

What Do the Scriptures Really Teach About Satan?

They explain what he does and what he is capable of. But while there are some hints to his abilities, the Word of God does not always clarify how he operates and what motivates him.

The Origins of Satan

Gen. 1-2: He is a created being. He is not the creator of anything.

Gen. 6:4-1: The story of the Nephilim. The Bible does not make it clear if there is a connection between them and Satan.

Luke 10:18: Jesus saw Satan falling like lightning from heaven.

Colossians 1:17-16: He is part of creation. He has not existed forever. He is not eternal.

Jude 6:2; 2 Peter 2:4: The fallen angels, likely referring to these demons, did not keep their proper position but abandoned their dwelling place willingly. God has kept them in everlasting chains and in darkness for judgment.

The Hierarchy Within Which Satan Operates

Dan. 10:13, 20 - The explanations about the prince of Persia, who opposed the angel Gabriel for 21 days, and the prince of Greece, depict a certain hierarchy.

Matt. 12:24 - The demons are subject to the authority of Beelzebul, the ruler of demons.

Col. 2:15-14 - Jesus disarmed the evil powers and authorities, triumphing over them. How did He accomplish that? He did so on the cross, when He cancelled the debt certificate that Satan held against us, which provided him a legal claim and right to bring accusations against us and slander us, even in the ears of God.

These verses clarify that Satan does not act alone. There are authorities and powers, a kind of hierarchy.

[They also teach that the event that symbolizes the weakest point in God's story, which seemingly was orchestrated by Satan and his servants - namely the termination of the Son of God, was in fact the end of Satan instead. One can imagine how Satan and his servants rejoined during those moments of the crucifixion. Their hearts swelled in joy - which only lead to their defeat.]

Eph. 6:12 - Paul speaks about this hierarchy, indicating that it includes authorities and powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places.

Satan's Characteristics and Deeds

Gen. 3:1 - He is more cunning than the other creatures created (referring to the serpent in the garden).

2 Sam. 24:1 - He tempts David to conduct a census, which comes at a high cost to the people. David relies on his military strength rather than on God.

Job 1 - The story of Job demonstrates that Satan cannot predict the future. Overall, this story proves that his abilities are limited to what God allows him to do. He cannot exceed these limits. He needs permission to inflict harm on Job. While he has the ability to cause harm, even to those who believe in God, he still requires permission for such actions.

Job 1:7 – This verse implies that he can roam the earth in a way different from other created beings, but it only proves that unlike God, he is not omnipresent.

Job 1:16, 19 - He can bring fire from the sky and summon wind from the desert. In other words, he has some control over natural forces and can perform demonstrations of power that affect humans. However, all this happens only after he receives permission from God. In my opinion, this does not mean he controls them at will but in a limited capacity.

Job 2:8 - He can inflict diseases, at least skin diseases.

Job 2:1; Zec. 3:1-2 - He stands and accuses, but he is subject to the decisions of God.

Matt. 4:1 - Satan believes in his ability to tempt the Son of God. Pride distorts his perception of reality, blinds his eyes, and demonstrates that, unlike God, he does not know everything. He doesn't know how Jesus will respond, proving that he lacks knowledge of the future.

Luke 22:31 - He can demand to sift believers, but even this happens within the limits set by God.

Jn. 8:44 - His nature: a murderer, no truth in him, he does not stand in truth, always speaks lies because he is a liar and the father of lies.

Jn. 10:10 - He steals, kills, and destroys.

Jn. 13:27 - He can enter into humans.

2 Cor. 11:14 - He can disguise himself as an angel of light.

2 Cor. 12:7 - The thorn in the flesh of Paul is the messenger of Satan. But, in essence, it is only a tool in the hands of God. God uses it, contrary to Paul's will and request, to prevent him from boasting and exalting himself.

1 Peter 5:8-9 - He prowls like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Rev. 2:10 - He can cause people to be thrown into prison. In other words, he can influence legal actions.

Satan's Authority in Our Lives and Our Authority Over Him

Luke 10:19 - Jesus gave us the authority to trample and overcome all the power of the enemy (Gen. 3:15; Rom. 16:20).

2 Cor. 2:11 - Unforgiveness exposes us to the schemes of Satan and gives his agents legal authority in our lives (Matt. 18:34).

1 Tim. 3:6 - Those aspiring to leadership roles should beware of pride, or else they may fall into the same judgment as Satan, who fell due to the snare of pride (Matt. 23:12).

James 4:7 - We can resist him, and he will flee from us.

The End of Satan

Matt. 25:41 - Eternal fire is prepared for him and his angels.

Rev. 12:7-10 - War will break out in heaven. Michael and his angels will fight against him and the fallen angels, they will not prevail, and he will be cast out of heaven.

Rev. 20:2-3 - He will be bound for a thousand years and cast into the abyss.

Rev. 20:7 - After a thousand years, he will be released from his prison and will deceive the nations throughout the world, initiating the war of Gog and Magog. The war will end when fire comes down from heaven and consumes them. Satan will then be cast into a lake of fire and brimstone, where he will be tormented day and night forever.

Satan's Names in Scriptures

Matt. 12:24 - Beelzebul (or Beelzebub, depending on the translation), the ruler of demons.

Jn. 12:31 - The ruler of this world.

Jn. 8:44 - Murderer, liar, and the father of lies.

1 Peter 5:8 - Adversary.

1 Jn. 3:8 - Sinner from the beginning.

Rev. 12:9 - Dragon, ancient serpent, the Devil.

Rev. 20:10 - Deceiver.

Jn. 12:31 - The Accuser, the adversary of the brothers.

What Does Scripture Not Explicitly Teach Concerning Satan, But Can Be Deduced From Them?

It is discernible that his opposition took place prior to the fall of man in Genesis 3. However, neither a precise description of that event nor the precise point in time of his personal rebellion (and

motivation) is ever made explicit. Rather, we are, as it were, dropped into an already mature and maturing plotline.

The Prevalent Perception Concerning Satan

The prevalent perception is that Satan envied the supremacy of God, his heart was filled with pride, and he rebelled against Him. He was then cast out of heaven and lost his place as one of the beings closest to God. As an act of vengeance, and driven by unsatisfied desires for glory, he sows chaos and confusion, disrupting the world that God created and acting against His children. This perception is based on verses originally written in the context of prophecies of doom against Israel's enemies, such as Tyre and Babylon (Is. 14; Ez. 28).

It does not explain precisely how and where Satan operates. Is he in hell? Under the earth? Perhaps in heaven (Job 1:7)? Does he dwell only in the spiritual realm? Or does he walk upon the earth?

Paradise Lost

"Paradise Lost" is a poem written by the 17th-century English poet John Milton. The poem focuses on the story of the fall of man, the temptation of Eve, and the expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

Milton wrote "Paradise Lost" to "justify the ways of God to men" and to reconcile the apparent contradiction between God's sovereignty and human free will.

Satan is the protagonist of "Paradise Lost". The information about Satan in the Bible (both the Old and New Testaments) was not sufficient for Milton, and he turned to additional sources: Paganism and classical Greek works. The story begins in medias res, after Lucifer and the rebellious angels have been defeated and cast into hell.