

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT THE DEVIL

Introduction

- A. Text: **1 Pt. 5:8**.
- B. The devil is a subject of endless curiosity and speculation.
- C. It is dangerous to not know enough about the devil to defend ourselves against him - **1 Pt. 5:8**.
- D. But it is also dangerous — in our curiosity — to push beyond what can be learned about the devil from the Scriptures.
- E. From the Scriptures, then, what can we know about the devil?

I. WHO HE IS

- A. One dictionary rightly defines the devil as “the major spirit of evil, ruler of Hell, and foe of God” (AHD).
- B. We generally use the term devil to mean *the supreme ruler of evil spiritual powers*. Cf. **Mt. 25:41**.

II. WHERE HE CAME FROM

- A. If the devil were co-eternal with God, then good and evil would simply be two equal powers. Most people would reject this possibility.
- B. Yet if the devil is *not eternal*, he must have been *created*. Cf. **Rom. 8:38,39**; **Col. 1:15-17**.
- C. And if the devil was created, he must have been created *good* and rebelled against God at some point prior to **Gen. 3:1**. Cf. **2 Pt. 2:4**; **Jd. 6**.
- D. His intelligence and power seem to argue that, before his fall, Satan must have been one of the highest, if not the highest, of the spiritual beings ever created by God.
 - 1. His potential for evil indicates that he had immense powers for good before he perverted them.
 - 2. Was it pride that moved him to rebel? Cf. **1 Tim. 3:6**.
- E. Evidently, when Satan turned against God other spiritual beings went with him — these evil powers (demons, evil spirits, wicked angels, etc.) are now allied with the devil - **Mt. 25:41**. Cf. **Eph. 6:12**.

III. HOW HE IS DESCRIBED

- A. “Devil” comes from the Greek *diabolos* = “slanderer.” *Diaballein* = to slander. *Dia* (across) + *ballein* (to throw).
- B. He is called “Satan.”
 - 1. Hb. *satan* = an adversary; an accuser, slanderer (used generically in **Psa. 109:6**) - **Job 1,2**. Cf. **Zech. 3:1,2**.
 - 2. Satan is represented as the ultimate one who slanders and reproaches.
 - a. God to man - **Gen. 3:1-6**.
 - b. Man to God - **Rev. 12:10**.
 - 3. He also is involved in the stirring up of reproach against the people of God by their enemies. Cf. **1 Tim. 5:14**.

- C. The devil is called our “adversary” (**1 Pt. 5:8**).
- D. The Bible contains other descriptions of the devil. (It is doubtful if “Lucifer” in **Isa. 14:12** is a reference to the devil — it more likely refers figuratively to the king of Babylon.)
1. He is called “Beelzebub (Beelzebul),” a Hb. term (lit., “lord of the flies,” cf. **2 Kgs. 1:2-18**) referring to the “ruler of the demons” (**Mt. 12:24-28**). Cf. **Mt. 9:34; 10:25**.
 2. He is called the “wicked one” (**1 Jn. 5:18,19**), the “evil one” (**Jn. 17:15**).
 3. He is called the “prince of the power of the air” (**Eph. 2:2**).
 4. He is called the “ruler (prince) of this world” (**Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11**). Cf. **Lk. 4:6; 1 Jn. 5:19**.
 5. He is called the “god of this age (world)” (**2 Cor. 4:4**).
 6. He is called the “great dragon . . . that serpent of old” (**Rev. 12:9,10**).
 7. He is called the “tempter” (**1 Thess. 3:5**). Cf. **Mt. 4:3**.

IV. WHAT HIS CHARACTER IS

- A. Central to the devil’s character is *malice* — his intent is to destroy - **1 Pt. 5:8**.
- B. Also central to his character is *deceit* — he pursues his malicious intent by means of the lie - **Jn. 8:44**. Cf. **2 Cor. 11:3,13-15**.
- C. Coupled together, these qualities of maliciousness and deceit make the devil the terrible adversary that he is — malignant, treacherous slander is what gives him his name - **Rev. 12:9,10**.
- D. In a few places, *diabolos* is used in reference to a human being:
1. The Lord referred to Judas Iscariot as a “devil” (**Jn. 6:70**).
 2. And Paul said that deacons’ wives must not be “slanderers (false accusers)” (**1 Tim. 3:11**). The NKJV margin suggests “malicious gossips” as an equivalent translation here.
 3. Paul also wrote that in the perilous times of the last days men would be “slanderers (false accusers)” (**2 Tim. 3:3**). Cf. **Tit. 2:3**.
- E. We are never more like the devil than when we engage in slander and divisiveness - **Jas. 3:14-18**.

V. WHAT HIS FUTURE HOLDS

- A. The demons “believe — and tremble” (**Jas. 2:19**).
- B. On one occasion, when Jesus confronted certain evil spirits, they cried out: “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?” (**Mt. 8:29**).
- C. God is much greater than the devil and his angels — God has conquered the power of evil and prepared a place of eternal torment for them - **Mt. 25:41; 2 Pt. 2:4**.

Conclusion

- A. All of us who have participated in the devil’s rebellion against God will share his eternal destiny if we refuse to let God redeem us - **Rev. 21:8**. Cf. **Mt. 25:41**.
- B. May we accept the gospel of Christ and be released from the devil’s doom - **Hb. 2:14,15**.