



Who Is Satan?

“Pride goes before destruction and haughtiness before a fall.” (Proverbs 16:18, NIV)

Who is Satan? He is not a guy in a red suit running around with a pitchfork! He is not just a principle or an evil force. He is not all-powerful or ever present. He is not your friend. So who is he? He is a spirit being who has a real personality with a mind, will and emotions. Created by God, he was an immortal (lives forever) spirit being of the order of angels called the cherubim. In fact, he was one of the highest of all angelic beings, created to praise and worship God! Clothed in precious stones, full of wisdom and beauty, he had a special place of prominence guarding the throne of God.¹ (Ezekiel 28:12-15) Can you imagine having such a position?

The sin of pride

So what happened that caused Satan to lose his position and become God’s enemy? All that splendor and privilege “went to his head.” His heart became filled with pride (a conceited sense of one’s superiority). He became dissatisfied, unhappy and jealous. Have you sometimes experienced feelings like that toward a sibling or friend? Such thinking will get you into trouble. Look what it did to God’s highest angelic being. The Bible says that one day Satan said, “I will” in his heart five times: *“I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars [angels] of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly; and I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”* (Isaiah 14:13-14, NIV)

The rebellion

Satan wanted to be God, to be worshipped, and to rule God’s kingdom! Such thoughts led him and other angels to rebel and sin against God. Angels who have sinned cannot live in the presence of a perfect God. Judgment and punishment came quickly. God cast Satan and all the other rebellious angels out of heaven. (Ezekiel 28:16-19) According to Revelation 12:4, one third of the angels chose to rebel against God and to follow Satan. These became the evil unclean spirits, demons or fallen angels. Today, Satan has his own invisible kingdom, an evil kingdom of darkness. Not only is he God’s enemy but the enemy of the whole human race. He is your worst enemy. He hates you! His purpose is to steal, kill and destroy you. (John 10:10)

The sentence

When an angel sins, there is no Savior, no forgiveness and no redemption (deliverance by Christ's death on the cross). When Satan and the other angels rebelled against God, they sealed their doom. God prepared a lake of fire called hell for them. (Matthew 25:41, NLT) Satan and his demons have been judged and sentenced. The day will come when he and his entire kingdom will reside in hell, along with those who refuse to believe in Jesus Christ – separated from God forever!

God's plan

None of this took God by surprise. Before he created Satan, God knew he and some of the angels would rebel. Before he created the world, he knew Satan would tempt Adam and Eve and cause them to sin. He already had a plan! (Acts 2:23) Willingly, his Son Jesus would come to earth as a human being on a rescue mission to destroy Satan's legal rule over the earth and to buy back the captives. The Bible says: "*For he [Jesus] has rescued us from the one who rules in the kingdom of darkness [Satan], and he has brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son. God has purchased our freedom with his blood and has forgiven our sins.*" (Colossians 1:13-14, NLT) Would you stop now and thank the Lord for rescuing you from Satan's kingdom of darkness?

The deceiver's plan

Why do you need to know about Satan? He is clever! He may have lost you from his kingdom, but he will keep barking orders at you, making you think he is still your master. Peter warns, "*Be careful! Watch out for attacks from the Devil, your great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour.*" (1 Peter 5:8, NIV) Do you often feel too busy, too tired to read your Bible and pray? Do you become angry and resentful when your parents ask you to do something? Are you tempted to lie when telling the truth will get you into trouble? Are you addicted to alcohol or drugs? These are enemy attacks! He tempts you through the desires of your self-nature and the pleasures of this world. The good news is that you do not have to listen and obey Satan any more! Resist him and stand firm. The Bible says, "*The [Holy] Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.*" (1 John 4:4, NLT) He is your power source to help you resist and flee. You can't, but he can.

Why does God allow Satan and his demons to tempt believers? (Temptation is not a sin.) How can you know if a tree is strong if there are never any hurricane winds? How can you learn to overcome sin if you never have any temptations to overcome? You are in training to learn to triumph over sin through the power of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes when a sin has become a habit, you may need to call for help from other believers. It may take time to be free. Through prayer and encouragement you can learn to resist and watch the enemy flee. Although you want to know the strategy and schemes of Satan and his demons, don't focus on him. Focus on Jesus and his awesome power! Become familiar with the weapons God has provided for your daily victory. (Ephesians 6:10-20) You have everything you need because Jesus lives in you!

Today, many people, including some who say they are Christians, do not believe that Satan exists. Jesus spoke of Satan as a real personality. This former angelic being knows his time is short. Rejoice! You are on the winner's side!

Attitude Check:

- What attitude should you have that is opposite Satan's attitude?

Explore:

- Ask God to search your heart for any pride or rebellion. Agree with him this is sin, receive his forgiveness and ask him to change your thinking.
- Read Luke 22:31-32. Who gave Satan permission to tempt Peter? What did Jesus pray for Peter? What did Jesus want Peter to do after he repented and turned back to Jesus? Why do you think Jesus allowed Peter to be tempted? How does this assure you of God's watchful care and protection? Write what you learn about Jesus in your journal.
- Read, "Who Is the Devil?" (In the front of *Student New Testament*)

Talking with God:

- Father, May the humility of Jesus be my attitude today.

¹ Although these verses are a pronouncement of judgment on the king of Tyre, it seems that with the superhuman description, it apparently describes more than a human ruler (Satan). Both the king and Satan committed the sin of pride.