

Basic Doctrines: Satan's Origin And Destiny

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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Most, if not all, of the cultures of the earth express a belief in some kind of evil being. This belief is often personified as a supernatural, godlike being who takes great pleasure in cruelty, perversion, and death. As the god of the Underworld, Hades, or hell, the Egyptians had Seth; the Greeks, Pluto; the Romans, Dis. The Western world, heavily influenced by Christianity and the Bible, calls this personal embodiment of evil Satan the Devil. With him come countless other wicked beings known as demons.

Where did Satan come from? Some cultures, philosophies, and religions believe that good and evil have always existed in a dualistic balance, like *yin* and *yang* or light and darkness. Others believe that God created the Devil to test mankind and preside over the eternal punishment of the wicked. What is the truth? Using the "here a little, there a little" principle (Isaiah 28:9-13), we can uncover Satan's origin and destiny in the pages of the Bible!

1. In what state was the earth created? Genesis 1:1-2; Job 38:4-7; Psalm 104:30; I Corinthians 14:33.

Comment: God originally created the earth with such perfection and beauty that the angels shouted with joy! Our Creator does all things in an organized manner and completes all His works in exquisite splendor. But the Bible's second verse describes an earth so formless and chaotic that God had to refashion it before He could create humanity.

2. Who was Lucifer? Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:12-17.

Comment: "Lucifer" ("light-bringer" or "morning star," the Roman name for the planet Venus) is an unfortunate translation of the Hebrew word *helel*, which means "shining one." Ezekiel calls him "the anointed cherub who covers," which means he was one of the chief angels whose wings covered God's throne in heaven. The text specifically shows him to be a created being, possibly the most beautiful, wise, and perfect of God's angelic creations.

But this mighty angel grew proud and vain in his beauty. He became envious of God's authority over the universe, and over countless years, he schemed to induce other angels to support him in overthrowing God. When he finally led one-third of the angels (Revelation 12:4) to war against God in heaven, God cast him and his angelic troops back to the earth (Luke 10:18).

3. How did Helel become Satan? Ezekiel 28:15-17.

Comment: God had created Helel a perfect spirit being, but He also gave him free-moral agency, the freedom to choose to follow good or evil. He chose to become Satan the Devil, the Adversary and Accuser, by allowing sin to mold his character. His rebellion against God sealed and hardened his evil nature, and now he opposes all that is good, right, and godly (Matthew 13:38-39; I Peter 5:8; Revelation 9:11; 12:9-10).

4. Are Satan and his demons bound to this earth? II Peter 2:4; Jude 6.

Comment: When God cast them back down to earth, He placed restrictions on their powers and limited them to "their proper domain" or "first estate," that is, the earth. Here, they await their judgment for their rebellion. "Cast them down to hell" in II Peter 2:4 is a rendering of a single verb in Greek, *tartaroo*, from the noun, *Tartarus*, a place of restraint for the wicked, a prison. Though Satan himself may appear before God's throne in heaven, he and his demons can do only what God allows (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7).

5. Is Satan "the prince of the power of the air"? What does this mean? Ephesians 2:1-3.

Comment: By deceiving the minds of men, Satan has set "the course of this world" against God and His loving, giving way of life. As the prince of the power of the air, he broadcasts his evil, rebellious attitudes to all humanity, and except for a few whom God has called out of his deceptions, the whole world lives under his sway (I John 5:19; Revelation 12:9).

6. Has Satan been disqualified as ruler of this earth? John 12:27-33; 14:30; 16:11; Colossians 1:13; 2:15; Hebrews 2:9, 14-15.

Comment: When Jesus Christ lived a perfect life and died for the sins of men, He qualified to dethrone Satan. The Adversary, who had the power of death, has been defeated! However, he remains active among us until the King of kings returns and sets up His government on earth.

7. Will Satan attempt to ruin God's plan before Christ returns? Revelation 12:7-9, 12-17; 16:12-16; 19:17-21; 20:1-3.

Comment: The Devil will again go on the offensive against God with the same results: God casts him back down to earth. In his anger over his defeat, he will savagely persecute God's people and gather the armies of man to fight against Christ when He comes. He and his human agents will be soundly defeated, and a strong angel will imprison him in the bottomless pit for a thousand years.

8. What is Satan's ultimate fate? Revelation 20:7-10.

Comment: After the thousand years of imprisonment, Satan will be released for a short while. During his parole, he will again unite some of the nations and take them to war against God's people. But God will summarily end this rebellion by sending fire out of heaven to destroy his army. The Devil will then be sentenced and cast into the Lake of Fire to suffer and die for his sins (see Ezekiel 28:18-19 and our article, "Do Angels Live Forever?"). Finally, God and man will be rid of their chief enemy, and peace and righteousness will flourish for all eternity!