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Does the Devil Really Exist?

Matthew 4:10: (KJV) Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.

Satan. The Devil. The Adversary. These are but a few of the names that describe that powerful spiritual being who fell from heaven and opposes God. Many people don't believe he exists. Still others look at the Bible and point out how Satan is such an infrequent player in the Old Testament and a dominant player in the New Testament. They use this observation as proof of the evolution of the "idea" of Satan. So, is he real or just a convenient fabrication of Christianity to keep people in line? If he is real, what kind of influence does he have? Should we be afraid?

Satan is given many names in Scripture that help us to identify his character. Usually, we start at the beginning and build our reasoning step by step. Today we want to start in the middle and talk about Satan's greatest power grab attempt in human history! Each aspect of the three temptations of Jesus addresses Satan from a different perspective. Each perspective helps us to understand who he is by what he does.

Matthew 4:1-10: (NASB) ¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted <3985> by the devil <1228>. ²And after he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he then became hungry. ³And the tempter <3985> came and said to him, if you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.

The tempter: Strongs #3985 peirazo (pi-rad'-zo); to test (objectively), i.e. endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline KJV-- assay, examine, go about, prove, tempt (-er), try.

Satan tempts: He enticed Jesus to do something helpful and needful to his body. He makes us second guess ourselves as to whether or not we are going in the right direction.

Jesus does not rely on his own personal strength to deflect Satan. Instead, he relies on the word of God. All of Jesus' answers are in relation to Israel being delivered as a nation.

⁴But he answered and said, it is written, Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. ⁵Then the devil <1228> took him into the holy city and had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶and said to him, if you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, He will command His angels concerning you; and on their hands they will bear you up, So that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

The devil: Strongs #1228 diabolos (dee-ab'-ol-os); a traducer; specially, Satan KJV-- false accuser, devil, slanderer.

(Merriam Webster) **Traduce:** to expose to shame or blame by means of falsehood and misrepresentation

Satan traduces: Satan tries to make things look one way when they are really another way. Today we would call that, "putting a spin on reality." He sought to expose a weakness of pride in Jesus by misquoting Scripture. Perhaps he assumed Jesus would think in the same way as he himself thought...? Again Jesus quoted the Old Testament: **⁷Jesus said to him, on the other hand, it is written, You shall not put the Lord your God to the test. ⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; ⁹and he said to him, all these things I will give you, if you fall down and worship me. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, go, Satan <4567>!**

Satan: Strongs #4567 Satanas (sat-an-as') (with the definite affix); the accuser, i.e. the devil (a borrowing from Hebrew and Aramaic meaning literally 'adversary')

Satan accuses: He accused Jesus of weakness and stands in opposition to the stated purpose of God. *For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.*

Satan is SMART! His intelligence is beyond human comprehension. We need to stay close to the method Jesus used to combat him...Scripture!

Satan is aware of where we are and why we are there and seeks to turn our location against our mission.

Mark 1:9-11: Satan would have observed this happening.

Our circumstances: Philippians 4:11-12: The Apostle Paul learned how to manage spiritually in all circumstances by staying close to Jesus and far away from Satan. Satan knows our circumstances in life. He is aware of what we are doing and why and seeks to corrupt our focus. **If you are a follower of Christ, you are an enemy of Satan.**

Mark 1:12: Satan was aware that the Spirit of God moved Jesus out into the wilderness.

Our focus: Philippians 3:13-14: Even after years of following Jesus, the Apostle Paul had to constantly strive to be better and press forward. **As his enemy, Satan is aware of our weaknesses and seeks to capitalize upon them!**

Matthew 4:2: Jesus had a physical weakness at this time - hunger. **Our weakness:**

2 Corinthians 12:9: Sometimes it is our weakness that makes us strong so we rely on the Lord. Where does your strength come from...self? Or God? Our strength has to come from some place stronger than our enemy. We receive strength to compensate for our weaknesses. **Satan is aware of our strengths and seeks to redirect them.**

Matthew 4:6: Jesus' strength was that he was the son of God with God's protection. Satan knew of that protection and tried to manipulate it for a proud purpose. **Our strength:**

Ephesians 6:10: (NASB) *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.*

Once Satan tires of the godly strength that repels him, he leaves...but then what? Matthew 4:11: (NASB) *Then the devil left him; (Luke 4:13 adds "...until an opportune time") and behold, angels came and began to minister to him.*

The angels fulfilled all that the devil was after!

- They probably fed and strengthened him. (The very definition of "minister.")
- They "bore him up" and fulfilled the text that Satan misquoted.
- They came as messengers of the Most High, whom they and Jesus served.

This gives us a clear view of Satan and his New Testament beginnings. What about the Old Testament?



Satan and Eden, *The Devil - Does He Really Exist* (documentary), SBS TV Australia

- *When Satan isn't being a dragon, he's a snake. The serpent said to have tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden has long been believed to represent the devil, although the Scriptures don't actually say so. In fact, Christian leaders disagree, sometimes violently, about what the devil is like, but one thing they do agree on: he is busy working with and through their enemies.*

What does Satan want? He wants CONTROL! He wants humanity to follow him! **How does he go about gaining and maintaining this control? With subtlety!** 1 John 2:16-17

Genesis 3:1-6: What evidence do we have that this was in fact Satan? **We believe the following texts to be clearly symbolic of Satan as it tells of the reasons he would have been in Eden and what went wrong as a result:** Ezekiel 28:11-17: The King of Tyre personifies Satan here. How do we know? *You were in Eden* - we know the King of Tyre was never in Eden, as an angel of the Lord guarded the entrance so no one was allowed back in. *You were the anointed cherub* - surely the literal King of Tyre was never an angel!

This describes an angelic presence in Eden who was there to protect in a position of great responsibility. He was there as a servant of God but turned against God. This being was corrupted by his own selfishness and self-importance. **This next text seems to verify the idea:** Revelation 12:9: Satan is described as *the great dragon, the serpent of old* - THE serpent of old would be the one in Eden, right?

So, if in Revelation Satan is *thrown down to the earth*, then where is he? What is he doing?



Satan and Job, *The Devil - Does He Really Exist* (documentary), SBS TV Australia

- *One of Satan's earliest appearances is as an angel in the book of Job. In one of the best known stories in the Bible, Satan argues that Job, one of God's most loyal servants, is only pious because he has a good life. God agrees that Satan can test Job by inflicting on him all kinds of diseases and calamities. In the end, in spite of dreadful sufferings, Job continues to worship God, and Satan loses the argument. The Satan who makes Job's life a misery isn't a demon or even a bad angel and he doesn't live in hell.*

Was Satan a "bad angel" at this point? Job 1:6-12: This does not imply that Satan was "good," it merely implies that Satan could come before God. Satan in his fallen state could still communicate with God. This *does* imply mischief, for Satan is challenging a promise that God has always given those who honor Him - His blessing. In the Old Testament, God's blessing was physical. His blessing in the New Testament would be spiritual. God's principle stayed the same, though: Obey Me and be blessed. Disobey Me and there will be consequences.

Satan is challenging God - that is not the work of a good angel. So the shackles are off regarding Job and Satan can now get to him. Satan is evil! He is looking to prove that Job will not be faithful to God. Job was protected because he was loyal. He was not loyal because he was protected.

Satan further revealed in Isaiah...or is he? Isaiah 14:12-15: Does the context show that these verses are about a literal king or Satan? **Let's look at the context:** Isaiah 14:3-4: (NASB) ³*And it will be in the day when the LORD gives you rest from your pain and turmoil and harsh service in which you have been enslaved, ⁴that you will take up this taunt **against the king of Babylon**, and say, how the oppressor has ceased, and how fury has ceased!*

It IS about a king in Isaiah's day - the King of Babylon - so are we out of line projecting this imagery onto Satan? We believe these words apply to both a literal king *and* Satan in a prophetic sense - two applications. Why do we think this is proper?

Here is another instruction given to Isaiah who responds personally: Isaiah 6:8-10: (NASB) Isaiah physically hears God and accomplishes his mission. These verses are about Isaiah! But is there a deeper application? **Jesus tells us that Isaiah's instruction was prophetic and meant to be fulfilled by Jesus himself!** Matthew 13:13-14: Jesus clearly tells us the Old Testament was for *its* time as well as a tool of prophecy with a more powerful meaning later on. If Jesus is telling us that is how the Old Testament prophets work, we should take him at his word. We can apply these descriptions to Satan and they make sense. The Old Testament was a tool for the future. Satan is described in many ways as he who stands and would have us stand against God. That is his objective - to get us to stand against God. How does he do that?

Satan: Strongs #4567 Satanas (sat-an-as') (with the definite affix); the accuser, i.e. the devil: (a borrowing from Hebrew and Aramaic meaning literally 'adversary')

Mark 8:33: Do you see how easy it is for us to end up serving Satan? This even happened to Peter! We need to be aware and careful because when we go against the will of God we are following the will of Satan. That is a sobering thought, because none of us are in line with the will of God all the time. We would like to be, but we are weak and imperfect.

1 Thessalonians 2:18: (KJV) *Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but **Satan <4567>** hindered us.*

Satan actively tried to stop the Gospel from being spread.

The Devil: Strongs #1228 diabolos (dee-ab'-ol-os); a traducer; especially, Satan KJV-- false accuser, devil, slanderer.

Ephesians 6:10-13: The Scriptures say our lives are "hid with Christ." If we are hid with Christ, how can Satan find us? It means you are hidden in the strength of Christ. If we sit under the authority of Jesus, our weaknesses are covered and we can overcome. We put on the armor of God, not our own armor. This is a battle way beyond our own capacity.

The Adversary: Strongs# 480 antikeimai (an-tik'-i-mahee); to lie opposite, i.e. be adverse (figuratively, repugnant) to: KJV-- adversary, be contrary, oppose.

1 Timothy 5:14-15: (KJV) ¹⁴*I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to **the adversary <480>** to speak reproachfully. ¹⁵*For some are already turned aside after Satan.**

The Adversary: Strongs #476 antidikos (an-tid'-ee-kos); an opponent (in a lawsuit); specially, Satan (as the arch-enemy):

1 Peter 5:8-9: How much does Satan know? It is speculation, but we believe God does hide certain things from him. We assume he reads the prophecies but sees them through his own filter and thinks he can change the outcome to *his* will, thwarting God's plans.



We can take heart even if we have fallen. If you fall, you don't stay down. You get up, brush yourself off and find your hiding place in Christ again. Make sure you are armed *this* time and learn from how you fell before.

Of course, there is the history of Christianity *after* the New Testament, and it is a sad story!

 **Constantine and power, *The Devil - Does He Really Exist (documentary), SBS TV Australia***

- *Four centuries after Christ, a Roman emperor, Constantine the Great, converts to Christianity. Within a generation the once persecuted religion is the official creed of the mightiest empire on earth. Christian bishops now have real power backed up by the state, and they use Satan to help them keep it. Again and again, church leaders claim that those who disagree with them - especially other Christian groups - are working for the devil.*
- *As Constantine made it a state religion and a state church and an established religion, what Constantine and his immediate successors found hardest to put up with was heresy.*

Christianity took a turn for the worse in the Dark Ages. The church at that time really took on the role of Satan to those who were trying to follow after Christ - as an accuser, adversary and traducer. "If you don't see it our way, you will be burned, tortured, killed, etc." This was an amazing victory of Satan! He controlled Christianity to try to control the world.

Did the persecuting Christians have "real power" as the sound byte described? No, real power is the power and influence of God in your life, the Holy Spirit. Christianity does not need governments or authority; it simply needs the power of God.

John 17:14: Christianity is supposed to be about the word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit - not running governments.

Satan gathers followers - often times they are unknowing followers: 1 John 3:7-8: *True* Christianity is comprised of a very tiny category of people. **Satan and his messengers seek to distort truth amongst the faithful:** 2 Corinthians 11:12-15: The history of Christianity shows darkness posing as light within the Christian movement, actually corrupting the name of Christ.

Why has Satan's influence escalated? What will be the end result?

 **Executions for Christ, *The Devil - Does He Really Exist (documentary), SBS TV Australia***

- *Catholic theologians would have said that because "heretics" didn't believe the "correct" Catholic faith they must be worshipping the Evil One instead - God's enemy.*
- *The logic is relentless: It's "us" and "them." If you're not with the church and the empire, you're with Satan. It's a short step for the church to demand that heretics be put to death. The first executions come 450 years after Christ. Over the following centuries, the numbers of people killed for supposedly working for Satan grows to many tens - possibly hundreds - of thousands.*

This history of Christianity was not good, proper, Christian or godly. It was Satanic. Never again should we allow the name of Christ to go in that direction. How are we as individuals standing for the true Gospel of Jesus Christ? 1 Timothy 4:1-3 Revelation 20:4: Will we stand firm in our faith? Satan fights harder because the Redeemer of the world has arrived and challenged his authority! That is why he went after Jesus right at the beginning of his ministry.

Satan, the ruler of this world, has a destiny: John 12:31-32: Jesus' faithfulness is what will drive out Satan permanently. **Satan, the accuser of our brethren, has a destiny:** Revelation 12:10-11: Satan is active in trying to undermine the faithfulness of true Christians. **Satan, the Devil, has a destiny:** Hebrews 2:9-10,14: Jesus is described as the pivot point of the plan of God. Because of that, he renders the devil powerless! Jesus is the answer to all Satanic influences. **Satan is to be bound during the 1,000 years of Christ's reign:** Revelation 20:1-3 ... **and then destroyed:** Revelation 20:10: *Cast into the lake of fire and brimstone*: a picture of destruction. **Where do we find our sure footing in this battle against evil?** Romans 8:35-39: Satan is alive and flourishing in this present world...but not for long! Our responsibility is to recognize and respect that and be hid in Christ under the armor of God so we can fight a battle that is beyond our ability to fight.

*So, does the devil really exist?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*