

## Satan – History

Two Old Testament passages – [Isa. 14:12-15](#) and [Ezek. 28:11-19](#) – furnish a picture of Satan's original condition and the reasons for his loss of that position. These passages were addressed originally to the kings of Babylon and Tyre. But in their long-range implications, many scholars believe, they refer to Satan himself. They tell of an exalted angelic being, one of God's creatures, who became proud and ambitious. He determined to take over the throne of God for himself. But God removed him from his position of great dignity and honor.

1. Building upon this foundation, [Rev. 12](#) sketches the further stages in Satan's work of evil.
2. In his fall from God's favor, Satan persuaded one third of the angels to join him in his rebellion. [Rev 12:3-4](#)
3. Throughout the Old Testament period he sought to destroy the messianic line.
4. When the Messiah became a man, Satan tried to eliminate Him. [Rev 12:4-5](#)
5. During the future period of tribulation before the Messiah's second coming, Satan will be cast out of the heavenly sphere. ([Rev 12:7-12](#)) Then he will direct his animosity toward the Messiah's people. [Rev 12:13-17](#)
6. [Rev. 20](#) notes the final phases of Satan's work. He will be bound for a thousand years and then finally cast into the Lake of Fire. [Rev 20:2, 10](#)

### **CHARACTERISTICS – SATAN**

1. As a result of his original status and authority, Satan has great power and dignity. So great is his strength that Michael the archangel viewed him as a foe too powerful to oppose. [Jude 9](#)
2. Satan's influence in worldly affairs is also clearly revealed. ([John 12:31](#)) His various titles reflect his control of the world system: "*the ruler of this world*" ([John 12:31](#)), "*the god of this age*" ([2](#)

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[Cor. 4:4](#)), and *"the prince of the power of the air."* ([Eph. 2:2](#)) The Bible declares, *"The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one."* [1 John 5:19](#)

3. Satan exercises his evil power through demons. ([Matt. 12:24](#); [25:41](#); [Rev. 12:7, 9](#)) An outburst of demonic activity occurred when Jesus came to earth the first time because of the Savior's attack against Satan's kingdom. [Matt. 12:28-29](#); [Acts 10:38](#)
4. Another such outburst is expected just before the second coming of Christ, because this will bring about the downfall of Satan and his angels. [Rev. 9:3-17](#); [12:12](#); [18:2](#)
5. Satan also has high intelligence. Through it he deceived Adam and Eve and took over their rule of the world for himself. ([Gen. 1:26](#); [3:1-7](#); [2 Cor. 11:3](#)) His cleverness enables him to carry out his deceptive work almost at will.
6. Yet Satan's attributes, impressive as they are, are not limitless. His power is subject to God's restrictions. ([Job 1:12](#); [Luke 4:6](#); [2 Thess. 2:7-8](#)) The reins of God on his activities are illustrated by Satan's request to God for permission to afflict Job. [Job 1:7-12](#)
7. Satan is permitted to afflict God's people. ([Luke 13:16](#); [1 Thess. 2:18](#); [Heb. 2:14](#)) But he is never permitted to win an ultimate victory over them. [John 14:30-31](#); [16:33](#)
8. A part of Satan's continuing ambition to replace God is his passionate yearnings to have others worship him. [Matt. 4:8-9](#); [Rev 13:4, 12](#)
9. Since God has frustrated this desire and put down Satan's rebellion, he has become God's exact opposite. He is *"the wicked one"* ([Matt. 13:19, 38](#)), while God is *"the Holy One."* [Isa. 1:4](#)
10. Satan's nature is malicious. His efforts in opposing God, His people, and His truth are tireless. [Job 1:7](#); [2:2](#); [Matt. 13:28](#)

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He is always opposed to man's best interests. (1 Chronicles 21:1; Zechariah 3:1-2) Through his role in introducing sin into the human family (Gen. 3), Satan has gained the power of death – a power which Christ has broken through His crucifixion and resurrection. Heb. 2:14-15

**Methods:** Of the various methods used by Satan in carrying out his evil work, none is more characteristic than TEMPTATION. (Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5) Satan leads people into sin by various means. Sometimes he does it by direct suggestion, as in the case of Judas Iscariot (John 13:2,27); sometimes through his agents who disguise themselves as messengers of God (2 Thess. 2:9; 1 John 4:1); and sometimes through a person's own weaknesses. (1 Cor. 7:5) He tempted Christ directly, trying to lead Him into compromise by promising Him worldly authority and power. Luke 4:5-8

Along with his work of tempting mankind, Satan also delights in deception. (1 Tim. 3:6-7; 2 Tim. 2:26) His lying nature stands in bold contrast to the truth for which Christ stands. (John 8:32, 44) The great falsehood which he uses so frequently is that good can be attained by doing wrong. This lie is apparent in practically all his temptations. (Gen. 3:4-5) As the great deceiver, Satan is an expert at falsifying truth. 2 Cor. 11:13-15

Satan's methods are designed ultimately to silence the gospel. He seeks to stop the spread of God's Word. (Matt. 13:19; 1 Thess. 2:17-18) When the gospel is preached, Satan tries to blind people's understanding so they cannot grasp the meaning of the message. (2 Cor. 4:3-4; 2 Thess. 2:9-10) At times he opposes the work of God by violent means. (John 13:2, 27; 1 Peter 5:8; Rev. 12:13-17) He brings disorder into the physical world by afflicting human beings. (Job 1-2; 2 Cor. 12:7; Heb. 2:14) Sometimes God allows him to afflict His people for purposes of correction. 1 Tim. 1:20

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**Defeat:** Satan is destined to fail in his continuing rebellion against God. His final defeat is predicted in the New Testament. ([Luke 10:18](#); [John 12:31](#); [Rev. 12:9](#); [20:10](#)) The death of Christ on the cross is the basis for Satan's final defeat. ([Heb. 2:14-15](#); [1 Peter 3:18, 22](#)) This event was the grand climax to a sinless life during which Jesus triumphed over the enemy repeatedly. ([Matt. 4:1-11](#); [Luke 4:1-13](#)) The final victory will come when Jesus returns and Satan is cast into the lake of fire. [Rev. 20](#)

Strength for a Christian's victory over sin has also been provided through the death of Christ. We have assurance that *"the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet."* ([Rom. 16:20](#)) But such personal victory depends on our will to offer resistance to Satan's temptations. ([Eph. 4:25-27](#); [1 Peter 5:8-9](#)) To help Christians win this battle against Satan, God has provided the power of Christ's blood ([Rev 12:11](#)), the continuing prayer of Christ in heaven for believers ([Heb. 7:25](#)), the leading of the Holy Spirit ([Gal. 5:16](#)), and various weapons for spiritual warfare. [Eph. 6:13-18](#)

**Reality:** Some people have trouble admitting the existence of such an enemy as Satan. But his presence and activity are necessary to explain the problems of evil and suffering. The Bible makes it plain that Satan exists and that his main work is to oppose the rule of God in the affairs of man.