

SATANOLOGY - THE DOCTRINE OF SATAN

In our present age, there is no lack of an interest in Satan, Satanism or satanic things, but there is a major lack in biblical knowledge about Satan. As with most other areas of doctrine, typically the source that is most neglected for information is the only one that can give true information- the Bible. When it comes to Satan, there has been such a vast departure from the Scriptures that not only is there a total distortion as to what he is actually like and what he actually does, but there are those, in the sphere of theological study, who think his existence is nothing more than a fairytale.

For example, Marcea Eliade, of the University of Chicago's Divinity School, who is considered to be a quality historian of religion, says: "The figure of Satan probably developed under the influence of Iranian dualism." George MacRae, a biblical scholar from Harvard Divinity School, says: "The Old Testament simply does not contain a personal Devil who is the principle of evil and God's adversary." Peter Williams, a professor of American religious history at Miami University in Ohio, says: The concept of the Devil "is a way of focusing anxiety about a diffuse threat. It's something you can get hold of that explains everything" (Kenneth L. Woodward & David Gates, *Giving the Devil his Due*, Newsweek Magazine, August 30, 1982, pp. 72-74).

With these kinds of views being postulated by supposed theologians and religious instructors, it is no wonder that most people base their view of Satan on Hollywood movies or horror stories written about religious cults.

Satan loves nothing more than to keep people in ignorance of what the Bible actually says about him. There is nothing he enjoys more than having people believe pseudo-theories and philosophies about him or to deny him. Satan knows that the more people know about the Bible, the more they are able to spot him and his work and through God's enabling power they are able to defeat him. That is why he desires to keep people in ignorance of **the only source that presents the truth about him- The Bible**. Just as angels are a reality, so Satan is a reality and, as Dr. Charles Ryrie said, "If one accepts the Scriptures as revelation from God...then the reality of Satan cannot be denied" (*Basic Theology*, p. 137).

Contrary to the distorted beliefs of some, the Bible is filled with many references to Satan in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the Old Testament, such books as Genesis, I Chronicles, Job, Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah teach much concerning Satan's existence and work. In the New Testament, every writer has something to say about Satan's existence and work. In fact, Dr. Chafer observed, "This mighty angel appears in the Bible with prominence, importance, and power second only to the Godhead Three" (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2, p. 33). Dr. Chafer goes on to say, "If the text of Scriptures is observed, it will be found that this greatest of foes is held before the Christian's contemplation next only to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" (*Ibid.*, p. 36).

Any person who has a desire for spiritual maturity and power will have a desire to know precisely what the Bible says regarding "the" central enemy of God, who is "...like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (I Peter 5:8).

SATANOLOGY (2)

QUESTION #1 – Who or what is Satan?

Satan is a high ranking angelic person. When we carefully read Matthew 4:5-10, we may observe the personal pronouns used for Satan. They are the pronouns “he,” “him” and not “it.”

We may establish that Satan is a person because he has all the qualities of a person:

Quality #1 - Satan has an intellect . II Corinthians 11:3

Quality #2 - Satan has emotions . Revelation 12:17

Quality #3 - Satan has a will . Luke 22:31; II Timothy 2:26

Quality #4 - Satan has self-expression . Isaiah 14:13-14

Quality #5 - Satan has perpetuity . Revelation 20:10- a forever existence

We may establish that Satan is an angel because the Bible classifies him as an angel:

Biblical Fact #1 - Direct statements of Scripture declare him to be an angel. Ezekiel 28:14
He is called the “anointed cherub” and the cherub are a class of angels

Biblical Fact #2 - He has angelic accessibility into God’s presence in heaven-

Job 1:6-7- He is present when angels present themselves before God

Revelation 12:7-9- Satan has access to heaven, which is an angelic
Prerogative

Biblical Fact #3 - He is able to maneuver to places as an angel. Matthew 4:5

In realizing that Satan is an angelic person, we must realize he is real, he is unseen (from a human standpoint) and he is powerful. Angels do have superhuman traits and qualities. But it is critical that we always remember that **Satan is finite and he is always subject to God’s supreme sovereignty. We are told in Scripture to “fear God,” not Satan.**

QUESTION #2 – Why study the doctrine of Satan?

We can say, with dogmatic certainty, that Satan does not want us knowing this doctrine, because he never wants anyone to know God’s truth.

Now before we actually answer this question, a couple of cautionary points are in order:

- 1) We must be careful in this study or any study to make sure that we never give God’s adversary attention and honor that only belong to God.
- 2) We must be careful to never allow some unhealthy curiosity to lead us to certain literature or data or practices that can open us up to his deceptive tactics.

Having said this there are at least five reasons why we study Satanology: