

TOPIC III

SATAN - LITERARY ERRORS ABOUT HIS ORIGIN AND OTHER DOCTRINES

Part III

Where did Satan really come from? And what was and is his purpose? How does he go about accomplishing it?

This is an extensive and lengthy topic with no chance to discuss it all in a brief period. So we will do what we have to do and take the necessary time. It also moves from the proper understanding of the Biblical texts to more personal and spiritual considerations as we go along. It should hopefully change our perspective and thought process about life and its events as far as the spiritual powers are concerned.

The title "Satan" is mentioned fifth-four times in the Bible, eighteen times in the O.T. (fifteen times in Job alone, the other three in Zechariah), and thirty-six times in the New; "Devil" thirty-four times (all in the N.T.), "adversary" once when referring to "Satan," "enemy" two times, "accuser" two times, "evil one" three times (twice in Matthew, once in John). "Dragon" or "serpent" is also used of Satan. "Dragon" is used thirteen times but only in Revelation when referring to Satan, and "Serpent" is used five times in Genesis 3, four times in Revelation referring to "Satan" and in II Corinthians 11:3 by Paul, plus 4 uses in Isaiah that could be considered as applicable (14:29; 27:1; 30:6; 65:25) Beelzebul is found seven times in the New Testament (three times when not repeated in the gospel accounts), where he is said to be "the ruler of demons." Whether Beelzebub is another name for Satan is debatable.

Interestingly enough, though Isaiah 14:12 and Ezekiel 28:11-17 are interpreted as depicting the pre-creation history of Satan and his fall from heaven, there is no mention of Satan in any form or description in the totality of all the major and minor prophets with the exception of Zechariah 1:1-2. This passage (and book) is worth noting as it is reflected in several places in the New Testament, notably in the Book of Revelation. So "Satan" is referred to thrice in the entire books of the prophets, and all of them in Zechariah.

So, "Satan" and "Devil" are the most used titles in the Bible.

שָׂטָן

Hebrew - satan (shaw-tawn or saw-tawn) meaning "adversary." Not always used of the spiritual evil one but is used of a human adversary as well on occasion. But "Satan" is the name of the superhuman adversary of God and translated as accuser once, adversary eight times and Satan eighteen times. A verb from "to be or act as an adversary."

διάβολος

Greek - diabolos; (devil) to slander, or falsely accuse - translated "devil" thirty four times, "malicious gossips" three times, all in the New Testament.

Now, as we continue, there will have to be some conjecture that could be totally wrong. But it will occur none the less. The danger is putting too much trust in our own conjecture.

So then, what is he? There are numerous descriptive terms used in the Bible about Satan and correlations we will look at.

A. Let's note first some things Satan has never been directly designated or called an "angel" or "archangel" in the Bible. In spite of church doctrine and theological teaching, and the images of Milton's "Paradise Lost", there is no place in the Bible that declares that Satan is or ever was an angel or an archangel, nor that he fell from heaven after a rebellion against God. These images all come from a misinterpretation of Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14, medieval literature, Catholic doctrine, portraits painted by many artists over the centuries, "scholars", teachers and preachers who never took the time to check out this subject and so on. The closest Satan ever comes to angels is that we are told in II Corinthians 11:13-15, where Paul is speaking of those who had preached a false gospel to the people in Corinth,

13: "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14: No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15: Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise

themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds."

He "disguises" himself. And Paul is referring, in the immediate context, to false apostles, as verses 3 and 4 testify,

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.

4: For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear *this* beautifully."¹ (See also verses 5-12)

But these verses do not say directly that he is or was an angel. But it does not exclude this possibility either.

Then in Revelation 12:7-9,

7: 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."²

But Satan is not directly identified as an angel himself. All the other main titles are there, but never is he directly called an angel. Plus, this is not portrayed as a pre-creation event.

In Luke 10:17-20 we read,

17: The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." 18: And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. 19: "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on

¹ II Corinthians 11:3-4. If there are doubts as to whether the Biblical text contains sarcasm, this ought to put them to rest.

² See my commentary on "The Book of Revelation" at: "www.bibleclassroom.org" for insight into this and other visions.

serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. 20: "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."

The tense here reveals Jesus' intent. He is speaking of "watching"³ as the 70 ministered including casting out demons. The point of Jesus comment is not to point to some pre-creation event, but to denote the immediate loss of Satanic and demonic power as the 70- ministered in Jesus' name. We see a little more here as well. We see the metaphors of the demons as serpents and scorpions - poisonous insects - and the word "enemy." But most important is the term "spirits" describing all of them. This is important as we proceed.

As a side note, if Satan had been cast out of heaven to earth before creation, then how is it that he is seen in heaven here? And falling? There are more statements like this as well.

B. Let's look at another title or term to understand is the Hebrew "Beelzebul" from the Old Testament. This term is used in the New Testament in Luke 11:14-19⁴ comes from two words, "Baal" - a pagan god of the Canaanites, Philistines and other nearby cultures and "Zebub" meaning "fly" as in the insect or "dung" upon which the flies eat or lay eggs. "Lord of the flies" or "Lord of the dungflies" is a fair translation. This term is only found in the Old Testament in II Kings, chapter 1.

1: "Now Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab. 2: And Ahaziah fell through the lattice in his upper chamber which *was* in Samaria, and became ill. So he sent messengers and said to them, "Go, inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I will recover from this sickness." 3: But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and say to them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel *that* you are going to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?' 4: "Now therefore thus says the LORD, 'You shall not come down from the bed where you have gone up, but you shall surely die.'" Then Elijah departed. 5: When the messengers returned to him he said to them, "Why have you returned?" 6: They said to him, "A man came up to meet us and said to us, 'Go, return to the king who sent you and say to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel *that* you are sending to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed where you have gone up, but

³ Imperfect active indicative in the Greek.

⁴ See also Matthew 10:25; 12:24-27; and Mark 3:22.

shall surely die.'" "He said to them, "What kind of man was he who came up to meet you and spoke these words to you?" 8: They answered him, "*He was* a hairy man with a leather girdle bound about his loins." And he said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite." 9: Then *the king* sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him, and behold, he was sitting on the top of the hill. And he said to him, "O man of God, the king says, 'Come down.'" 10: Elijah replied to the captain of fifty, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty." Then fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty. 11: So he again sent to him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he said to him, "O man of God, thus says the king, 'Come down quickly.'" 12: Elijah replied to them, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty." Then the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty. 13: So he again sent the captain of a third fifty with his fifty. When the third captain of fifty went up, he came and bowed down on his knees before Elijah, and begged him and said to him, "O man of God, please let my life and the lives of these fifty servants of yours be precious in your sight. 14: "Behold fire came down from heaven and consumed the first two captains of fifty with their fifties; but now let my life be precious in your sight." 15: The angel of the LORD said to Elijah, "Go down with him; do not be afraid of him." So he arose and went down with him to the king. 16: Then he said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron--is it because there is no God in Israel to inquire of His word?--therefore you shall not come down from the bed where you have gone up, but shall surely die.'" 17: So Ahaziah died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And because he had no son, Jehoram became king in his place in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah."

Beelzebul is just one of many pagan gods. And this is the only place he is mentioned in the O.T. But his name and fame developed its way into Jewish thought over the 850 years since this event. An entire theology and tradition, not found anywhere in the Bible developed in the doctrine of the Jews about this one time mentioned false god of the Philistines. Did Dante and Milton write some of their poetry during this time?⁵ This is seen in Luke 11:14-19 (and Mathew 12:22-28)

⁵ A deliberate reference to the impact on church thinking, doctrine and theology by secular writers that had a larger impact than the Bible itself.

14: "And He (*Jesus*) was casting out a demon, and it was mute; when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed. 15: But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons." 16: Others, to test *Him*, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven. 17: But He knew their thoughts and said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house *divided* against itself falls. 18: "If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. 19: "And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So they will be your judges."

Here, Beelzebul is identified as the "ruler of demons." But there is not a clear association or identification with Satan. In the passages quoted above, it could be that Jesus is equating Beelzebul with Satan or just commenting that if the house of Beelzebub is divided against itself and will thereby fall, so it would be with Satan's house as well. The other possibility is that Jesus knows that Beelzebul is a false god and opts not to discuss the fallacy of their thinking with them and opted to avoid nit-picking about this that would detract from His main point. Jesus could have quoted Exodus 23:13, "Now concerning everything which I have said to you, be on your guard; and do not mention the name of other gods, nor let *them* be heard from your mouth." But he avoided this distraction to make a more important point.

If Beelzebul is indeed a figment and not a real "god" then, in that case, Satan would need to be considered as controlling the demons, but there is no place that suggests that direct control. On the other hand, in Luke 10:17-18, there is a direct connection,

17: The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." 18: And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning."

We'll discuss this passage more at a later time, but in the casting out of demons, Satan's power is negated and he is rendered powerless. This suggests that in one way at least, Satan's power is manifested through demon possession. The word "demon" is defined as a supernatural evil spirit spreading evil in the spiritual environment, including that of man. But the demons are subject to several higher authorities including God, Satan and man in Jesus' name. More on that later.

Now, in Milton's "Paradise Lost" (Book II, lines 300-400) Beelzebub is Satan's front man, like the angel of the Lord is God's most powerful angel in such image may well be the Lord himself. The problem is that Milton depicts these beings as fallen angels cast from heaven and now plotting revenge. This is the image we have been taught. It is false as far as I can tell. There, Beelzebub speaks and has quite a soliloquy or two: (Readings from Milton if necessary)

C. And Jesus tells us also in the Luke passage that Satan has a kingdom. This is important. He is a "king", "ruler" or "prince," titles attributed to him in the New Testament. But is he also a spirit being rather than an angel? Angels' are "spirit" beings but is or was Satan one of these? Let's take the "king" or "ruler" aspect first.

John 14:29-31; 29: "Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe. 30: "I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me; 31: but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here. 31: "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out."

And,

John 16:11, "... and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged."

The word "ruler" is "arch-ohn." It means, "headman", "highest authority" "ruler" "leader," "first in political power or rank" or even "prince." We use the term "arch-rival", "archenemy" to indicate the primary or most powerful opponent.

In his testimony before Agrippa in Acts chapter 26, Paul recounts Jesus words to him when Paul encountered him on the road to Damascus. In part of this speech to Paul Jesus said,

16: 'But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; 17: rescuing you from the *Jewish* people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, 18: to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the

dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

We have here that the earth is under the dominion of Satan and that his kingdom is that of "darkness." "Darkness" is the kingdom of lies and deceit, as opposed to "light" the kingdom of truth. How did he get this dominion? After all, we were given total dominion (in Genesis one and two)⁶ over all creation and now Satan has it? We gave it to him. We see this in Genesis 3 where God's counsel was set aside in favor of the serpent's. And this has been the problem ever since. For example, in Isaiah 29:13 we read,

"Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned *by rote*,..."

But, getting back to our topic, Paul also said,

"And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 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." II Corinthians 4:3-4

Here he is called a "god." The word is the same as used of God, "theos." We will see more about what is in this verse later on in terms of our mind and how it is impacted by Satan through the teaching of error and false doctrine, deception and lies we too often believe. But I digress.

John says this,

"We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of the evil one.*" I John 5:18-19

In Mark 1:13 and Matthew 4:8-10 we read,

1:13, "And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him."

⁶ Also see: Genesis 9:2; Psalm 8.

Matthew 4:8: "Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; 9: and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." 10: Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"

Here we have several things, 1. The devil (verse 1) is identified as Satan (Mark 1:13 and verse 10 in Matthew). 2. The "kingdoms" of the world belong to Satan and are under his dominion, rule or authority. Jesus didn't deny he had the authority to give them to Him. Jesus answer is revealing, not about Satan, but about us - the world. First, this same temptation is repeated over and over again from Genesis 3 to this minute. Man succumbed and is succumbing to this day, to this minute. Genesis 3 and this account is constant in this, Satan's world. Now, the question is, who actually gives Satan his power over us?

Then Paul writes in Ephesians 2:1-2,

1: "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."

Here again we have the title, "prince" of Satan and that the course of the world is according to the "spirit" now working in the sons of disobedience.

Once again, the church has been led astray by its leaders. It has taught for centuries (assisted by Dante and Milton) that Satan rules in "hell." However, there is no such teaching in the Bible. It is all fiction. Satan rules here, over the world, and over mankind.

