

## The Ancient Serpent

(Genesis 3, Revelation 12)

In the first line of Genesis 3, the text introduces the antagonist, the serpent, who is more crafty or cunning than any of the other animals in the Garden. At this point, the origin of the serpent is just as mysterious as the origin of God.

However, the rest of the Bible will fill in much of the serpent's backstory. He is a spiritual being who fell from being created perfectly to a rebel. The rebellion – the sin – happened after Genesis 1:31, where God describes everything He made as "very good".

The serpent asks the woman: "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" The woman responds that they can eat the fruit of any tree except one. But she adds, "neither shall you touch it lest you die" (v. 3). Eve is right concerning eating and dying but wrong concerning touching the fruit of the tree. The serpent immediately exploits this with a lie. He says, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God..." (v. 4-5). His lie is quite ironic. They were already in God's image and likeness (1:26). The serpent deceived the woman, and she took the fruit and ate it. She also gave some to Adam, and he ate. At that moment, sin entered the world, and Adam and Eve died spiritually (separated from God) and would eventually die physically (Rom 5:12).

Isaiah 14:12-15 may describe Satan's sin where the text talks about a "Day Star" (Lucifer, KJV) who said in his heart, "I will ascend to heaven" and "I will set my throne on high" and "I will make myself like the Most High." Ezekiel 28:11-19 may also allude to Satan's fall. In Ezekiel, pride is the culpable reason for the fall. In Luke 10:18, Jesus said, "I beheld Satan's fall like lightning from heaven." Is there a relationship between the "Day Star" and "like lightning" falling from heaven? Yes.

Jesus assigns the devil responsibility for Adam and Eve's death in John 8:44. He said, "You are of your father the devil...He was a murderer from the beginning [referring to Gen 3] and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies." The serpent is the devil – a liar and murderer. In Revelation 12:9, we learn that the ancient serpent is the devil, that is, "the accuser"; the Satan, or literally "the adversary"; and the deceiver of the whole world. He was Adam and Eve's adversary and has been the adversary of God, the Son, and the people of God from the beginning. We also learn that he is an angelic being and a leader of other angels who rebelled against God's rule. These fallen angels are called demons and distinguished from "holy angels" (Mark 8:58). Peter writes about angels that sinned (2Pe 2:4). In Jude 6, there is a description of angels that did not keep their proper place. Ten times the NT calls the devil the "evil one" (Mat 13:19).

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- Is cursed by God; he must now crawl on his belly; evidently, he didn't crawl before the curse
- Promised to have his head bruised (crushed, Merriam-Webster) by the offspring of Eve – namely Jesus Christ
- Rebelled against God's rule and reign; he is the originator of sin
- Led other angels to follow in a rebellion against God, essentially becoming the enemy of God and humans
- Deceives and is the deceiver of the whole world; he lies and is the father of lies
- Is the Devil, the accuser of the people of God like Job or Joshua, the high priest
- Is "the Satan", the slanderer, the adversary of the people of God
- Provoked David to sin against God in numbering the people
- Is the tempter, as in the temptation of Christ, and a murderer from the beginning, according to Jesus
- Beelzebul, another name for Satan – the ruler or prince of the demons (unclean spirits) (evil angels)
- Is the evil one who snatches away the Word of God from the hearts of people
- The one who entered Judas Iscariot, the LORD's betrayer
- Is the god (ruler) of this world who blinds the eyes of those who do not believe the Gospel of Jesus
- The prince (ruler) of the power of the air and can disguise himself as an angel of light
- Hindered Paul from getting somewhere and like a roaring lion, seeks someone to devour
- Will spend eternity in hell, a lake of fire, prepared for him and his evil angels (demons)

### Final Thoughts

Submit to God; resist the devil, and he will flee from you (Jam 4:7). His lies must be identified and rejected at all costs. Do not allow the evil one to steal God's Word from your heart. Pray daily not to be led into temptation. Satan and his demons are the enemies of truth and your enemy. Do not allow Satan to deceive you into believing the Bible isn't true.