

# The Devil

His Origin, His Nature, and His Destiny



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## Introduction

In this brief booklet we want to examine a central biblical character, the devil, and consider some questions that are controversial to many people. These questions concern the origin of the devil, his nature, and his destiny.

Common orthodox belief subscribes to the thought that the devil is a fallen angelic being, but do the Scriptures really substantiate this teaching? First, let me mention that though a doctrinal position may be orthodox (Webster's New World Dictionary defines orthodox as "conforming to the usual belief or established doctrines . . . conventional"), it does not always constitute "sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1).

We subscribe to the truth that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine" (2 Timothy 3:16). We draw our doctrinal stance, not from a consensus of men, but rather from the Scriptures as enlightenment, and inspiration is given by God (John 16:13).

## The Origin of the Devil

To properly understand the origin of the devil, we must understand some truths concerning Creation. Let us first address the point, Who was the agent employed in Creation? Why is this important? Because the Old Testament deals in types and shadows (Hebrews 10:1) to portray the New Testament dispensation. Why do we need to biblically understand who the agent was in Creation? The answer is, because the same agent is employed in re-creation. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [or the Greek says new creation]." Now, who was the agent employed in Creation? Ephesians 3:9 declares, "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." Christ was God's agent in Creation, and multiple Scriptures substantiate this truth. The Apostle Paul also stated in Colossians 1:15-16: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers [this refers to those in the spirit realm, which includes the devil and all demoniac spirits]: all things were created by him, and for him."

The Revelator heard Christ declare it in Revelations 3:14, which reads, "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness. . . ." Who is this? Revelation 19:11 mentions that Christ is "called Faithful and True." Revelation 19:13 says "his name is called the Word of God." Who is the Incarnate Word? John 1:14 states, "And the word was made flesh . . . we beheld his glory . . . full of grace and truth." John 1:17 tells us that "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." So, who is the Word? and who is the faithful and true witness? Jesus Christ. What else is He? Revelation 3:14 says He is "the beginning of the creation of God." The Revelator also dealt with this truth in the Gospel which bears his name. In John 1:3 he penned, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." These are clear, all-inclusive statements. When this passage emphatically states "all things," this necessary inclusion must cover the personified devil, or Satan.

Now, up to this point, there is not much dissension, but the next question that arises is, In what form was the devil originally created—as an angelic being, as some suppose, or as a devil? Unfortunately, here is where the confusion and controversy begin, but we need not be in confusion. "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Corinthians 14:33). If we will let the Scriptures speak, they are light. The Psalmist said, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Psalm 119:130).

## The Nature of the Devil

Look at the words of Jesus in John 8:44, which reads, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him." Notice He said, "from the beginning." He was not speaking of the beginning of the world, nor since the beginning of his supposed fall, as some teach, but "from the beginning" means from his very creation. J. B. Phillips, in his translation, renders it, "He always was a murderer." Charles B. Williams, in *The New Testament: A Translation in the Language of the People*, said in his version, "He was a murderer from the very start." The Greek word here for the English word "beginning" is *arche* and literally means "at the first estate." Therefore,

it is erroneous to say that those "which kept not their first estate" (Jude 6) were angels that became devils, because Jesus taught us that Satan's "first estate" was as a devil! Some have difficulty grasping this truth or identifying divinity with anything evil, but the Scriptures are very explicit. Consider Isaiah 45:7, which states, "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things." I realize this might have reference to the natural realm, but the principle remains the same.

We must keep in mind several very vital and significant truths. First, we are dealing with "the Lord God omnipotent" (Revelation 19:6), one Whom the Psalmist described as having "infinite understanding" (Psalm 147:5). He knows "the end from the beginning" (Isaiah 46:10). Before God ever created the first being in His infinite foreknowledge, He knew what would occur; and in His mind's eye, in the counsel halls of eternity past, He formulated a plan to secure man's redemption. Read 1 Peter 1:19-20. Verse 20 says he "was foreordained before the foundation of the world."

Now, in Satan's original "first estate," he was created a devil. Why? In Heaven God has legions of angels, but not one Scriptural reference points to their being creatures of choice. They are not endowed with the power of choice. This is another reason we know that the teaching of the fall of Satan is erroneous. One reason for the creation of man was that God might have a creature that was a free, moral agent to serve Him even when faced with a choice. This was the express purpose for which He placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 1:17) in the midst of the garden. Some may say, "God has no relationship with evil," but I pose the question, Who created the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil"? Genesis 1:1 states, "In the beginning God created. . . ." How? "By Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 3:9). Why was the tree created and placed in the garden? To present man with a choice. Why did He create a devil? For the same purpose, which was to present man with a choice in the face of opposition. The Bible is replete with appeals for man to "choose life" (Deuteronomy 30:19). The Lord delights in man making the proper choice under great duress; it proves his love and allegiance. Consider the account of Job. In the conversation between God and Satan, who mentioned Job to Satan? God did; it was not Satan's initiative, but God's! Job 2:3 reads, "And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job. . . ?"

Concerning temptation, the Bible tells us that "man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed" (James 1:14). Notice there is a dual element to temptation. James said "he is drawn away," which is the first element, "and enticed." The original Greek word for "enticed" is *deleazo*, which means, "to lure by a bait," according to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. To lure, implies an intelligence, a deliberate, calculated maneuver. In the Genesis account, it is obvious who the agent was in the luring. Satan used the desires of the flesh, as enunciated in 1 John 2:16:

". . . the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. . . ." But who cast out the lure on the waters of life? Paul said in 2 Corinthians 11:3, ". . . as the serpent beguiled Eve. . . ." Who was truly behind the serpent's activity? Look at the divine pronouncement in Genesis 3:15: ". . . it [her seed] shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." To whom does this have reference? Who was going to be bruised? Romans 16:20a says, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Satan was the luring power behind the enticement. Satan is an intelligent master schemer, Second Corinthians 2:11 speaks of "his devices." One rendering says "schemes, thought out plans."

How do we know that Satan was not a fallen angel? Certainly, the Scriptures are clear; but aside from the Scriptures, sound reasoning poses several unanswered questions for advocates of this stance, such as, Where Scripturally do we see angels endowed with the power of choice? What tempted Satan (supposedly) to be lifted up with pride and rebel? and if some imperfection gave rise to that, what could prevent it from occurring again? If Satan was in Heaven and was cast out, what would keep us from making it to Heaven and being cast out? (As you can see, there are some very serious implications and ramifications to that line of teaching.) Finally, if he fell, when did he fall and how many times?

In Genesis, Chapter 3, at the garden scene, the Scriptures let us know that he was already a devil, yet people refer to Isaiah 14:12 and say this passage refers to Satan falling when it says, "How art thou fallen from heaven"; yet, this was approximately B.C. 712. Next, they use Luke 10:18, where Jesus said, "I beheld Satan as lightning falling from heaven" to portray his supposed fall; yet, this was A.D. 32. Then, these advocates go to Revelation 12:9 and say "There it is!" The Revelation was penned in A.D. 96. So, when did Satan supposedly fall: B.C. 712? A.D. 32? or A.D. 96? How many times did he fall? Why the discrepancies? They "do err, not

knowing the scriptures" (Matthew 22:29). The truth is, none of these passages substantiate such a teaching. Isaiah 14:4 tells us whom the Scripture was addressing in verse 12. The writer said, ". . . take up this proverb against the king of babylon." This prophecy had nothing to do with Satan. When you are "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15) you can see the text was talking about a "man" (Isaiah 14:16), more properly Nebuchadnezzar. (You can read the companion account in Daniel 4:19-27).

In Luke, Chapter 10, dealing with the seventy who had returned, they said to Jesus, "Lord, even the devils [verse 20 says spirits] are subject unto us" (verse 17). As you can see, there is no allusion to some supposed fall in the eternal realm.

Then, in Revelation, Chapter 12, the writer was not dealing with the devil personified, but rather a system through which the devil worked. Verse 9 mentions "the great dragon," which Bible students universally recognize as a symbolic expression of the pagan Roman Empire, as this dragon was the insignia on their shields. Therefore, none of these passages deals with any literal angels being cast down. We must remember that just as "God is a spirit" (John 4:24), so is the devil a spirit. Look at the words of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 2:2: "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the prince of the power of the air; the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Here we see vividly portrayed that the enemy is a "spirit," or a spirit being. He is actually an agency that God employs in this time world. He serves as a tempter to present man with a choice. In Matthew 4:3 the sacred writer depicted Satan's purpose, or the agent that he is, in this world when he penned, "And when the tempter came to him. . . ." In this account of Jesus' temptation, Satan appealed to the same three human desires that he utilized in the garden: "lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Who was the "tempter"? In Matthew 4:10 Jesus said, "Get thee hence, Satan."

### **The Destiny of Satan**

What is the destiny of Satan? He was created, he is a spirit, and he is one who was created as an agency, to serve a purpose and to play a part in the plan of God. What lies ahead? Just as Satan is God's agent in time to serve as a tempter, he will be God's agent in eternity to serve as a tormentor. Nowhere do the Scriptures teach that the devil will be tormented, but rather that he will be the tormentor.

Now, briefly, I will lay "precept upon precept; line upon line" (Isaiah 28:13). I realize many lift some verses out of context to substantiate these points, but let us examine them in the light of our study. Consider Matthew 25:41, where it is recorded, ". . . prepared for the devil and his angels." Notice what is absent in this verse: nothing is mentioned about torments or punishment. When the Scripture says, "prepared for the devil and his angels," it simply means what Peter said in 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." If the Lord had his way, no one would be in hell but its keepers. Yet, in His infinite foreknowledge, He knew that "broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" (Matthew 7:13). In the plan of God, He, of necessity, had to incorporate punishment. The Bible verifies this. Matthew 25:46 states, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." In other words, for there to be punishment, there must be those that administer it.

Some lift the accounts out of context in the synoptic Gospels concerning the account of Legion (Matthew 8:28-29, Mark 5:6-7, and Luke 8:27-28) to teach torments of devils and demons. Let us consider these. Notice in Mark, Chapter 5, and Luke, Chapter 8, that both accounts refer to a singular man: Mark 5:2 says "a man" and Luke 8:27 says "a certain man"; and both accounts say "when he saw Jesus" (Mark 5:6; Luke 8:28). Notice what Mark's account states: "What have I to do with thee . . . I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not" (Mark 5:7). All of this was spoken in the singular, and this was the man talking. Now look at verse 9: "And he [Jesus] asked him, What is thy name? And he answered saying, My name is Legion: for we are many." When the devils spoke, they said "we," but when the man talked, he said "I" or "me." So, contrary to common thought, the devils were not afraid of torment; the man was.

Now let us examine the account in Matthew. Notice that the narrative in Matthew 8:28 has a distinct difference: ". . . there met him two possessed with devils." Verse 29 says, "And, behold, they [Who? Not the devils, the two possessed] cried out . . . art thou come to torment us before .the time?" Why did they say "us" in this passage? Because two men were mentioned. It was the men who feared future torments, not the devils.

When Matthew wrote concerning the devils in verse 31, he began, "So the devils . . ." He introduced the noun devils again because the employment of the word "they" reverts back to the "two possessed" in verse 28.

These Scriptures clearly show us that Satan will serve a purpose in eternity just as he does in time: in time he is a tempter (1 Thessalonians 3:5), and in eternity he will serve as a tormentor. To substantiate this with Scripture, look at Matthew 18:23-35. Jesus related a parable and concluded it with the words in verse 34: "And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors." Notice closely Jesus' words in verse 35: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you." This verse makes it very plain that "the devil and his angels" are the tormentors. Look at Luke 12:47-48. Verse 47 says the servant "shall be beaten with many stripes" and verse 48 says, "shall be beaten with few stripes."

"Beaten" is an active verb, which of course requires that action be taken by some party. Who would administer these stripes? Well, who is going to be there? "The devil and his angels." It might be well to mention that the employment of the term "angels" does not always denote celestial beings. The Greek word for "angel" is *aggelos* and literally means "messenger." It is not always a divine being. Look at Revelation 22:8-9. The latter part of verse 8 reads, "I fell down before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things." Verse 9 says, "Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book. . . ." He was not a celestial being, but a "messenger." Consider the Apostle Paul's words to the Galatians in Galatians 4:13-14.

Verse 14 reads, ". . . received me as an angel of God." What did he do? Verse 13 tells us, ". . . preached the gospel unto you." He served as a "messenger." This is what is being portrayed in Jude 6, and then in 2 Peter 2:4 when these verses talk about the "angels that sinned." He was not talking about celestial beings. Examine the context. In 2 Peter 2:1 the writer speaks of "false prophets" and "false teachers," not celestial beings. Look at Jude's account. What was Jude dealing with? Apostasy! Who are the "angels" mentioned in verse 6? Those who fostered this apostasy. Jude says in verse 8 they "defile the flesh," letting us know that these were men who had once been messengers, not angelic beings. "The devil and his angels," or messengers, will be God's messengers in eternity to deliver torments to the damned. It would be most unfair to create a being for a specified purpose, have him perform that purpose, and then punish and torment him for doing what he was created to do. Isaiah 45:21 declares that God is a "just God." So the Scriptures do not teach that Satan will be tormented, but that he will be the tormentor. Just as he was God's agent in this time world, so shall he be in eternity.

I trust that you have a clear understanding of the origin, nature, and destiny of the devil. Some may question why this study is necessary, but if we embrace the flawed thinking that the devil was once an angel and fell, the natural succeeding thought would be that we cannot hold a victorious experience. The truth is, we can be victorious! "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57). The spirit behind such a false teaching is an antiholiness spirit. It is the product of the unclean spirit spoken of in Revelation 16:13.

The reason for the opposer is so that we may prove our love and allegiance to Christ in the face of opposition. The question is, Do you have the victory that God has ordained that you have? The good news is that through Christ Jesus you can!

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