



Conducted by
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"How did Satan come about and what is his end?"

Satan is a created being. If he were not then he would be God and this, of course, is absurd. I like this question because early last year in Motherwell I undertook a special study of Satan and we attempted to examine every passage in the Old and New Testament Scriptures where he is mentioned. These references helped us to understand him better, which is no bad thing.

God created Satan, but, I hasten to add, not as Satan. Personally, I see him as a fallen angel or even an archangel, who had rebelled against God in heaven and was, therefore, driven out. The Scriptures are clear on this matter. **"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon: and the dragon fought 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, who deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him . . . for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night"** (Revelation 12:7-10). Thus is an important passage in many respects. I like the fact that, for one thing, many of his titles are quoted therein.

ANGELS

Angels are created beings. Jesus Himself was involved in their creation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16). The latter passage in the Authorised Version speaks of **"thrones or dominions or principalities or powers"** and I agree with some commentators that these terms have reference to different grades of angels known to the Jews as archangels, angels, seraphim and cherubim. But when were they, including Satan before he rebelled, created? John C. Whitcomb Jr in his book *The Early Earth* has written: **"The third heaven was populated with hundreds of millions of angelic beings (Daniel 7:10), each one a 'son of God' in the sense of a direct creation by God (cf. Job 1:6) and therefore perfect in all their ways (Exekiel 28:15). They must have been created at the very beginning of the first of creation for Job 38:6,7 tells of their singing and of their shout of joy at the creation of the earth. That they did not exist before the first day is indicated by Colossians 1:16 (which tells us that Christ created all *invisible* as well as visible thrones, dominions, principalities and powers in the heavens as well as upon the earth) in the light of Exodus 20:11 (*in six days* Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea and *all that in them is*)."**

PRIDE

What got into Satan in leading the rebellion in heaven? I think Paul in his first epistle to Timothy gives us the answer. We read in his comments on the qualifications of an elder: **"He ought not to be a new convert, for fear he should be blinded with pride and come under the same condemnation as the devil"** (3:6, Weymouth). Pride - that is what led to his downfall. No wonder it is often said: "Pride comes before a fall". C.S. Lewis once described Pride as "The Great Sin". He also pointed out that "pride always means enmity - it is enmity". I think this great thinker was right on both counts.

The trouble is that he led other angels to destruction. Another important passage on our theme is 2 Peter 2:4: **"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment . . ."** "Cast down to hell" is the Greek verb *tartaroo*, which signifies to consign to Tartarus. Tartarus is where all the fallen angles, excluding Satan, are right now. These, I believe, are the demons, which are so frequently mentioned in the gospel records, where they are also described as "evil spirits". Satan is not in Tartarus. In Job 2 we read: **"And the Lord said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?' Satan answered the Lord, 'From roaming through the earth and going to and fro in it'"** (2).

SATAN - A PERSONALITY

In dealing with Satan, we are not dealing with an evil force, but an evil personality. He is real. He can think and speak and act. He is a cunning foe and Christians should never underestimate him. He is associated with lies, deception, temptation, etc. John said that **"the devil sinned from the beginning"** (1 John 3:8) and Jesus once remarked that **"he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in truth, because there is no truth in him . . . for he is a liar and the father of it"** (John 8:44). The bottom line is that Satan is always hostile to God and to God's people.

Daniel Defoe once wrote a book entitled *"The History of the Devil"*. I once tried to study it in the Mitchell Library in Glasgow, but the librarians could not find it. In any event, Defoe wrote a more famous work entitled *"Robinson Crusoe"*, which I have in my own library. In it, there is a famous discussion between Crusoe and Friday. We read: **"Well", says Friday, 'but you say God is so strong, so great; is he not much strong, much might as the devil?' 'Yes, yes,' says I, 'Friday, God is stronger than the devil: God is above the devil, and therefore we pray to God to tread him down under our feet, and enable us to resist his temptation and quench his fiery darts'. 'But,' says he again, 'if God much stronger, much might as the wicked devil, why God no kill the devil, so make him no more do wicked?' I was greatly surprised at this question . . ."**

A lot of people wish things were different. But the reality is that Satan is a reality and his wicked influence is seen and felt everywhere. I have got simply to accept things as they are. When I was born into this world he was already here doing his darksome deeds through sinful mankind. Like me he is a product of creation. He was created good, but he became bad through his own volition. There is a war on an it is good versus evil, light versus darkness, God versus Satan. All of us are involved whether we like it or not.

SATAN'S END

Crusoe eventually pointed out: **"God will at last punish him severely; he is reserved for the judgement"**. How true! Satan's days are numbered. Christ's victory is assured. Jesus said during His ministry: **"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angles . . ."** (Matthew 25:41). John wrote: **"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophets are,**

and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Revelation 20:10). Friday wondered about the possibility of Satan repenting. It is not going to happen! That's the end of it.

But could a rebellion ever take place again in heaven after the judgement and when all the righteous have been received into glory? The answer, in short, is No. Speaking of the eternal city, John declared: **"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defiles, neither whatsoever works abomination, or makes a lie: but they who are written in the Lamb's book of life"** (Revelation 20:27). His word is good enough for me.

THE SAINTS AND THE DEVIL

Why did Jesus come into the world? I complete 1 John 3:8: **"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil"**. V-Day is still to take place, but D-Day has already happened through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Satan's end is now just a matter of time. All saints, therefore, should remain strong in their work of faith, labour of love and patience of hope in the Lord Christ Jesus. As Peter put it: **"Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may desire: whom resist steadfast in the faith . . ."** (I Peter 2:8,9).