

Kingdom Focus

The Devil

The first mention of the devil in the Bible is in Genesis chapter 3 where he is called the serpent (which seems to be a description of his behavior rather than his appearance). We know that the serpent is the devil because Revelation 12:5 and 20:2 say so. He deceived Eve in a cunning way to doubt and then discard the integrity of God's Words. Hence the great fall happened which impacted both heaven and earth.

Why was the devil in Eden? The answer is supplied in Ezekiel chapter 28. He was in Eden before his corruption and was "the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty" (Ezekiel 28:12 New King James Version). He was the cherub anointed to cover or guard in Eden. Before iniquity was found in the cherub, he was beautiful

and wise, anointed to be the guardian in Eden. However, he was lifted up with pride, forsook his responsibility, and became the adversary of God and man.

After Adam and Eve ate of the

tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the devil was cursed by God. Nothing in the Scriptures indicates that he was cursed before this time.

Genesis 3:14 and 15

And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

The curse made the once perfect and beautiful one to be the lowest of all living beings. The condemnation of eating dust or dry dirt all of his days is his current reality, to be followed with the ultimate consequence—his complete annihilation. "He shall bruise your head" is referring to the Messiah who will destroy the devil in the end. "Thou shalt bruise his heel" is referring to the crucifixion. The former will be a

eternal reality; the latter was but for a moment. Jesus Christ was resurrected and lives on eternally.

Although today he is cursed, the devil has significant power which the Scriptures outline in part. That which is communicated in a somewhat cloudy way in the book of Job is stated precisely in Revelation 12. He is the accuser of the brethren. He accuses them before our God day and night. Though the details of his action as the accuser may be uncertain, his determination to steal, kill, and destroy is very clear.

He declared to Jesus the influence and extent of his power over the entire world when he showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time (Luke 4). He said, "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it." Jesus responded with God's Word and thereby withstood the temptations. However, he did not deny the devil's claim of power. The book of Revelation states, "Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." II Corinthians 4 tells us that he is the god of this age and that he blinds the minds of people so that they do not believe the glorious Gospel. He is referred to as the prince of the power of the air in Ephesians 2. Air surrounds and influences everyone. As a roaring lion, according to I Peter 5:8, he walks about seeking whom he may devour.

Sometime after his original transgression and before the flood in the time of Noah, which is recorded in Genesis 6, he

influenced 1/3 of the angels to do evil also. 1 Peter 3:19 and 20 tell us that spirits from Noah's day were imprisoned. One of the visions given to John reveals that the dragon, another name for the devil, influenced the third part of the stars of heaven.

Revelation 12:3 and 4

And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars [angels] of heaven, and did cast them to the earth....

In the same vision, we begin to understand what will happen to the devil and his cohorts in the future. Revelation 12:6 makes reference to "a thousand two hundred and threescore days," that is 3½ years. Revelation 12:14 refers to "a time, and times, and half a time," which is also 3½ years. That which is recorded between 12:6 and 12:14 is one of the events that happens during the last 3½ years before the return of Jesus Christ, commonly referred to as the end of the age. Note what happens to the devil.

Revelation 12:7-11

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and

his angels were cast out with him.

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

The 12th chapter of Revelation talks about two separate "casting outs." That which we noted in verse 4 is when the devil influenced the third of the stars of heaven "and did cast them to the earth." This event happened long ago. What we just read in verses 7-11 is the second casting out, but this time Michael and the angels cast the devil and his angels out for good. During the last 3½ years, tremendous destruction of cataclysmic proportions will take place on the earth. The casting out of the devil explains in part the reason why.

Revelation 12:12

Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Once the 3½ years expire, Jesus Christ will return to the earth and lock the devil in chains for one thousand years.

Revelation 20:1-3

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

After the 1,000 years, the devil will be loosed one more time for a short season, during which time he will again deceive the nations. He will rally them against the saints and the beloved city. However, the fire of God will devour them. Then the devil will be utterly destroyed forever.

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Revelation 20:10

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

The overall scope of the Scriptures do not indicate that there will be an eternal hell where the devil and the evil ones will have eternal life and torment¹. The way to understand the phrase "shall be tormented

day and night for ever and ever" is that the effects of the final judgment will be forever and ever. Consider Jude:

Jude 7

Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Sodom and Gomorrha were completely destroyed by fire, so much so that their exact location is still not known. The effects of their judgement was "the vengeance of eternal fire." Fire's impact causes total annihilation; such is the destiny of the devil. "Eternal fire" can be accurately translated as ages fire or fire in the age to come. The effects of the lake of fire, not the lake itself,

will last forever. Therefore the devil's destruction will be complete and last forever. His destruction is a part of our hope.

Our responsibility until that glorious day is to stand fast in the Lord.

Ephesians 6:10-13

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to

withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

We are not to combat the devil on our own with our limited human abilities. Jesus Christ has already withstood and triumphed over him. Our responsibility is to stand fast in the Lord. We do this by studying, thinking, and doing the Word of God. We do this by being totally dependent upon our God, which is evidenced by our prayer life. The Lord said, pray: "Give us this day our daily bread...lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Jesus Christ is our Lord so we obey his commands which is how we stand fast in the Lord. We also keep our eyes steadfast on the glorious hope of his coming kingdom when all evil will be destroyed and we will live on forever.

1 A lot of what is commonly believed in the church regarding hell is from the influence of the Greek philosopher Plato rather than the Scriptures. The Hebrew word *sheol* and the Greek word *hades* are both translated "hell" in the Old and New Testament respectively. However they should have been translated "grave," not "hell."

In the Mosaic Law God told Israel not to burn their children in fire as an offering to the false god Molech (Leviticus 18:21; 20:1-5; Deuteronomy 18:9 and 10). Apparently this was a common practice among the pagans. Many years later Ahaz, the king of Judah, disregarded this command and burned his children in the fire as a sacrifice to Molech (II Kings 16:3; II Chronicles 28:3). Because he was the king, he influenced others in his reign to do the same. The place these atrocities were carried out was the valley of the son of Hinnom. Jeremiah talks of these things in Jeremiah 7:29-34. He prophesied that this evil place will someday be called the valley of slaughters. Read Jeremiah 19 for more clarity.

The valley's reputation for extreme wickedness gave rise to the employment of its name as a term for the eschatological (end times) place for punishment of the wicked, a designation confirmed by Christ himself in Matthew 5:22; 10:28; 13:42, 50; 18:9; 23:15, 33; and 25:41. "Gehenna," the Greek contraction of "Hinnom," is the word Christ used regarding future punishment.