

TOPIC III

SATAN - LITERARY ERRORS ABOUT HIS ORIGIN AND OTHER DOCTRINES

Part IV

(A.) So where does he first appear, (B.) How did he come to be, (C.) What is his nature (and more) and (D.) The spiritual realm; (E.) How does he work? (F.) Whose authority is he and all the spirits under? (G.) Why was he and the evil spirits or demons created? (H.) "What of free will?" And, how do we discern the truth and avoid his influence?

A. Where does he first appear?

In the Bible he first appears in Genesis 3. We have in Genesis 3, a portrait of humanity that is true to this day. We will speak more of this from time to time. But an initial key verse is verse 1: "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made." Here we have the statement that God made the serpent and made it "crafty," meaning, "shrewd," "clever," "cunning". ("Serpent is "nachash" - to "hiss" thus, a snake.) The serpent mixed truth and falsehood in his message to Eve. She, based on her own desires, followed the counsel of the serpent and disregarded God's counsel. She then went and did what she had been commanded not to do by God." This is still going on with mankind today. The serpent is identified as Satan in II Corinthians 11:3, and in Revelation 12:9 and 20:2. The Corinthians passage supports the idea that this so called "deception" of Eve is still going on.

Again from II Corinthians 11:1-4,

1: "I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me. 2: For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you *as* a pure virgin. 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." (Italics mine)

A definite reference to Genesis three. "Craftiness" here is literally "all working", meaning using all means to trick, be cunning, or present the facade of wisdom in order to persuade or deceive. The term "serpent" is a metaphor to help grasp the nature and danger of Satan. However, as a "spirit" being, it is not beyond the possibility that he could transform himself to appear as a snake or creature. More likely a literary picture. But we will leave that discussion for another time. And, we will come back to this passage for another point in a moment.

Now, returning to Satan's beginnings, John says,

"Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil." (I John 3:7-8)

So we have the term "beginning" again, and that Satan "sinned" from the beginning. This means he presented information contrary to what God had said and contrary to the truth in a deceptive and manipulative manner.

The next reference as to Satan's beginnings is found in John, chapter 8 where, in a lengthy debate with the Pharisees and other Jews Jesus said, "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." (8:44)

Though it is impossible to separate the outlined topics one from another, we will visit these passages again and see how they speak to the other matters. Jesus states that Satan was a murderer "from the beginning." When, however, was the beginning and what did John intend by the use of this term?

First, the term "the beginning" means the "beginning" of creation (See: Matthew 19:4)¹. Second, Satan is called a "murderer." The Greek is "man slayer or killer." He does not physically kill anyone,² and, with the exception of the Book of Job³ (by which we would err if we tried to use it as a theological study of Satan), there

¹ "And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created *them* from the *beginning* MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE..."

² Jesus is referring to the "spiritual" death of mankind.

³ See my commentary on the Book of Job at: www.bibleclassroom.org.

are few physical acts or events Satan is noted for. In fact, compare the history of Satan's "evils" against those that evil men have enacted against each other since Cain. Considering the horrors men have inflicted upon others for several thousand years of recorded history, one would be hard pressed to find very many deeds of evil done by Satan in comparison. One must come to the conclusion that "evil" as we normally interpret it is unlike the "evil" attributed to Satan. "Evil" is rooted in a spiritual principal and as far as Satan is concerned, it is basically and simply in his message. In believing his message, rather than God's men then perpetrate acts we call "evil" upon each other.

Satan is also called a liar. And, as we have said, the problem is that people believe his lies rather than God's truth. This has occurred "from the beginning," from Genesis three on to now. His influence is nearly always through ideas that come into the consciousness of people who do exactly what Adam and Eve did in listening to the prompting of their own desires as more important than what God has said. His weapons are lies. And he uses men to promote them. More on this later.

B. How did he come to be?

In his gospel, John writes,

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." (1:1-3) And, "He (*Jesus*) was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him."⁴

In 1:1-3 the word "beginning" is used twice. But we also see a confirmation that everything was made by God through Jesus, His Word. This would include all the beings of the spiritual realm as well. We have confirmation of this from Paul.

Paul writes in Colossians 1:15-17,

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been

⁴ See also: Hebrews 1:2, 2:10; Isaiah 44:24; Isaiah 45:12, 18; I Corinthians 8:6; Romans 11:36;

created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."

C. What is his nature, and more...

Now, moving to another aspect of the matter, in Jude we have some insight into a bit of the spiritual drama. First, the context is that of false teachers in the church and then Jude uses illustrations to tell of the fate of such men.

3: "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. 4: For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."

Then in the midst of describing their fate Jude notes,

6: "And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, 7: just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. 8: Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. 9: But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" 10: But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. 11: Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. 12: These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; 13: wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever. 14: *It was* also about these men *that* Enoch, *in* the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, 15: to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all

the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."
(Italics mine)

The point is that though Jude is condemning and warning about the deception and fate of false teachers, (likely gnostic) he hints at some other things as well.

First, angels have "their own domain" (appointed "ruler-ship") and "proper abode" (place of residence), some abandoned it and were therefore "bound" by God in a place of darkness to await judgement. Verse 7 states that this judgment is "eternal fire." In II Peter 2:4, as Peter also is speaking about false and deceptive teachers, he says, like Jude,

4: "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; ..." - will suffer the same fate.

Peter also notes, like Jude, that the angels do not bring judgment against these reprobate teachers,

10: ... and especially those who indulge the flesh in *its* corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, 11: whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord."

Second, we have references to Satan having ruler-ship over these angels.

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."

Jesus makes this comment in Matthew 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;

So what do we make of this? Remember, the word "angel" means "messenger." So let's try and get all the art work out of our heads. These are "spirit" beings, some of which can actually take human form or be allowed to be seen in some form by people on occasion. But mostly this is a spiritual matter, by that I mean a matter involving unseen spiritual realms inhabited by unseen spirit beings.

I would suggest that though it appears that all of this was happening before creation, that God actually created it that way, planned and intended all of it. Angels, demons, Satan, and all the created spirits do not appear to have either full free will or are they omnipotent,⁵ but are used by God for specific purposes to bring about the salvation of as many human beings as possible. Otherwise, they would see the consequences of their actions.

II Peter 3:7-9 summarizes it pretty well,

7: "But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. 9: The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

The "spiritual" realm or world is spoken about in the Scriptures a great deal; too many times to mention. The word "heaven" in English is most often employed to speak of this environment. It is revealed to us at times but we cannot enter it or explore it.⁶ For example,

⁵ One interesting passage regarding the ignorance of earthly rulers concerning God's plan is I Corinthians 2:6-10. Not all is revealed to everything or everyone. "Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God predestined before the ages to our glory; *the wisdom* which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND *which* HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM." For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God." Also, the binding of these disobedient "angels" does not apply to demons, as we see throughout the Bible.

⁶ I Corinthians 15:50.

II Kings 6:11-17,

11: Now the heart of the king of Aram was enraged over this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, 'Will you tell me which of us is for the king of Israel?' 12: One of his servants said, 'No, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom.' 13: So he said, 'Go and see where he is, that I may send and take him.' And it was told him, saying, 'Behold, he is in Dothan.' He sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city. 15: Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, 'Alas, my master! What shall we do?' 16: So he answered, 'Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' 17: Then Elisha prayed and said, 'O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.' And the LORD opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha."

Psalms 68:17, "The chariots of God are myriads, thousands upon thousands; The Lord is among them *as at Sinai*, in holiness."

Ephesians 2:3-6, 3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, 4: But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5: even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6: and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,..."

3:8-10, 8: "To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, 9: and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; 10: so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places*."

Hebrews 8:4-5, 4: "Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; 5: who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things,..."

Hebrews 9:23-24, 23: "Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with

better sacrifices than these. 24: For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;"

And, Ephesians 6:11-12, 11: "Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12: For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*."