

## WHERE DID THE DEVIL COME FROM?

In the Bible, we read about how sin entered into the world and the consequences we have to live with (**Genesis 3**). The process of temptation is explained very well (**James 1:12-18**). In this context, the character of God is upheld as the caring and righteous God He is.

For some people, it is an enigma that such a good and all-powerful God could let someone like Satan tempt us to do wrong. This leads some to question either God's power or God's goodness. Therefore, it is important to know who is Satan, and where did he come from?

A word of caution: we must be careful not to draw the wrong conclusions about Satan any more than drawing the wrong conclusions about God. **Deuteronomy 29:29** is another verse to remember as we investigate this subject: *"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."*

We must respect God's limitation of information about Satan, but we are also required by this verse to know what God has revealed in order to have the right understanding of God and Satan so that we will live right by obeying God. A mere intellectual exercise would be a waste of time.

### SATAN IDENTIFIED

We first read about Satan in **Genesis 3**. He is called *"the serpent."* **Revelation 12:9** identifies the dragon in the vision of war in heaven as the ancient serpent (of **Genesis 3**), and that he is also called **the devil** and **Satan**. **Verse 10** states that he functioned as our accuser before God day and night. An excellent example of this is in **Job 1-2**. This is why he is called Satan—he slanders us to God. (If we spread slander, we are doing the devil's work.) To my surprise, *"the devil"* only appears in the New Testament. **Matthew 4:3** speaks of **the tempter** confronting Jesus and then calls him **the devil** in verses **5** and **8**. Most of our information is in the New Testament, where we have the revelation of God's mystery, His plan of salvation which He intentionally kept from the devil and his angels (**1 Corinthians 2:8-13**). Now He has said much more about both in the N.T.

The New Testament gives us many other terms for helping us understand who our enemy is. He is: "the god of this world" (**2 Cor. 4:4**), "the ruler of this world" (**John 12:31**), the father of lies (**John 8:44, Rev. 12:9**), "the prince of the power of the air," "the **spirit** who works in the sons of disobedience" (**Ephesians 2:2**), "the wicked one" (**Matt. 13:19**). Two different Greek words are translated *"devil."* One is DIABOLOS, which means the same thing as "Satan;" the other is DAIMON, which means a powerful spiritual being. Satan is the prince of demons (**Matthew 12:24**). Satan has "his angels." (**Rev. 12:7**)

### RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

The devil is a created spirit being like the angels. He went before God when all the angels (called "sons of God" in **Job 1:6**) presented themselves to God. He is not an evil counterpart to God. He is inferior, under the authority of God (**Job 1:9-12**). Michael the archangel is actually the good created spirit being as the closest counterpart to Satan as the evil created spirit being. He led the angels of God against Satan and his angels in the war in heaven (**Rev. 12:7-10**). Jesus was on the cross at that time (**John 12:31-34**). Michael contended with Satan over the body of Moses but did not speak as inferior or superior to him (**Jude 9**).

**How could a righteous, all-powerful God create a wicked being like Satan?** He was not created evil. He chose to be evil. There are many evil men, but God did not create them as evil, either (**Ecclesiastes 7:29**). Both angels and men are created with free will to choose to do evil.

**How could a righteous, all-powerful God allow Satan to do such harm to the human race?** For the same reason that God allowed Satan to hurt Job. Satan raised an issue of doubt over Job's motives for serving God. God could not respond to that issue by simply annihilating Satan. All that would prove is that God is stronger than Satan. God had to allow man to be tested. Satan is first a slanderer, an accuser (**Rev. 12:9**) who then sets traps for us in hopes that we fail. We must prove him wrong as Job did.

The devil is already condemned (**1 Timothy 3:6**). He lost the war in heaven, so he seeks to take out his vengeful spite on us (**Rev. 12:12,17**). He will be thrown into the lake of fire prepared for him and his angels (**Matt. 25:41**) in the end (**Rev. 20:15**). God did not make hell as a place for our punishment but Satan's; however, we will spend eternity with the one on whose side we choose to be today. What is your choice?

If it was possible for Satan to rebel against God without someone to tempt him, how do we know that we won't fall away when we are with God in heaven? I really believe that is why God has made the world something to overcome. If we develop the faith and love in God, put on the unselfish, sacrificial character of Christ, then we will never choose to rebel when we are there. It is what we strive for now. Let's keep our heart with all diligence.