Others like goblin, rascal, scoundrel, scamp, rouge and dickens are listed elsewhere.² Mephistopheles was the pseudonym given to the devil in the legend of Dr Faust. JR Tolkien, of *The Lord of the Rings* fame, used the names Morgoth and Sauron in depicting his wicked, Satan-like characters.

No doubt these names are intended to personify evil but they somehow divert our attention from the real identity of Satan. This can soften our stance against the enemy and thus make him out to be

just a make-believe and imaginary foe, existing only in the realm of fantasy. This speaks volumes about a real danger – people are playing right into the hands of the deceiver himself.

What is in a name?

Since a true picture of the enemy is vital in helping us to prepare adequately for the war, it is imperative that we know him by his real name. We must remember that even the picture of Satan’s image as a person having horns and an arrow-tipped tail with a pitchfork in hand is not biblical. This can be a figment of man’s imagination at best, for the Bible nowhere depicts Satan in this fashion.

What the Bible does give are many names in reference to him. Behind these names stand a most accurate picture of what Satan is really like. It would be worth our while to study and analyse his names

because they reveal his character and activities.

As many as forty different names of Satan are mentioned throughout Scripture. Looking at some of these names is important as they will give us an idea of his true nature and mission among God’s creation.

Names depicting his position

Anointed cherub

(Ezekiel 28:14): It describes Satan’s original exalted position. He was probably the highest-ranked among the highest class of angelic beings before he defied God, fell into the sin of pride and rebellion, and was cast out of heaven.

The prince of this world

(John 12:31; 16:11): In these verses, Jesus referred to the devil twice as “the prince of this world”. “Satan rules a world system (in Greek,

cosmos, an ordered system) which includes men and angels who are separated from God and are His enemies by nature (Matthew 12:24; Romans 8:7-8). This *cosmos* is Satan's counterpart to God's rule and kingdom."³ Satan now rules over all those who live in rebellion against God.

In 2 Corinthians 4:4, the Apostle Paul refers to Satan as "the god of this world" who has blinded the minds of unbelievers. The term "world" here is not the Greek *cosmos*, but *aion* which denotes a prevailing spirit of the age. Its emphasis is on "a system of philosophy that expresses a creature-centred manner of life and a religion that rejects the true God and sets up a counterfeit religion".⁴ The course or fashion of this world is governed by Satan. People who follow the worldly system of thinking and activities follow the devil who directs it. That is why Paul reminds Christians in Galatians 1:4 concerning "this present evil world". We must not conform to this world (Romans 12:1-2), for it does not fulfil the will of God (1 John 2:15-16), but the will of its god, Satan.

The prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2): It denotes Satan as the dominant leader of the dark demonic host, the host of fallen angels, that operates in the air. These are the angels who apparently concurred with Satan in his rebellion against God, and were cast out of heaven. Some Bible scholars believe that as many as a third of the angelic host might have fallen together with Satan (cf. Revelation 12:4). Jesus referred to them as "the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41; cf. Revelation 12:7). These demons work under Satan's charge; they are subservient to him.

The chief of the devils (Matthew 12:24; Luke 11:15): The Jews accused Jesus of casting out demons by "Beelzebub the chief of the devils" (Luke 11:15). They attributed His power to cast out demons as coming from Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons. To this, Christ answered, "...Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his

kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub" (Luke 11:17b-18). This analogy, then, describes Satan's position as the ruler of the demonic host.

Names depicting his character and deeds

Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12): This was Satan's name before His fall. In his original state, he was known as Lucifer, "the shining one" (in Hebrew, *hêlêl*, "star of the morning" or "day star") with a description "son of the morning" (in Hebrew *ben šahar*). This name is understood as referring to Satan, the chief of the other angels who are depicted as stars.

Satan (Zechariah 3:1; Revelation 12:9): This common name of Hebrew origin is used fifty-two times in the Bible. It means "adversary". Satan opposes God and His purposes. In opposing God, he also opposes God's people (1 Peter 5:8). He is the chief adversary of Christians.

Devil (Matthew 4:1, 5): This is another common name, which is used about thirty-five times. The Greek

diabolos means “slanderer”. The devil seeks to defame God and His people (Job 1:9-11). He is also known as the “accuser of brethren” (Revelation 12:10).

A horrifying thought is the fact that sometimes people use Satan’s names to call others in jest, like some parents who are fond of calling their children “you little devil” or “this cute little demon”. Certainly, none of them would ever hope that their children will grow up to become fully grown ones.

Old serpent (Revelation 12:9): “Old” indicates that Satan has been around a long time and is well known. The word “serpent” refers to Satan who appeared to Eve in the garden of Eden and caused the fall of man (Genesis 3). In 2 Corinthians 11:3, the Apostle Paul used the term “serpent” to denote Satan’s craftiness: “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”

Great dragon (Revelation 12:3, 7, 9): Other variations to this name include “great red

dragon” and “dragon” (Revelation 12:3-4). This name portrays Satan as a terrifying, destructive beast who is full of fury against God and His people.

The wicked one (1 John 5:18): In the Greek text, “that wicked one” (*ho poneros*) gives the idea that Satan is intrinsically wicked; he is not content to be corrupt in himself but must also seek to corrupt others.

Liar (John 8:44): Four statements by Christ describe Satan’s rejection of the truth: (1) he does not abide in the truth; (2) there is no truth in him; (3) he speaks lies from his own nature, for he is a liar; and (4) he is the father of lies. Satan promotes outright lies, sometimes even mixing them with truth for the sake of his lie (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

Tempter (Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5): Matthew, in his account of Satan’s temptation of Christ, calls him “the tempter” (4:3). He is dedicated to enticing people to sin against God.

Deceiver (Revelation 12:9; 20:3): Satan is the one “which deceiveth the whole world” (12:9). Interestingly,

the term “deceive” is present participle in Greek, indicating that he is continually engaged in these wicked deeds. His deception involves false doctrines, counterfeit miracles, the influence of seducing spirits, etc.

The spirit that worketh in disobedient children (Ephesians 2:2): This phrase depicts Satan as the one who influences the hearts of the unsaved to live disobedient and rebellious lives.

Murderer (John 8:44). Jesus said, “He was a murderer from the beginning”, referring to all that happened in Genesis 3, including the murder of Abel in Genesis 4. Through his stealth and deception, he brought mankind into spiritual and physical death.

Apollyon (Revelation 9:11): The verse portrays Satan as the king of the locust-like demons of the bottomless pit. Here, he is called in Hebrew *Abaddon*; and in Greek *Apollyon*. Both the Hebrew and the Greek names mean “destroyer”. According to this verse, they torment and kill great numbers of mankind.

Satan is a destroyer of both physical and spiritual life.

Conclusion

In summary, the above names paint the picture of an anointed cherub who had turned into a dreadful, scheming and destructive character full of wickedness. He leads a vast army of demons and

disobedient men to revolt against the holy God.

These lines from Martin Luther's hymn *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God* aptly sum up the character and evil intent of Satan:

*For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe
His craft and pow'r are great,
And, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.*

Praise God that through Christ we are delivered from being vessels of this thoroughly wicked angel. And by the power of His Spirit and His Word, we can be overcomers of any and all attacks of Satan. Knowing his names helps us to understand his nature and deeds, so let us take heed not to fall prey to his devices.

1 <http://www.yourdictionary.com/synonyms/devil>

2 <http://thesaurus.com/browse/devil>

3 C. Fred Dickason, *Angels Elect and Evil*, 127.

4 *Ibid*, 128.



DEMONS

Satan's Cohorts

Introduction

Satan is not the only enemy of Christians. He is our chief adversary and has many allies to wage war against us. Some of these allies are visible while others are invisible. Some of them can appear in the flesh while others remain as spirit beings. It is important to know that Satan, our chief adversary, is not operating alone. We must be aware that he has his own army of evil angels to carry out his battle strategy against us. They are called “devils” (demons) in the Scriptures.

While some quarters may deny the existence of demons, others exaggerate their abilities and intents. Still many others hold to all sorts of erroneous concepts about demons which will only aid in the devil's schemes against God's people. Know that Satan would have Christians deceived and misinformed about his being and behaviour, and that of his cohorts. The devil and his angels often camouflage their existence and identity. This deception is most effective in luring victims to their downfall.

Reality of demons

The Old Testament regards demons as evil beings who constantly try to mislead the people of God about His truth. The Hebrew term *shedhim* (Deuteronomy 32:17) refers to real demons. In Psalm 106:36-37, the worship of idols is tantamount to the worship of demons (cf. 1 Corinthians

10:19, 20). Another Hebrew term used for demons in the Old Testament is *seirim* which refers to other conceptions of demon worship (Leviticus 17:7; 2 Chronicles 11:15). Demon worship is very much a reality in the Old Testament times as it is today.

In the New Testament, Christ on several occasions spoke about Satan and his angels (cf. Matthew 25:41) and He concurred with the Jewish thought that Satan was the chief of demons (cf. Matthew 12:22-28). It is a fact that Christ's ministry involved the casting out of demons from those that were possessed (Matthew 12:22-29; 15:22-28; Mark 5:1-16). He also gave His disciples power to do the same (Matthew 10:1).

The fact that Jesus and His apostles had never chided anyone for believing in the existence of demons, but affirmed their existence by their teachings, confirms that demons are real. Moreover, the Bible has a solid record of more than one hundred references to demons.

Origin of demons

There are false views on the origin of demons which we should reject as they do not have any biblical support.

One comes from animistic traditions which teach that demons are the spirits of deceased people who were supposed to

be wicked. However, Jesus taught through the story of poor Lazarus and the rich man that the souls of the wicked dead are confined in conscious torment as a result of God's punishment (Luke 16:19-26). They are in no wise allowed to come back to the realm of the living, though the Bible records a few exceptions. So there is no biblical evidence that the souls of the dead roam the earth or its atmosphere.

Another false view describes demons as "divine" or intermediary beings, more specifically the "evil ones". This also has no foundation in the Scriptures.

Then there are those who teach that demons are a fallen pre-Adamic race. They believe that Lucifer (Satan) was in charge of a human race in a perfect world that God created (Genesis 1:1). But they became corrupted and chaotic, resulting in a dreadful cataclysm that caused the earth to be "without form and void" (Genesis 1:2). This theory is called the "Gap Theory" suggesting that there is a huge time gap between verses 1 and 3 of Genesis 1. They interpret Genesis 1:2 as the chaotic gap between God's two creations. The people, who died then, live today as demons, seeking to enter human bodies, which is known today as "demon possession". This is nothing but a speculation, and contradicts the clear teaching of the Bible.

There are yet some others who point to Genesis 6 and explain that demons originated as a result of the angels of God cohabiting with women of the pre-Noahic flood. According to this theory, this unnatural union resulted in mongrel creatures, partly human and partly angelic (*nephilim* - fallen ones, giants). The flood was said to have destroyed these monsters

and their spirits became the demons who seek to inhabit human bodies and continue in sensuality. But Jesus has clearly taught in Matthew 22:30 that angels cannot have marriage relationships. Thus, this view is just another speculative theory without any biblical support whatsoever.

The correct view of the Scriptures is that demons are angels who, together with Satan, rebelled against God and have been cast out of heaven (Revelation 12:4). They are his cohorts in his war against God and His people.

Some of these fallen angels are kept in bondage (2 Peter 2:4), while others are free to roam (Luke 8:26-39). The Apostle Peter records, "... God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Peter 2:4; cf. Jude 6).

The unconfined demons function in a highly organised kingdom under the leadership of Satan in their attempt to thwart God's glorious purposes. According to Ephesians 6:11-12, they are known as "principalities", "powers", "the rulers of the darkness of this world" and "spiritual wickedness in high places" (cf. Ephesians 1:21; 3:10; Romans 8:38; Colossians 2:15).

Nature of demons

The well-known story in the Bible about Jesus' encounter with the demon-possessed man in Luke 8:26-39 tells us a great deal about the nature of demons. Demons are beings who display the primary attributes of personality such as intellect, emotions and volition (vv. 28, 32-33). To portray them as impersonal evil forces, like those shown

in TV shows and films, would only cloud the true nature of these wicked creatures.

In addition, demons are also spirit beings. In Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, the apostle pointed out that the Christian's struggle is "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12). They are able to inhabit and possess the bodies of humans and animals (Luke 8:26-39; 11:24-26).

Furthermore, Christians ought to be aware that demons are powerful beings. They can control unregenerate men and grievously afflict them (Luke 8). They have the power to torment people with such unbearable pain, even driving them to the point of suicide (Revelation 9:5-6). Persons possessed by demons are capable of doing violent things with superhuman strength (Luke 8; Mark 5:3). They can also perform "miracles" (2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:13; 16:14). They do possess extraordinary knowledge

about their confinement and future judgment (Luke 8:31), and could have some knowledge about the future (Acts 16:16-17).

Conclusion

Demons are real. They are not some make-believe fantasies of wickedness and evil. They are quite clever and can do things beyond human capabilities. They can easily work their way into the hearts of people by such display of knowledge and power.

God's people are hereby warned about being gullible and falling prey to demonic devices. Do not be misled by the extraordinary abilities displayed by these demons in the activities of some men. The Scriptures remind us to test every spirit whether they are of God (1 John 4:1). Let us take courage that our Lord is the mighty fortress. Though the whole world may be filled with devils, yet in Christ Jesus we can overcome them "because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).



*And tho' this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us, We will not fear,
for God hath willed His truth to triumph thro' us;*

*The prince of darkness grim, We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, For lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.*

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God, Martin Luther



SATAN

Our Foremost Enemy

Introduction

One of the major reasons why Satan easily entraps many Christians in sin is because they are ignorant of the nature of his person and works. Insufficient understanding of the enemy will definitely lead to a lack of proper preparation in facing him. On the other hand, misinformation about the enemy's character will also lead to an underestimation or overestimation of his capabilities, both of which are detrimental to one's success in winning the spiritual battle. While underestimation will lead to complacency, overestimation can lead to fear, discouragement and eventual defeat.

Many grotesque myths and bizarre practices exist today in connection with Satan and demons. Christians should not heed these superstitions, for the Bible provides us with the truth about Satan. It teaches us all there is to know about this evil creature who opposes us. We should not allow our minds to think more or less about him than what God has revealed to us.

Knowing our enemy's character and strength is a very important requirement in gearing up for the spiritual battle that faces us. As in any battle, we should strive to have a proper knowledge and assessment of the opposition. This will adequately prepare

us to defend ourselves and to eventually triumph, no matter how fierce the attacks.

The existence of Satan

Scripture is replete with evidence of Satan's existence. To doubt his existence is to deny the biblical affirmation of his existence. Both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible testify that Satan is real and not an imaginary foe of Christians.

Right at the beginning of the Old Testament in Genesis 3, we see the first appearance of Satan shortly after mankind was created. This wicked being showed up in the garden of Eden under the guise of a serpent (Genesis 3:1; cf. Ezekiel 28:13). Then in the book of Job, we read how Satan sought to trouble a God-fearing man that he might deny God (Job 1:6-12). During the time of King David, Satan provoked David to commit sin which resulted in the death of seventy thousand men (1 Chronicles 21:1-14).

In the New Testament, every writer makes mention of Satan (though not in every book). 19 out of 27 books of the New Testament give credence to his existence. Yet, even those eight books that do not specifically mention him,

four of them imply his existence in the form of demons or evil angels.¹

In the four Gospel books of the New Testament alone, our Lord Jesus made reference to Satan at least 25 times. We can also read about the person-to-person encounter between the Lord and Satan in the parallel passages of Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13.²

The evidence of his personality

We have further proof that Satan is a genuine person and not, as some have suggested, just a personification of evil by a hallucinating mind. The Scriptural records of Satan show him as being able to exercise his intellect, emotions, will, etc., thus proving his personality. Consider the following facts about him that give evidence to his personality:

His intellectual nature: His intellect is evident because God asked him, “Hast thou considered my servant Job?” Furthermore, he schemed to deceive Eve through his subtlety (2 Corinthians 11:3). His craftiness is most evident in his temptation of Christ when he manipulated Scripture to try and deceive Christ (Luke 4:1-12). Another proof of his intellect is his fluency and persuasiveness of speech. How he entices man to follow his will!

His emotional nature: He has emotions too, particularly that of pride. In fact, it fuelled his rebellious desire to oppose God and exalt himself above Him (Isaiah 14:12-17). In Peter’s description of Satan as a “roaring lion”, Satan appears to be so full of fury and rage. He is also able to affect the

emotions of people. Just consider how he tormented Job with constant afflictions.

His moral nature: Since God will judge Satan (Revelation 20:10), we know that he is a moral being. He and his demons are also known as “unclean spirits” (Matthew 10:1; Acts 8:7; Revelation 16:13) and they would seduce men and women to live ungodly lives (1 Timothy 4:1-3).

All of the above aspects of his nature prove that Satan is very different from impersonal beings (like animals) or impersonal forces (like the wind) or impersonal things (like rocks). Moreover, Scripture uses personal pronouns when referring to Satan. He was addressed as “thou” in Ezekiel 28:14, 16; “he” in James 4:7 as well as “himself” and “his” in 2 Corinthians 11:14-15. We therefore conclude that Satan is a person and so are each of his demons.

The explanation of his power

Satan is, in essence, an incorporeal and invisible spirit being like all the angels and is thus more powerful than man (Psalm 8:5). He was among the “cherubim class” of the angels (Ezekiel 28:14, 16). In fact, he was ranked very high among the cherubim, for he was referred to as “the anointed cherub” and “covering cherub”.

Even though he is now a fallen angel, the Bible does portray him as a creature with tremendous power. In Jude’s epistle, we read: “Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee” (v. 9). Furthermore, Jesus’ reference to him as the “prince of this world” (John 12:31) gives credence to

the power he wields. Paul called him the “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

While he is thus portrayed in the Bible as a very powerful and dangerous adversary of God's people, Satan is never depicted as equal to God. In fact, Scripture clearly teaches that Satan is far weaker than God, and an enemy doomed for eternal destruction. We must remember that Satan is only a creature, whereas God is the omnipotent Creator. He is finite and limited; he can operate only when and where he is allowed to by God (Job 1:10-12).

Conclusion

These images of Satan's character as vividly painted in Scripture are more than enough for Christians to realise that we are not up against an ordinary opposition. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities,

1 C. Fred Dickason, *Angels Elect and Evil*, 122.

2 *Ibid*, 122

against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

Having to fight a constant spiritual battle against a powerful foe, God's people are not destined to journey ever so smoothly in this life. Remembering this will keep us from becoming lax and complacent. It will also help us to be all the more sober and vigilant.

At the same time, we also need not be overcome by fear in facing our adversary, for Scripture did say, “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4). If we abide in the Lord, Satan will have no control over us whatsoever. “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). Indeed, with the Lord's help, we will be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.



The Assaults of the Enemy

(Continued from page 23)

Jesus has warned His disciples to be wary of some religious fanatics who may think that in opposing true believers, they are doing God a service (John 16:1-3). This will be the scene in the last great apostate ecumenical religion. Demons will be moving men to persecute and kill true believers (Revelation 18:24).

Conclusion

Since his incursion into the garden of Eden, the perfect world of God's creation, Satan and his demons have always been

on the prowl looking to frustrate God's people in their desire to live godly lives. Our Christian faith is constantly being sifted as we go through trials, temptations, attacks and assaults from demonic beings.

Therefore, we must be vigilant against our enemy and his ploys and resist him (1 Peter 5:8-9). As the Apostle Paul admonishes us, let us “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” and “put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:10-11).