

SATAN

Notwithstanding that both God and Christ together with prophets and apostles, present him in scripture as a real being, many in the professing church reject the absolute reality of Satan. They argue that he is an abstract force, a mythological part of man's growing up, and that to believe in his existence and personality is primitive, naïve and even superstitious. Others contend that the term Satan is simply the personification of evil influences in men's heart and that the language describing him in scripture is meant to be figurative, not literal. But we must accept scriptures at face value and not look for hidden meanings – let the scriptures speak for themselves (CP Eze 28:11-19). Here we learn the origin of Satan: he was created by God – an angelic being (CP V12-14 with Col 1:16-17). When God created Satan he was the model of perfection, full of wisdom. He was jewelled with every precious stone and was even piped to play music. God had appointed him guardian angel, *...the anointed cherub that covereth*. *Covereth* here means to hedge in, protect, and defend, fence in, cover over. Satan was perfect in his ways until his heart was corrupted by pride because of his beauty, and he then tried to usurp the throne of God (CP Eze 28:15-19 and Isa 14:12-15 with 1Ti 3:6).

In Isa 14:12 God calls Satan "Lucifer", which means "Son of the morning, the light bearer". Lucifer became Satan after he tried to usurp God's throne. The name Satan means adversary, enemy, opponent; one who resists, obstructs and hinders that which is good. Satan is the adversary or enemy of God, Christ and all mankind (CP Psa 109:6; Zech 3:1-2; Lu 13:16; 22:3-4, 31; Ac 10:38; 2Cor 4:3-4; 1Th 2:18; 2Ti 2:26; 1Pe 5:8). In Ac 10:38, 2Ti 2:26 and 1Pe 5:8 here Satan is also called the *devil*, which means "accuser, slanderer". The devil is a malicious enemy of God's people, looking for ways to overcome them with temptation, persecution and discouragement (CP 2Cor 2:10-11). The devil is called the accuser of the brethren. He accuses them before God day and night (CP Rev 12:10). Satan is also called *the God of this world* in 2Cor 4:3-4; he will do anything to prevent the gospel being heard. Satan has blinded men to God's truth through the evil world system he has created with its cares, and temptations and desires, both moral and physical. Paul is not referring to Satan in 2Cor 4:4 as a god in the sense he is a deity, but because he is the one who controls unbelievers, and is the one they serve, whether they know it or not (CP Jn 8:44; Ro 6:16; 1Jn 3:8).

Those who reject Satan as a real being, reject the Genesis account of man's fall from grace. They argue that it is allegorical, not literal (CP Gen 3:1-6). Those who reject Satan as a real being cannot accept as factual that a serpent actually spoke to Eve here and caused her to sin. Yet Paul the apostle, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, accepted it as factual (CP 2Cor 11:3). To reject the Genesis account of the fall is to reject the authority of scripture. Scriptures throughout teach that Satan is a real being-an angel, albeit a fallen one.

The Genesis account of the fall is not teaching as some think, that Satan was transformed into the serpent, although he is called a serpent – among other names –

elsewhere in scripture (CP Rev 12:9-15, 20:1-2). In Gen 3:1-6 Satan animated the serpent. We know it is so because God cursed him as well as the serpent for what happened (CP Gen 3:14-15). God is addressing two distinct and separate beings here. In V14 He addresses the serpent, cursing him to henceforth crawl on his belly in the dust, which indicates that prior to this the serpent moved about in an upright position. In V15 God cursed Satan, pronouncing enmity between his seed – the children of the devil – and the seed of the woman, Jesus. This predicated the perpetual hostility between the children of the devil and the children of God (CP Mt 10:34-38; Jn 15:18-19; Jas 4:4; 1Pe 4:12-19; 1Jn 2:15-17; 3:8-13; 4:1-6).

Satan provoked King David to take a census of Israel, which invoked God's wrath upon the nation, and resulted in the deaths of seventy thousand men (CP 1Chr 21:1-3, 7-8, 14). Satan moved God to test Job (CP Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7). We see here that far from being an abstract force, a mythological part of man's growing up, or simply the personification of evil influences in men's hearts, the absolute reality of Satan is indisputable. He has the power of speech and walks up and down in the earth going from place to place. He was able to inflict Job with boils all over his body and cause great calamities to befall him. We also learn in Job 1 and 2 that although he may be a fallen angel, Satan is at liberty to come and go in heaven as he pleases. Satan will not be utterly cast down from heaven to earth until midway through the tribulation prior to Christ's second coming (CP Rev 12:3-4, 7-17). We see here that Satan is also able to disgorge a great flood of water in an attempt to drown the woman depicted in V7-17 (CP Lu 10:17-18). Some bible scholars believe that Jesus is referring here to Satan being cast out of heaven in time past in fulfilment of the prophecies in Isa 14:12-14 and Eze 28:11-19. Others believe that Jesus is referring to the future event described in Rev 12 when Satan is cast down to earth from heaven during the tribulation. . It does not matter which view is correct – neither is fundamental to salvation.

After Jesus completed His forty days fast in the wilderness prior to commencing His earthly ministry, Satan tempted Him face to face. Satan physically took Jesus to Jerusalem and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, he also physically took Jesus up to a high mountain (CP Mt 4:1-11 also Mk 1:9-13 and Lu 4:1-13). It is clearly evident in scripture that Satan is a real being who, after he and antichrist, together with their armies, are defeated by Christ at the battle of Armageddon, will be chained and cast into the bottomless pit during Christ's millennial – one thousand years – reign on earth. At the end of the thousand years Satan will be loosed from the pit for a time in which he will lead nations hostile to God in the last great rebellion against God. Satan will again be defeated when God sends fire down from heaven to destroy his armies, and Satan will then be physically cast into the lake of fire to be tormented day and night forever (CP Rev 20:1-3, 7-10).

Apart from *Lucifer*, the only other proper name given to Satan in scripture is the *devil*. All the other names applied to him indicate his personality and character.

He is called the *fowler*, one who sets traps (CP Psa 91:1-3), the *tempter* (CP Mt 4:1-3 with Ac 5:31; 1Cor 7:5), *Beelzebub*, Lord of flies or Lord of dung (CP Mt 10:25; Mk 3:22; Lu 11:15), *wicked one* (CP Mt 13:19, 38; 1Jn 5:18), *enemy* (CP Mt 13:39), *murderer, liar, father of lies* (CP Jn 8:44), *thief* (CP Jn 10:10), *wolf* (CP Jn 10:12), *prince of this world*. Satan rules the hearts of worldly and wicked men (CP Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), *God of this world*. *World* here means *age*. Satan rules the thoughts and deeds of the men of this age. He has blinded them to God's truth through the evil world system he has created (CP 2Cor 4:3-4). *Belial*, referring to Satan in contrast to Christ, ungodly in contrast to Godly, light in contrast to darkness (CP 2Cor 6:15), *serpent* (CP 2Cor 11:3; Rev 12:9), *prince of the power of the air*. This refers to Satan as the ruler of the evil spirits who live and rule in earth's atmosphere (CP Eph 2:1-3), *roaring lion* (CP 1Pe 5:8-

9), *dragon, great dragon* (CP Rev 12:3-12; 13:1-4; 20:1-3), *accuser of the brethren*. Satan accuses Christians before God day and night (CP Rev 12:10).

It should be noted in closing here that while scriptures teach the absolute reality of Satan, they also teach that he is a defeated foe. He was defeated in Christ's life, death and resurrection (CP Col 2:15; He 2:14; 1Jn 3:8). Christians whose lives are ordered according to God's word, need have no fear of Satan (CP Eph 6:10-18; He 2:15; Jas 4:7). Satan must never be used by Christians as a scapegoat to deliver them from responsibility for their actions. We cannot blame the devil for what we do ourselves (CP Jn 8:34; Ro 6:16). Satan cannot dominate or oppress Christians without their consent - he can only tempt, not force. Jas 4:7 is very clear: Christians submitted to God can resist the devil and he will flee from them.