

UNIT 2: God's Creating Work

Section 9: Angelology: Satan

Systematic Theologies:
Boyce, Culver, Erickson,
Grudem, Ryrie

INTRODUCTION:

It is interesting that many people who will affirm the existence of God will deny the existence of Satan. Many who accept and affirm the existence of God will relegate Satan to the world of myth or fairy tale. Many associate Satan with superstition and think of Satan as a funny man in a little red suit, with a pitchfork, little horns coming out of his head, and a pointy tale. What fool would believe something so ridiculous?

We certainly do not believe that Satan is a man in a little red suit. Indeed, that is not the Biblical picture. The Biblical picture of Satan is not funny at all—he is the saints' archenemy. But where do we get that image? That portrait of Satan of the man in the red suit and tights and so on, is dated back to the middle ages at a time when Christian people were acutely conscience of the reality of the spirit world and of the reality of Satan. They took steps to protect themselves from the wiles of Satan. In their efforts and studies they came to the conclusion that the Devil's greatest point of weakness was his pride. So they attacked him at this point by making these silly caricatures of him in order to "poke fun" at him. No one in the church at that time really believed that Satan really was a man in a little red suit with a pitchfork and so on. That image was designed to ward him off by assaulting his pride.

Q1: Is Satan merely a personification of evil?

Q2: How did Satan Fall?

Q3: What does Satan do?

I. Satan's Name

1. Accuser – **Rev 12:10** "Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night." – *see Devil*
2. Adversary – **1 Pet 5:8** "Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your **adversary**, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." – *see Satan*
3. Abaddon/Apollyon – **Revelation 9:11** "They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon." – embodiment of Destruction... He seeks to destroy everything that praises God.
4. Beelzebul – seems to mean "Lord of the Flies" or "Lord of the Dunghill" ... some scholars believe this name to be a perversion of the false god "Baal" ... **Mark 3:22-23** The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by **Beelzebul**," and "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons." ²³ And He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? (see also **Matt 10:25, 12:24ff; Luke 11:15ff**)
5. Belial – **2 Corinthians 6:15** Or what harmony has Christ with **Belial**, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? – literally means "worthlessness"... means "lord of the forest" – the name came to be associated w/ negative activity and insidious motives.

6. Devil – literally, “accuser” or “slanderer” – He makes false accusations against others in an attempt to harm God and man. Image of law court – Satan as prosecuting attorney. (**Matt 4:1ff, 13:39, 25:41, Lk 4:1ff, 8:12, John 6:70, 8:44, 13:2, etc...**)
7. Dragon – **Revelation 12:7-9** And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war,⁸ and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.⁹ And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the **devil** and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. – He seeks to destroy the work of the Messiah...
8. Evil One – **1 John 5:19** We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of the evil one*. – He is the supreme evil doer... a personal, evil being. (**Matt 13:19, 38; Eph 6:16; 2 Thess 3:3; several ref’s in 1st John**)
9. Father of Lies – **John 8:44** "You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the **father of lies**. – Satan’s “native tongue” is to lie!
10. God/Ruler of this World (Age) – **2 Cor 4:4** in whose case the **god of this world** has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (**John 12:31, 16:11**) – This title indicates that Satan has some power in the present age... (but only by God’s sovereignty)
 - **R.C. Trench**, “The age (of which Satan is god) means “all that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at anytime current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitute a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral, atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitable to exhale— all this is included in the aion, which is... the subtle informing spirit of the kosmos, or world of men who are living alienated apart from God.”
 - *Thankfully*: **I John 4:4** “You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”
11. Prince of the Power of the Air – **Eph 2:1-2** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the **prince of the power of the air**, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. – context seems to indicate influence over unbelievers...
12. Satan – **2 Cor 11:14** No wonder, for even **Satan** disguises himself as an angel of light. – literally means “Adversary” – He is opposed to God, His rule, and His children. (**I Chron 21:1, Job 1-2, Zech 3:1-2, Rom 16:20, 2 Cor 2:11, 2Thess 2:9, etc**)
13. Tempter – **Matt 4:3** And the **tempter** came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." (**I Thess 3:5**)
14. *Other Names*: Diablo (Devil), Lucifer (Reflector of Light – **Is 14:12**)
15. Satan has been called some very strange things. He’s been called Old Harry, Old Nick and in Scotland they call him Old Clotty because he is cloven footed according to the popular impression. He’s called Old Roger, Old Scratch, and sailors call him Davy Jones.

II. Satan's Nature

A. A "Personal" Being

1. By this phrase we explain that Satan is not merely a "personification" of evil, but an actual being who exists and acts.
2. **Ryrie** highlights the Biblical evidences of this truth: "Seven books of the OT teach his reality (**Genesis, I Chronicles, Job, Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah**). Every writer of the NT affirmed his reality and activity. Christ's teaching also assumes and affirms Satan's existence and activity. In twenty-five of twenty-nine passages in the Gospels that speak of Satan, our Lord is speaking."

B. Personal Traits

1. **Intelligence:** **2 Corinthians 11:3** But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ (**also Matt 4**)
2. **Emotions:** **Rev 12:17** (anger), **Luke 22:31** (desire), **I Tim 3:6** (pride/conceit)
3. **Will:** **Is 14:12-14** (his ambition), **II Tim 2:26** (holding others captive to do his will), **Jude 9** (disputation about the body of Moses)
4. **Personal Pronouns:** Satan is referred to as a person (i.e. **Job 1-2, Matt 4, etc**)
5. **Moral Responsibility:** If "satan" was just a personification of the evil intentions people have, then "satan" could not be held morally culpable... but he is – **Matt 25:41** "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

C. He is a Creature

1. Assuming **Ez 28:11-19** refers to Satan... the passage clearly states Satan was created (**v15**)... Satan belongs to the order of angels called cherubim (**v14**). Apparently he was the highest created angel (**v12**).
2. All agree that the subject of **Ez 28:1-19** is judgment on Tyre and its leader... the question is whether **v11-19** go beyond the human leader to reveal things about something or someone else... To say that Satan is implicated in this text is not to say that the human leader is not in view... it is only to say that the reference goes beyond that human leader of Tyre. To say that the descriptions are inflated references to an earthly king seem "too high..." It makes much more sense to see them as descriptions of an angelic being – Satan.
 - a. Satan had unparalleled wisdom and beauty (**v12**)
 - b. Satan had unparalleled habitation (**v13**)
 - c. Satan had an unparalleled covering (**v13**)
 - d. Satan had an unparalleled function (**v14**)
3. Some sense of Satan's power might be given in **Jude 9** where Michael takes care in disputing with Satan. Satan is also called the "god of this world and the prince of the power of the air" (see above)... saying something of his power.
4. Though a mighty being... Satan has creaturely limitations & is accountable to God.

D. He is Fallen

1. *The Fact of Satan's Sin*
 - a. **Ezekiel 28:15** explains that "sin was found" in Satan.

- b. **Barnhouse** terms it “spontaneous generation in the heart of this being in whom such magnificence of power and beauty had been combined and to whom such authority and privilege had been given.”
 - c. **Ryrie**, “This sin must have been included in the eternal plan of God. Yet God never assumes the responsibility for the commission of any sin, including Satan’s.”
 - d. **Culver**, “We must assume that, however Satan became evil, it was through a fall from an original created state of moral good. This state included the power of free will and without external temptation by anything evil in itself, he aspired to be and to have what was not rightly his. He thereby fell and has not paused in descent.”
 - e. **Boyce**, “The commonly received doctrine as to the original state of evil angels, is that they were once pure and holy, such as are now the angels of heaven, though not, as they, confirmed in holiness. This is founded upon the supposition that it is impossible for God to create being otherwise than free from sin. The only objection which can be made to this original innocence is suggested in such questions as these: how can a being perfectly holy be led to the commission of sin? How would a being realizing the character and power of the supreme being ever be so unwise as to revolt against it? But these questions present only metaphysical difficulties which must vanish before actual facts.”
2. *The Timing of Satan’s Sin*
- a. Many propose a pre-Garden of Eden fall for Satan...
 - b. I think there are some good reasons to see the Fall of Satan as being commensurate with or just prior to the Fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden...
 - c. **Grudem**, “Sometime between the events of Genesis 1:31 and Genesis 3:1, there must have been a rebellion in the angelic world with many angels turning against God and becoming evil.” **Erikson agrees...**
 - d. **I John 3:8** – “the devil sinned from the beginning” – not from his creation, but from the beginning parts of the history of the world (**Gen 3**)...
 - e. Some proposed reasons:
 - (1) This allows us to see God’s calling His Creative Work “very good” without exception... for at that moment Satan was still “unfallen”—sin not introduced
 - (2) Also this would see the “judgment” meted out by God against the serpent as the moment of condemnation...
 - (3) Also it makes sense to see Satan’s judgment is commensurate w/ the fallen angels and those who “do not obey the gospel” ...
 - (4) The serpent is connected w/ Satan undeniably in **Rev 12:9** “And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”
3. *The Nature of Satan’s Sin*
- a. **1 Timothy 3:6** and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. – seems to point to the sin of pride as being Satan’s point of offense!
 - b. **Is 14:12-14** (again, if pointing to Satan gives more detail of Satan’s sin) – “How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! ¹³ “But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God,

And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. ¹⁴ 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'"

- (1) "I will ascend to heaven" – Desire to occupy and settle heaven on equality w/ God.
- (2) "I will raise my throne above the stars of God" – Satan desired to rule all the angels
- (3) "I will sit on the mount of assembly..." – Satan desired to govern the universe
- (4) "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds" – Satan wanted the glory that belonged to God ("clouds" are often associated w/ God's presence)
- (5) "I will make myself like the Most High" – Satan wanted to be as powerful as God and exercise authority and control over the universe.
- (6) **Ryrie**, "His sin was a direct challenge to the power and authority of God."

III. Satan's Activity & Tactics

A. Counterfeits – **2 Cor 11:14-15**

1. The principle way Satan operates is by offering a counterfeit kingdom and program.
2. This is Satan's tactic... promise blessing through sinful actions...
3. Satan promotes a "form of godliness while denying its power" (**II Tim 3:5**). He disguises his servants as servants of righteousness (**II Cor 11:15**). He promotes a doctrinal system through demons who in turn use people who advocate a false asceticism or unbridled license (**I Tim 4:1-3, Rev 2:24**).
4. Satan promotes a counterfeit order. He attempts to promote a world-system that lives in "independence" of God. Satan tries to make the values of his godless system seem attractive. Thus he works to make people give top priority to self as number one and to the here and now as most important... Christianity speaks with such direct antithesis to this position (**I John 2:17**)!
5. In **v12** Satan is called "the morning star" – in Latin: "Lucifer" ... This title gives some indication regarding the basic plan of Satan, since the same title is used in **Rev 22:16** of Christ. Satan plans to "counterfeit the plan of God"
6. The ultimate counterfeit will be the coming Antichrist, whose activities will be in accord with Satan and who will pawn off on mankind "the lie" (**II Thess 2:9-11**) We see this described further in Revelation – The Beast, Prophet, AntiChrist...
7. **Culver**, "The theatre of contest is the human race – from **Genesis 3** to **Revelation 20**. We err if we suppose his goals are simply to promote crimes, civil disorder and immorality. Rather, Satan would have human beings – whether crude and primitive, or refined and sophisticated – worship any creature rather than the Creator, to follow their own wills to death and hell rather than God's will to life everlasting."

B. Other Tactics:

1. Slanders – **Gen 3:4-5**
2. Attempts to Destroy the work of Jesus – **I John 3:8**
3. Deceives... Lies – **Rev 20:3, John 8:44**
4. Blinds minds and spiritual eyes – **2 Cor 4:4**
5. Accuses – **Rev 12:10**
6. Hinders – **I Thess 2:18**
7. Sows tares – **Matt 13:38-39**

8. Incites Persecution – **Rev 2:10**
9. Tempts to sin – **Matt 4, Acts 5:3**
10. Seeks to establish his own kingdom – **2 Cor 2:11**

IV. Dangers Regarding our Doctrine about Satan

1. In church history there have been two serious distortions about the person and work of Satan. One is to minimize his reality and to not take him seriously as an adversary. Some take this to the point, as we mentioned previously, of denying his existence entirely. The other side of the distortion is to attribute to him greater power and greater significance than he actually has.
2. To often the church is influenced by dualistic religions, which see the forces of good and evil—light and darkness as equal opposite forces—fighting with one another for supremacy. But the Biblical view knows nothing of such dualism because the contest between God and Satan is no contest at all. Satan is a creature, he is a created being, always and everywhere he is under the sovereign power and authority of the Creator. He is in no way an equal adversary to God Himself. As a creature he possesses none of the incommunicable attributes of God.
3. Sometimes in our preoccupation with Satan we are quick to assign to him attributes that belong only to God. Martin Luther warned his people about the stark reality of Satan by saying, “Satan is a close by as your own clothes” we disagree with Luther at this point. I believe that at this point Luther was speaking more out of his own experience than from sound exegesis. Luther certainly understood that as a creature Satan certainly did not possess the attribute of omnipresence. Satan cannot be at more than one place at any given time so he cannot be as close by to you as your own shirt and as close by as my shirt. But if you have someone as significant to the advancement of the Kingdom as Martin Luther was I can understand that he lived everyday of his life wearing this diabolical shirt. But it is unlikely that anyone of us will encounter the Satan himself in our lifetime.
4. Satan is a creature and is thus defined by the limits of creaturely-ness. He is not infinite and he is not omniscient. Remember, though, that angels are higher than us—they have more power and knowledge than us but they are still way below the level of God Himself. We must never be guilty of attributing to Satan divine characteristics.
5. Satan is accountable ultimately to God (**Jb 1, Matt 25:41**). He is not omnipresent (**Jb 1:7**), not omniscient (**Jb 1**), not omnipotent (**Rev 12:7**), and he can be resisted (**Eph 6, Ja 4:7**). We are told to never underestimate him (**Jude 8-9**), never overestimate him (**Jb 1:21**), be on guard (**I Pet 5:8**), do not invite his attacks (**Eph 4:27**), testify against him (**Jn 12:31, Rev 12:11**), be wise regarding his tactics (**2 Cor 2:11**), employ the spiritual armor (**Eph 6:10-17**), pray (**Matt 6:13, Eph 6:18**), and resist (**Ja 4:6-7**).
6. Remember, ultimately, Satan has already been judged and defeated at the cross. Paul explained that God through Christ disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him (resurrection). – **Col 2:8, 14-15**.
7. We are also assured of the Lord’s intercessory prayers for us (**John 17:15-26, Heb 7:25**). He is guarding us from the evil one (**II Thes 3:3-4**), and provides us with spiritual armor to cause us to stand firm against the wiles of the devil (**Eph 6**).
8. Satan’s doom is sure (Luther’s hymn) – **Rev 20:10** And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the **lake of fire** and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.