

Our Enemy Satan

1) *Who is Satan?*

A) Satan is a fallen angel (see Job 1:6; 2 Corinthians 11:14).

B) Satan is the leader of all fallen angels (called demons). Jesus identified Satan with Beelzebub, the prince of demons in Luke 11:14–23. Jesus went on to say that Satan has a kingdom, implying that he guides and directs demonic activity.

C) Satan is the enemy of God and all believers. Everything we are told about Satan in Scripture shows that he has opposed God since the beginning of the world and will continue to do so until the return of Jesus Christ.

2) *How did Satan fall?*

A) All who take the Bible seriously agree that Satan is evil, but not all agree on whether or not the Bible gives us a record of his fall into wickedness. Two major passages of Scripture are understood as describing Satan's original holy condition and his subsequent fall into sin: Ezekiel 28:11–19 and Isaiah 14:12–19. Although it is commonly believe that Satan is being described in these passages, you should know that many disagree (you shouldn't be dogmatic on the issue).

B) Ezekiel 28:11–29 describes Satan's original holiness, beauty and perfection. In fact, Satan's beauty is singled out as the reason for his pride and fall into evil. In this passage, the Prince of Tyre acts as a type of Satan.¹

C) Isaiah 14:12–19 describes Satan's pride and desire to exalt himself above God. (Note that in verse 12, the KJV translated the Hebrew word meaning "star of the morning" as "Lucifer," and this led to Lucifer being used as a name for Satan.) In this passage, the king of Babylon acts as a type of Satan.

D) Scripture tells us that Satan was able to convince one-third of the angels to join in his rebellion (Revelation 12:4). God cast Satan and the angels who followed him from heaven (Luke 10:18).

3) *What are some common myths about Satan?*

¹ A "type" is a person, place or thing which is used to represent something else. For example, the veil in the Temple was said to be a type of Christ—when it was torn in two, it symbolized the death of Christ on the cross (cf. Heb 10:19–20).

A) Myth—Satan doesn't really exist.

(1) The Bible is comprehensive in its teaching about the reality of Satan. His existence is taught from Genesis to Revelation. Seven Old Testament books teach his existence (Genesis, 1 Chronicles, Job, Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah) and every New Testament writer refers to his reality and activity as a personal being. More importantly, Christ affirmed the fact of Satan's existence (Luke 10:18; 11:14–23).

B) Myth—Satan lives in Hell.

(1) Popular culture would have us believe that Satan lives in Hell, and that he and his demons torture people who go there. Nothing could be further from the truth. Hell is actually a place of fearful torment that God prepared for Satan and the demons (Matthew 25:41; Jude 1:6–7). Right now, Satan and his demons roam the earth, eagerly trying to lead people away from God (1 Peter 5:8). They greatly fear hell and do not want to go there before their time (cf. Matthew 8:29; James 2:19).

C) Myth—Satan has a tail, two horns and carries a pitchfork.

(1) Images of Satan as a mischievous little devil serve only to conceal his true purpose of leading people to their eternal destruction. As we have seen, Satan is a spirit and can manifest himself in many ways. 2 Corinthians 11:14 tells us that Satan likes to disguise himself as an angel of light.

D) Myth—Satan is God's equal.

(1) Satan is a created being with finite power. God is an uncreated being with infinite power. Thus Satan is no more the equal of God than we are. Satan is stronger and smarter than human beings but he is no match for God.

4) What are some of Satan's names?

A) Satan's names are descriptive of his character and his opposition to God. Here are some of the many names used in Scripture to refer to Satan:

(1) Satan. This is the most common name. In Hebrew the word for Satan means “adversary.” It highlights his role as the opponent of God, of believers, and all that is right and good.

(2) The Devil. Devil is the second most common name for Satan. The name “devil” comes from the Greek word diabolos which means “slanderer, defamer.” This emphasizes his goal to malign both us and God.

(3) The Serpent. In Satan’s temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, he used a serpent (Genesis 3:1–6). The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians that Eve’s downfall resulted from the serpent’s craftiness (2 Corinthians 11:3). The name “serpent” describes his subtlety and beguiling nature.

(4) The Tempter. The apostle Paul referred to Satan as “the tempter” (1 Thessalonians 3:5). This name highlights the fact that he is always trying to entice us into sin.

(5) The Dragon. John saw Satan as a red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, who with the demons were arrayed against the Lord and His people (Revelation 12:3–4, 7, 9, 13, 16–17).

(6) The Evil One. In calling Satan “the evil one,” Jesus and John both depicted him as totally corrupt and carrying on an evil work (John 17:15; 1 John 5:18–19).

5) What is Satan doing?

A) Satan is very active in the world today. He is constantly opposing God and working in the lives of both sinners and Christians.

(1) His work in the lives of sinners involves:

1. Blinding them to the truth (2 Corinthians 4:4).
2. Influencing the way they live (Ephesians 2:2).
3. Keeping them in his domain of darkness (Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13).
4. Holding them captive and enslaved to his will (2 Timothy 2:26; Romans 6:17).
5. Provoking them to sin (1 John 3:8–12).
6. Causing his demons to oppress and possess some of them (Mark 9:25–26).

(2) His work in the lives of Christians involves:

1. Tempting us to sin (Matthew 4:1; 1 Corinthians 7:5).

2. Lying and deceiving us whenever possible (John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:3).
3. Placing snares and traps in our way (1 Timothy 3:7; 6:9).
4. Exploiting us (2 Corinthians 2:11).
5. Persecuting us (Revelation 2:10).
6. Accusing us before God (Revelation 12:10; Job 1).
7. Resisting our efforts to serve and obey God (1 Thessalonians 2:18).

B) Satan is a finite being and cannot be everywhere at once like God can. He is assisted in his evil schemes by his demons—fallen angels who followed him in his rebellion against God (Revelation 12:4; Matthew 10:1). While Satan does personally tempt certain individuals (e.g. Christ, Job, Peter, Judas, etc.), it is reasonable to believe that we are most often tempted by his demons.

6) What is Satan's final destiny?

A) The book of Revelation reveals that one day Satan and his demons will be completely defeated, “thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur,” and “tormented day and night forever and ever” (Revelation 20:10).

7) Can Satan put thoughts into our minds?

A) Although there is no direct statement in Scripture concerning this question, there are several different passages that suggest that he can. Consider the following verses:

(1) “From that time on Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and experts in the law, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. So Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him: ‘God forbid, Lord! This must not happen to you!’ But he turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, because you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but on man’s’” (Matthew 16:21–23, NET). This implies that Satan was the influence behind Peter’s thoughts.

(2) “When anyone hears the word about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches what was sown in his heart; this is the seed sown along the path” (Matthew 13:19, NET). How can Satan snatch something away from a person’s heart unless he is able to perceive their thoughts and put doubt in their mind?

(3) “The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, that he should betray Jesus” (John 13:2, NET). This implies that Satan put the thought of betraying Christ into Judas’ mind.

(4) “But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back for yourself part of the proceeds from the sale of the land?’” (Acts 5:3, NET). Here we see that Satan filled Ananias’ heart with greed and successfully tempted him to lie.

(5) “We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5, NASB). Why would we be commanded to take every thought captive if we had complete control of what thoughts came into our minds?

B) Many Christians have testified to the fact that Satan is able to put thoughts into their minds. Consider what Martin Luther once wrote: “The Devil throws hideous thoughts into the soul—hatred of God, blasphemy, and despair. When I awake at night, the Devil tarries not to seek me out. He disputes with me and makes me give birth to all kinds of strange thoughts.”²

C) Based on the Scriptures above and the personal experience of many people, I believe Satan and his demons can perceive what we are thinking and introduce thoughts into our minds. That’s why it’s so important to exercise control over our thought-life.

² Neil T. Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker*, p. 64.