

# **Satan**

(Rev. 05/25)

## Are snakes evil? Is Satan really a snake?

Surprisingly, I've encountered this question – in one form or another – a lot! To answer this, we need to go back to the beginning: Genesis!

*Then God said, "Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals." And that is what happened. God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. - Genesis 1:24-25 (NLT)*

On the sixth day of Creation, God makes all of the animals and then finishes by making man. Since snakes are created by God, not Satan – Satan can't create! – then they aren't inherently evil. In fact, when God gets done making everything, He calls it all "good". Because of this, there is nothing "evil" about snakes in-and-of themselves!

Next, we need to figure out who – and what – Satan is. In Hebrew, the name "Satan" literally means "the accuser"; it's a job description AND title all rolled up into one! In a description of Satan, we find this:

*You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. - Ezekiel 28:14 (ESV) (NLT doesn't call Satan a "cherub", which is what the Hebrew words actually say.)*

So, Satan (or Lucifer) is a spiritual being. He has great power, beauty...mixed with a great deal of arrogance. Notice that he is NOT a snake...he's a spirit!

So, where do we get the idea that Satan is a snake? Let's go back to Genesis:

*The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?" - Genesis 3:1 (NLT)*

See? Satan is a snake! He deceives Adam and Eve because he's a snake! Or not...

Actually, what's going on is that Satan possesses the snake, just like demons can possess humans. How do we know this? Because, as GotQuestions.org points out, *"Snakes don't talk!"* It's not that they lost their ability to talk because of The Fall; they never had it in the first place! This is Satan speaking through a host creature; nothing more.

So, what does that say about the host creature? Nothing! Just like when Jesus casts out demons in the New Testament, we're not told to continue to regard the humans who were healed as "evil".

You can be afraid of them – phobias are real. You can be wary of them – some are quite dangerous. But are they evil because Satan possessed one, one time, back in Eden? Nope.

## Did God know that Satan was going to betray Him?

We are told by Paul in Ephesians 3:11:

*This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord. - Ephesians 3:11 (NLT)*

Since it was “eternal”, God already knew what was going to happen and what the price would be. So, before God created anyone or anything, He already knew what Satan would choose, just like He knew what each of us would choose, too.

### **Does God love Satan?**

Okay, this is kind of tricky and it depends on what is really being said in Ezekiel 28:11-19! Let me show you the passage:

*Then this further message came to me from the LORD: “Son of man, sing this funeral song for the king of Tyre. Give him this message from the Sovereign LORD:*

*“You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and exquisite in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God. Your clothing was adorned with every precious stone—red carnelian, pale-green peridot, white moonstone, blue-green beryl, onyx, green jasper, blue lapis lazuli, turquoise, and emerald—all beautifully crafted for you and set in the finest gold. They were given to you on the day you were created. I ordained and anointed you as the mighty angelic guardian. You had access to the holy mountain of God and walked among the stones of fire.*

*“You were blameless in all you did from the day you were created until the day evil was found in you. Your rich commerce led you to violence, and you sinned. So I banished you in disgrace from the mountain of God. I expelled you, O mighty guardian, from your place among the stones of fire. Your heart was filled with pride because of all your beauty. Your wisdom was corrupted by your love of splendor. So I threw you to the ground and exposed you to the curious gaze of kings. You defiled your sanctuaries with your many sins and your dishonest trade. So I brought fire out from within you, and it consumed you. I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching.” - Ezekiel 28:11-19 (NLT)*

Some people argue that this passage ONLY refers to the King of Tyre. (Which makes sense since it’s actually addressed to him!) But, if you look at the description, it seems to be describing something more than an ordinary human...

Because of that, a lot of people – myself included – tend to think that this is a message addressed to both the King of Tyre and Satan. This means two things: (1) Ezekiel is condemning the King of Tyre for his sins and, at the same time, condemning Satan for leading him into sin; and (2) the human king’s fall is symbolic of the fall of Satan.

If this view is true, then Satan is one of the most incredibly beautiful creatures ever made by God! Because of that, I would argue that God loves Satan, because he’s such a great example of God’s workmanship.

But, we also need to remember that Satan made the CHOICE to sin and was banished. No matter how incredible of a being Satan was, he's under the wrath of God for his choices...just like we are for ours.

### Does the devil really have horns and a tail?

Actually, the Bible describes Lucifer – Satan is a title that means “adversary” – as a beautiful being. People dispute the following verses – I’ll cover that in a moment – but in Ezekiel 28, we’re told:

*Son of man, sing this funeral song for the king of Tyre. Give him this message from the Sovereign LORD: “You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and exquisite in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God. Your clothing was adorned with every precious stone...” - Ezekiel 28:12-13b (NLT)*

Now clearly this verse refers to the King of Tyre, right? But if you read on, this being is in Eden, it's described as a “mighty angelic guardian”, and it has “access to the holy mountain of God”. Those seem to indicate that this is more than a mortal. For me, I think this is a judgment on both the King of Tyre AND Satan. (If you want to dispute that, it's fine.)

But if this is a description of Satan, then he is...beautiful!

What does he look like AFTER his rebellion? Actually, we're not really told...

So where do we get the idea of Satan having horns, a tail, bat wings, and more? Well, if you want to look at the era that destroyed our views of...just about everything, look no further than the medieval world!



**15 Century Depiction Of Satan**  
(Source: Medievalists.net)

In Medieval times, when they were illuminating (decorating) manuscripts, they started adding...details. Satan goes from a beautiful being to...Satan. Demons are portrayed as bats. Halos start getting drawn on all the “saints”. Jesus is drawn as a white guy.

The general rule of thumb is that if it is a corruption of the Bible, it was probably invented by people in Medieval times who got “creative” with the stories.

### **How did the devil transform into a snake in the chapter of Adam and Eve?**

Simple answer? He didn't! (Can I stop now? Probably not...)

The first thing to know about Satan is that he's a spirit-being. In other words, he's not wrapped up in a physical body like we are. And we can learn a lot about Eden by looking at another story about spirits – this time, demons!

*When Jesus arrived on the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gadarenes, two men who were possessed by demons met him. They came out of the tombs and were so violent that no one could go through that area.*

*They began screaming at him, “Why are you interfering with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torture us before God's appointed time?”*

*There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding in the distance. So the demons begged, “If you cast us out, send us into that herd of pigs.”*

*“All right, go!” Jesus commanded them. So the demons came out of the men and entered the pigs, and the whole herd plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water. - Matthew 8:28-32 (NLT)*

So these demons, these spirit beings, can possess human beings and, apparently, pigs. (Although possessing pigs doesn't seem to go very well...)

If demons can possess animals and humans, then it would make sense that Satan can, too. If that's the case, he doesn't transform into the snake; he just possesses it so that he can use it.

### **If God created heaven and earth and everything in it, where did the devil come from? Wasn't everything perfect?**

This is a great question! It's true: if God made everything and everything was perfect, then God couldn't have made Satan...could He? And, if He did, then it wasn't all “perfect”.

Well, first of all, we have to get rid of the word “perfect”. Did you know that we're never told that God created perfection? Let me show you:

*Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light “day” and the darkness “night.” And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day. - Genesis 1:3-4 (NLT)*

God makes everything...what? (Good.) While that may seem like a small difference, it really does

matter. Consider this:

*In ancient Hebrew culture, the concept of "good" was deeply intertwined with the character and nature of God. The creation narrative in Genesis repeatedly uses "towb" to describe God's creation, emphasizing its perfection and harmony. The term also reflects the Hebrew understanding of life, where goodness is associated with divine favor, prosperity, and moral integrity. (Source: Biblehub.com)*

So, as long as God's Creation is in harmony with God, it's "good"; it's perfect BECAUSE it's in harmony. This becomes critical to understand because when Adam and Eve sin, Creation is no longer in harmony. It's no longer "good"; instead, it's a fallen world.

The same holds true for Satan. If God created Satan, then Satan is "good" as long as he's in harmony with God! Does that make sense?

Great! Now let's check out that whole "in harmony with God" idea:

*For you said to yourself, 'I will ascend to heaven and set my throne above God's stars. I will preside on the mountain of the gods far away in the north. I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High.' - Isaiah 14:13-14 (NLT)*

Like us, Lucifer had the ability to choose and choose he did. He went after the throne of God! (Kind of stupid, considering Lucifer was part of God's Creation!) He even managed to turn 1/3 of the angels against God and he led them in a war against Heaven. (See Revelations 12:3-9.)

His "goodness" – like ours – is only when we're in harmony with God. I think Lucifer had a little bit of...dissonance...with God when he rebelled and tried to throw God off His throne.

After that, Lucifer influenced Eve to commit the first sin (Genesis 3:1-7), he became the ruler of this world (John 12:31), he tempts people (Matthew 4:3), he deceives people (2 Corinthians 4:4), and he delights in causing pain and suffering (Job 1:9-12). In fact, his other names are actually just "job descriptions"! The word "Satan" means "adversary"; and the word "devil" means "slanderer".

In the end, despite all of the damage he causes, the Devil is going to lose. He will be thrown into a fiery lake, as told in Revelation 20:10; and all of those who followed him will join him in being eternally separated from God. God wins...was there every any doubt?

### **If God created Satan, why doesn't He destroy him?**

Wow! A great question...and a tough one, too! Why? Because you're asking me to try to guess what God is thinking. (I have a hard enough time understanding my thoughts, let alone trying to understand God's!) Anyhow, there ARE some things to notice.

First, God WILL destroy Satan in the end. Check out Revelation, the last book in the Bible:

*Then the devil, who had deceived them, was thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulfur, joining the beast and the false prophet. There they will be tormented day and night*

*forever and ever. - Revelation 20:10 (NLT)*

In the end, everything that Satan tried to do...fails. Also, notice that Satan doesn't "reign" in Hell; he's not the king. Instead, Satan is a prisoner who is tormented for rebelling against God.

As for the rest of it, we're not told why God allows Satan to run amok now. (I like the word "amok"!)

All we know is that God has a timeline, and it WILL happen exactly the way He planned it.

*The LORD of Heaven's Armies has sworn this oath: "It will all happen as I have planned. It will be as I have decided." - Isaiah 14:24 (NLT)*

(If you read this, you will find that I am TOTALLY taking this out of context! However, if God has a plan for the enemies of Israel, it's probably safe to assume that He has a plan to deal with the enemy of all humans: Satan!)

### **If God knew that Satan would tempt Eve and everything would be a sinful world, why did He make Satan?**

If you have an Apple product, you're probably familiar with Siri. Siri can talk to you, answer questions, find information and more. Does Siri love you? No. She's programmed with a set of responses and she's NEVER allowed to change her responses. Because she's forced to do only certain things, it isn't love.

God loves us and wants us to love Him in return. Because of that, He had to give us the choice to NOT choose Him! If we didn't have a choice, if we're forced to follow God whether we want to or not, that's simply not love!

So God created Lucifer to be beautiful and powerful and gave Him a choice. He does the same thing for us, too. He created us to be beautiful and to love God and to be loved by Him in return. It's our choice how we will respond to that offer. That's love...

### **Satan punishes sinners, so why is he portrayed as bad? Isn't he good by default?**

In the past, I've ripped on the Renaissance painters for giving us a lot of "bad ideas" about God. I promised myself that I would try NOT to do that again, but...here goes:

*Then the devil, who had deceived them, was thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulfur, joining the beast and the false prophet. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. - Revelation 20:10 (NLT)*

The Bible tells us that Satan is a "roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" and that, in the end, he's thrown into the "lake of fire". Satan doesn't "rule in Hell", he's as much of a prisoner as everyone else! His goal is to destroy people, not punish them! For Satan, Hell is as much of a torture as it is for anyone else and at no point and nowhere in the Bible does it ever say that Satan punishes sinners.

The idea that Satan rules in Hell and punishes sinners comes from...the Renaissance. The Bible doesn't EVER talk about it! This is a great question and it shows why we need to double-check what we heard



with what the Bible says. (Don't take my word for it; take God's Word, instead!)

### Who is the Devil?

The Devil is a very sad story. He started out as a cherub of God named "Lucifer", and he was called the "morning star". (See Isaiah 14:12.) In Ezekiel 28:12-19, Lucifer is described as a beautiful cherub, adorned in many fine robes and jewels. Things went well until Lucifer decided to rebel against God:

*For you said to yourself, 'I will ascend to heaven and set my throne above God's stars. I will preside on the mountain of the gods far away in the north. I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High.' - Isaiah 14:13-14 (NLT)*

Like us, Lucifer had the ability to choose and choose he did. He went after the throne of God! (Kind of stupid, considering Lucifer was part of God's Creation!) He managed to turn 1/3 of the angels against God and he lead them in a war against Heaven. (See Revelations 12:3-9.)

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He is NOT the red guy with horns, pitchfork, and a tail that you see in cartoons. In fact, we're told in 2 Corinthians:

*But I am not surprised! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. - 2 Corinthians 11:14 (NLT)*

In the end, despite all of the damage he causes, the Devil is going to lose. He will be thrown into a fiery lake, as told in Revelation 20:10; and all of those who followed him will join him in being eternally separated from God. God wins – was there every any doubt?

### Why does the Devil start a war with God [when] he knows that he is going to lose?

Simply put:

*Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall. - Proverbs 16:18 (NLT)*

In other words, the Devil was arrogant enough to think that he could take God. Kind of a dumb thought when you're going after the one who made you, but the Devil has made a lot of dumb choices over the millennia.

For example, take the idea of killing Jesus...which fulfilled the prophecies...and provided us with a way to return to right-standing with God. Whoops! That didn't work so well, did it? Well, neither did rebelling against God...

### Why does the Devil want God's powers so much?



Well, actually it's not God's powers that the Devil wants so much as God's position. Let me show you:

*“How you are fallen from heaven, O shining star, son of the morning! You have been thrown down to the earth, you who destroyed the nations of the world. For you said to yourself, ‘I will ascend to heaven and set my throne above God’s stars. I will preside on the mountain of the gods far away in the north. I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High.’ - Isaiah 14:12-14 (NLT)*

Now I need to confess something to you: this prophecy, written by Isaiah, is referring to the King of Babylon. There are some people who take it to ONLY apply to the human king. Others believe that it ONLY applies to Satan. (If you read the wording, Isaiah does seem to be talking about someone more-than-human.) Personally, I think it applies to both, but I'll understand if you disagree.

If this applies to Satan, he decided that his throne should be above God's; that everyone should worship and bow down to him. As an old Petra song says:

*Son of the morning  
Highest of all  
You had so much going  
Till you took the fall  
Had a place in the glory  
But you wanted it all  
Impossible odds  
But you had the gall  
- “This Means War” by Petra*

So it's not about power, it's about being worshiped as God, instead. And that's something that God can't share with a being that He created...

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