

# OpenTheo

## Origin of Satan



### **Spiritual Warfare** - Steve Gregg

In this talk, Steve Gregg challenges common assumptions about the origin of Satan. Gregg argues that there is no biblical basis for the belief that Satan was once an angel, and that biblical passages often used to support such beliefs are actually referring to other figures or using symbolic language. He suggests that while God allowed Satan to exist and cause harm, this was part of a larger plan and testing process for humanity. Ultimately, Gregg emphasizes the importance of being aware of the varying interpretations of biblical passages and not assuming that commonly held beliefs are necessarily true.

## **Transcript**

In our previous session, we had an introduction to the general subject of spiritual warfare. And when we talk about war, there's obviously sides in a war. There's someone fighting against someone else.

And since we are involved in warfare, we are one of the sides. The question is, who is on the other side? Who are we fighting against? It will do very little good to go to battle if you don't know who it is that is the enemy. You end up shooting some of your own guys and cooperating inadvertently with those who are your enemies if you don't know who the enemy is.

And therefore, we need to talk about this subject. Many years ago, I was asked if I would teach for YWAM a series on spiritual warfare. This is 16 years ago now, or 15 or 16 years ago.

And so I set out to prepare a series. I still have notes from that original series, though I've redone them over and over again. I have redone the series a lot of different ways.

But I remember when I first began to prepare the series, I thought, well, the most logical place to begin a series on spiritual warfare is to talk about the beginning of the war. The beginning of the enemy and how the enemy came to be in the picture. And I thought I knew the answer to the question of where did the enemy come from, because I was raised in the faith.

I was raised in an evangelical church. I knew the standard lines about where Satan came from. But as I sought to put together a series of teachings on it, I needed actually to have the scriptures available to prove my point.

And as I looked at the scriptures that I thought proved my points, it seemed to me that they didn't really prove those points as I thought they did. And I began to wonder whether my scenario that I'd been raised with really had a biblical basis at all. I have since that time become fully convinced that the traditional idea of the origin of Satan really doesn't have any biblical basis that can be established on passage of scripture.

Although it still may be a correct scenario, we don't know. I believe that Christians usually assume that the Bible says more about this than it actually does. For example, it's very common to believe that the devil, when he came into existence, was not a devil.

That he first came into existence when God created the angels. And that when he created the angels, so I was once told, God placed all of the angels somewhat under the oversight of three archangels. These archangels were Michael, Gabriel, and Lucifer.

And of these three, one of them turned out to be bad. But before he turned out to be bad, he was very good. In fact, he was the wisest, most beautiful creature God had created.

And this tended to make him proud and caused him to think that he was as good as God or that he could stage a successful revolt against God. And since a third of the angels were under his command, he led them in a cosmic revolt. This sometime prior to the fall of man, of course, because when the devil appears for the first time in human history in Genesis chapter 3, he's already bad.

So sometime prior to that, Lucifer staged a revolt against God. And he and his third of the angels were kicked out of heaven and became corrupt, vile, perverted, twisted spiritual beings, which we now know as the devil and demons. This view is almost universally held among evangelicals.

And to challenge it, well, most people don't even know that there's any reason to challenge it, that there'd be any reason to question it. The only reason I question it is not because of any particular adverse feelings I have toward that viewpoint. It's just that when I began to try to prove it from scripture, and I began to look at the scriptures that were the basis for this belief, I became astonished that there were no scriptures that taught this doctrine.

Now, there are two theories, as far as I know, as to the origin of Satan. One is this most popular theory, which probably everyone here has been taught from the beginning of their Christian indoctrination. And the other is a much less widely held theory, which I think may have more in its favor biblically.

And only after arriving at this theory myself, from my own study of scripture, I've been relieved to encounter a few authors who I already had respect for on other points, actually espousing the same theory that I had come to. So, from time to time, this happens with me. My views will change very gradually from something that I thought was taught in scripture.

Entirely on my own, I'll research the scriptures and change my views. And then later on, thinking that I'm the only person who sees it this way, I'll be confirmed in it by encountering other people who I respect, who, to my surprise, also believe the same way I have come to believe. Let me go over the two theories about the origin of Satan, and we can just examine the scriptural case for them and see if we can get any information about it.

There are a number of scriptures, not very many, but a number, that are used to try to demonstrate that Satan was, before his fall, a good guy. He was one of God's good angels, but that he became corrupted and fell. The first passage I'd like to turn your attention to, and chronologically in scripture it's the first to appear as well, is Isaiah chapter 14.

In Isaiah chapter 14, beginning at verse 12, we read, And how are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning? How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will also sit on the mount of the congregation, on the farthest sides of the north.

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High. Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the pit.

Now, here we have the arrogance of Lucifer, described by his heart ambition to ascend into heaven, to be like God, to be above the stars of God. And yet it is said that Lucifer will be cast down, Lucifer will be thrust down to the lowest Sheol, which is in the King James translated as hell, but in most modern translations is left untranslated, the Hebrew word Sheol equivalent to the New Testament Greek word Hades. And so here we have one of the principal passages about Satan falling.

And it is said to be because Lucifer was proud and ambitious and desired to be above the stars of God, that is the angels of God, and desired to be like God himself. In other words, he desired to usurp God's position. Now, this passage does not say whether Lucifer was an angel or not.

There is no mention of the person who is addressed here as Lucifer as being an angel. But the idea that Lucifer was an angel comes from looking over at Ezekiel chapter 28, a second passage that is a key passage in this theory. Ezekiel chapter 28, verses 12 and following.

Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre and say to him, thus says the Lord God. You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God.

Every precious stone was your covering. The Sardius, topaz and diamond, beryl, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created.

You were the anointed cherub who covered. I established you. You were on the holy mountain of God.

You walked back and forth in the midst of the fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created until iniquity was found in you. Now, although this passage states that it is addressed to the king of Tyre in verse 12, it is believed by many that the king of Tyre here is not really the king of Tyre at all, but really the power behind the throne.

Some spiritual being. In support of this notion, we have the fact that whoever is addressed is said to have been in Eden, the garden of God. We know for a fact that there were not very many characters in Eden.

There was God, but it certainly isn't referring to God here. There was Adam and Eve, but this can't be referring to them. They were long dead by the time Ezekiel wrote.

And there was, of course, the serpent, which we identify as Satan. Therefore, by the process of elimination, many people believe that this person addressed must be a reference to Satan. Furthermore, it is said that he was the anointed cherub that covers in verse 14.

A cherub is not a human creature, but an angelic kind of a creature. Ezekiel actually saw four cherubs, cherubim as the plural would be in Hebrew, in chapter 1 and in chapter 10 he described them. Now it is said that this person who is addressed is said to be a former cherub also.

Then, of course, there are statements like this in verse 12. You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. And in verse 15, you were perfect in your ways from the days you were created until iniquity was found in you.

It is said that this could not apply to a human king because no one is perfect. To say he was full of wisdom and perfect in beauty and perfect in all his ways, it is argued, could not really apply to a human being. It must be a reference to something that was angelic, something that was pure and without any flaws.

Now, in addition to that, you have, at least in the King James Version and the New King James Version, at the end of verse 13, this statement. The workmanship of your timbrels

and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. Now, this reads differently in other translations, but for centuries, really, Christians mostly read the King James Version.

And the New King James follows the rendering of the King James Version here. And it says the workmanship of your timbrels and pipes, those are musical instruments, was prepared for you on the day you were created. Actually, the King James is prepared in you.

On the basis of the wording of the King James Version of this verse, there have actually been people who have said that Satan, before he fell, was a beautiful angel, a beautiful cherub, who actually had musical instruments created as parts of his body. Believe it or not. I don't know if you've ever heard this suggested.

I've heard it many places by people who very soberly suggest that this is what is taught. That before his fall, Satan was an angel who had musical instruments hanging out of his body like limbs. And this being the case, it suggests that he was a musician, obviously.

Now, if God created Lucifer with musical instruments hanging out of his body, obviously a gifted musician, perfect in beauty, perfect in wisdom, perfect in all his ways. If that's true, then perhaps we should understand that he was in charge of worship, choir director of heaven or something like that. This has actually been suggested.

When you read certain books about spiritual warfare, most authors try to tell us something about the origin of Satan. And not a few have made these what I consider to be wild suggestions based on this biblical statement. But if you've ever heard that Satan was perhaps the worship leader in heaven before his fall, it is entirely derived from the suggestion that there were musical instruments created as part of his body.

And then from there, it's extrapolated. He must have been somehow in charge of music in heaven or something like that. However, if you will check any other translation other than the King James or the New King James, you'll find that timbrels and pipes, which are mentioned here, are actually not rendered that way in most translations, but rather settings like jewel settings, like the setting of a ring.

Some have another translation. Some of the new American standard. What's it say? Settings and sockets.

OK, so where the King James and the New King James say timbrels and pipes, which are musical instruments, modern translations understand these Hebrew words differently. They're not talking about timbrels and pipes. It's about sockets and settings as you put jewels in.

I mean, that's what the context is about. Jewelry. You've had all these precious stones as you're covering in certain sockets and settings and so forth.

It's talking about a jewel, a bejeweled person. OK, so we don't have any reference to musical instruments hanging out of his body necessarily, and therefore we don't have any basis for believing he was the worship leader in heaven. Anyway, there's a few other scriptures, not many, that are thought to teach something like this.

One of them, as I pointed out in our last class, is Luke 10, 18, where Jesus said, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I already told you that there's more than one way to see that statement of Jesus. That's Luke 10, 18.

One way is to see this as a reference to Lucifer, the angel, falling and becoming the devil. However, Jesus doesn't say anything about Lucifer. By the way, neither does Ezekiel.

The name Lucifer doesn't appear in Ezekiel 28, nor in Jesus' words. In fact, the name Lucifer doesn't appear anywhere in the Bible except in one verse, which is Isaiah 14, 12, which we saw a moment ago. Jesus does not say he saw an angel fall.

He says he saw Satan fall. Now, this could suggest that Satan was an angel before he fell, but he doesn't say so. In other words, this doctrine is not established upon that statement of Jesus.

If you could establish that doctrine from some other place, the statement of Jesus could be seen perhaps as a confirmation of it or as an allusion to it. But we cannot establish such a doctrine on the basis of Jesus' vague statement that he saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. We have to import certain ideas to it to get that impression.

We also have the fact that some people see in Revelation 12 where the dragon is cast out of heaven in Revelation 12, 9. Some people think that that confirms this doctrine. But as I pointed out in our last session, the time frame of Revelation 12 does not encourage us to see it in that light. It does not look as if it's a passage about things that happened before human history began.

The fall of Satan from heaven in Revelation 12 occurs in the context of human history, not sometime in the ancient past before humans had their beginning. As a matter of fact, there's really nothing else in the Bible to support the notion that Satan was a fallen angel. The entire doctrine is based essentially on Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28.

There are a few other things in the New Testament that are sometimes thought to suggest something about Satan having been an angel. For example, in 2 Corinthians 11, verse 14, Paul says, It is in no wonder, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of life. It is sometimes thought from this verse that Satan is or was an angel of light.

And that is why he sometimes will appear to be an angel of light if he appears to people. If he presents himself, he presents himself as an angel of light. And it is sometimes thought that this is simply because that is exactly what he is or was.

However, Paul is not arguing that Satan is or ever was an angel of light. He is saying that that is how the devil presents himself or transforms himself into an angel of light. Look at verse 15, Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness.

Satan's ministers transform themselves into ministers of righteousness. That doesn't mean they are ministers of righteousness or ever were. It means that they represent themselves as if they were.

It means that they impersonate ministers of righteousness. And that is exactly the same sense in which Satan transforms himself into an angel of light. He impersonates an angel of light.

That doesn't mean that he ever had a history of being one. Now, by the way, as I say, if we could prove from other passages that Satan used to be an angel of light, then we could use this as an allusion to that fact. Oh, see, he used to be an angel.

He can still appear to be an angel sometime. And that would, of course, be a possible confirmation for a doctrine if that doctrine were able to be established on other grounds elsewhere. There is also thought to be a possible reference, and I am trying to remember where this was.

I believe it was in 1 Timothy 3. Yes, in 1 Timothy 3, when it is giving the qualifications for an elder, and verse 6, 1 Timothy 3, 6, it says, An elder should not be a novice, that is a new believer, lest, being puffed up with pride, he fall into, now here is an unfortunate thing. The new King James has already taken a position where they didn't need to. It says in the New King James, lest, being puffed up with pride, he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.

Now notice, this suggests, the way it is worded here, that the devil fell into a condemnation because he was puffed up with pride. That would appear to dovetail well enough with what we read in Isaiah 14, that Lucifer wanted to be like God, and yet he was condemned to the lowest shale. And many people have felt, and obviously the New King James translators are among those who feel this way, that Paul is referring to Satan's origins here, that Satan fell through pride.

I disagree, however, and it is a shame that they added the word same, and you can see that they did because it is in italics. When you find a word in italics in the Bible you are reading, it means that it was not in the original Greek. Literally in the Greek, it says, lest, being puffed up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

The condemnation of the devil is what is used here. Now, many believe, and obviously among them are the New King James translators, that the condemnation of the devil means the condemnation that the devil himself experienced, or as it says here, the same

condemnation as the devil. That is one interpretation of those words.

However, the expression, the condemnation of the devil, does not necessarily have to mean the condemnation experienced by the devil, but it could mean the condemnation perpetrated by the devil. Have you ever felt the condemnation of Satan? Well, I believe you probably have, whether you know it to be so or not. The devil is an accuser.

He seeks to make you feel condemnation. When you feel condemned, this could be, if it is the devil inspiring this sense of condemnation, this sense of guilt, you could be said to be experiencing the condemnation of the devil. Now, the question is, when Paul said, lest they fall into the condemnation of the devil, was he saying that the devil experienced this condemnation, or was he using it the other way than I suggested? Well, I think the answer is easy enough if you look at the next verse.

He says, moreover, he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Now, notice verse 6 and verse 7 end with similar phrases. Verse 6 ends with the phrase, the condemnation of the devil, and verse 7 with the snare of the devil.

Now, there is no ambiguity as to what the snare of the devil means. It does not mean the snare that the devil fell into. It means the snare that the devil lays for the believer.

The snare of the devil is something that happens to the believer because of the devil's activity against them. They fall into his snare. It therefore seems likely that the similar phrase in the previous verse, the condemnation of the devil, is referring to something the believer experiences instigated by the devil.

Just as the snare of the devil does not refer to a snare that the devil has fallen into himself, so the condemnation of the devil doesn't likely mean the condemnation that the devil himself fell into. What I'm saying is, people are making more of this phrase than is legitimate. It is possible that the phrase, the condemnation of the devil, could mean the same condemnation as the devil, as the New King James order, but that's reading something into it.

That's adding words that aren't there. The simple expression that Paul uses is the condemnation of the devil, which corresponds very closely to the snare of the devil in the next verse, and I think in both cases he's not referring at all to anything that ever happened to the devil, but rather to dangers that Christians could fall into, instigated by the devil. It's the devil's condemnation of believers that is referred to in verse 6, not the devil's personal suffering of condemnation because of his pride.

Therefore, I don't think there's any validity to the suggestion that this verse is alluding back to Satan's pride. It's more saying that a man who falls into pride and leadership will fall into behaviors for which he will experience condemnation, and the devil will condemn



him, too. The devil loves to accuse us to our own conscience and make us feel condemnation. We'll talk about his activity in that area later on in another setting.

What I wanted to point out is, we really don't have any statement in Scripture, certainly not in the New Testament, that indicates that the devil was ever an angel. And if we do have that teaching, it must be found either in Isaiah 14 or in Ezekiel 28. Now, let's look at Isaiah 14 again, a little more closely.

Are we encouraged by the context to understand Lucifer to be an angel? In Isaiah 14. Again, the name Lucifer occurs only once in Scripture. It is in Isaiah 14.12. And if you are not reading the King James or the New King James or the Living Bible, in other words, if you're reading any other version than those, you won't even find the name Lucifer at all in your Bible.

The New American Standard, the NIV, the Revised Standard, the Good News Bible, or any of these other newfangled translations that come out, they don't use the word Lucifer. They translate it. And, well, they might.

They translate the rest of the Hebrew words in the passage. Why shouldn't they translate that one too? Lucifer means morning star or star of the dawn. And if you read the NIV or the New American Standard or some other modern translation other than the King James or New King James, you will not even find the name Lucifer, but rather they translate Lucifer to something like morning star or star of the dawn or something very similar to that.

Now, that being the case, let's see who Lucifer is in Isaiah 14. Well, we've always associated Lucifer with Satan, but is that a biblical, is that biblically based? If Lucifer is Satan, we need to find it in this passage because there's no other passage that mentions Lucifer. In other words, if the Bible is going to teach us that Lucifer is another name for the devil, then this is the only passage we have to get that from.

There aren't any other passages that will help us on this. So, what do we have here? Well, if you look back at verse 4, same chapter, Isaiah 14, 4, that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon and say how the oppressor has ceased, the golden city ceased, the Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers. He who strut the people in wrath with continual stroke, he who ruled the nations in anger is persecuted and no one hinders.

Now, notice this. This is a prophecy against the king of Babylon and that shouldn't surprise us because chapter 13 and 14 of Isaiah are one protracted burden against Babylon. Chapter 13, verse 1 says, the burden against Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.

And we read in chapter 13 about the fall of Babylon when the Medes and the Persians

would come. It specifically says in Isaiah 13, 17, Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them. And we read of the fall of Babylon there.

And then in chapter 14 we have a continuation of a burden against Babylon according to verse 4. Take up this proverb and say against the king of Babylon. And what is it he said? Well, you were the oppressor. You were the conqueror.

You were the persecutor. And now look at you. You're fallen now like everyone else.

Now, at a certain point in that burden against the king of Babylon, we read these words in verse 12. Son of the morning, how are you cut down to the ground who weakened the nation? For you have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.

I will sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the most high.

Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol to the lowest depths of the pit. Now, it is said that the language here addressed to Lucifer could not be applied to an earthly king. Like the king of Babylon.

For example, it says you're fallen from heaven. And you'll be brought down to Sheol. What man has ever been in heaven and would be brought down to hell? Well, would you turn with me please to Matthew chapter 11 and verse 23.

Jesus says, and you Capernaum. Capernaum, by the way, is not the name of an angel. Capernaum is the name of a city on this planet.

It says, and you Capernaum who are exalted to heaven will be brought down to Hades. Now, Hades is the Greek equivalent of Sheol. When he says that Capernaum who would be exalted to heaven will be brought down to Hades, Jesus is alluding.

He is borrowing language from Isaiah 14 verses 13 and 15 in the passage we just read. How do I know that? Well, if you don't believe me, look at the margin of your Bible. You'll find that even the editors of your Bible have put Isaiah 14 verses 13 and 15 in there as the cross reference for Jesus' statement.

Bible scholars recognize this. It doesn't even take a Bible scholar. All you have to do is look at the language.

It says you're in heaven, you make yourself in heaven, but you'll be cast down to hell, to Hades, Sheol. Jesus is taking the very language of the prophet Isaiah and he's saying you're in heaven, Now, I'm not saying that Lucifer and Isaiah is to be identified with Capernaum. All I'm saying is that if Jesus could use this language of an earthly city, namely Capernaum, why couldn't Isaiah use the same language of an earthly city,

namely Babylon? I can find no reason that this would not be likely.

It's something that can in fact be said to an earthly kingdom, an earthly city. Jesus himself borrows the language from Isaiah and applies it in that way. If you look at the little tiny prophet of Obadiah, one chapter long, right after Amos in the Old Testament, Obadiah is a prophet who prophesied against the nation of Edom.

And the Edomites had their capital city in a place called Petra, a rock mountain. And they had carved out their city out of the lofty places in the rocks, accessible only by a narrow ravine which was easily defended against invaders. And they really believed themselves invincible because they had this high stone fortress.

And yet Obadiah predicted that they would fall, and they did. The Nabateans and Arabians eventually conquered Edom and Petra. But in the prophecy against them, notice this in the book of Obadiah, verse 4, God says to the Edomites, Though you exalt yourself as high as the eagle, and though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down, says the Lord.

Now, did the Edomites have their nest among the stars? Were they as high as the eagle? No, they weren't. That's a hyperbole. He's saying even if you could be that high, even though you picture yourself, you fancy yourself to be as high as the eagle, and you nest among the stars, yet I can still reach you, I can still bring you down from there.

Now, if that kind of thing could be said about Edom, could not the same kind of thing be said about Babylon? When he says, You said I will ascend into heaven, I will set my throne among the stars of God. You know what? Babylon did say those things. If you will recall what the origin of the nation of Babylon was, it was the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11.

That's where Babylon began. In fact, where we read in Genesis 11 of the Tower of Babel, the Greek Bible says the Tower of Babylon, the city of Babel is called Babylon in the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint, and it's evident that the Tower of Babel was the origin of the later nation of Babylon, and the city of Babylon. That's the location.

The Bible tells us right where this tower was located. In Genesis 11, it says in verse 2, It came to pass as they journeyed from the east that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. And they said, Come let us make bricks and make them thoroughly and build a tower and so forth in a city.

Well, Shinar is the plain upon which the city of Babylon later sat. So the origin of Babylon was the Tower of Babel. Look at verse 4 of Genesis 11.

They said, Come let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose top is in the heavens. Isn't that interesting? They wanted to build a tower whose top was in the heavens. They wanted to ascend above the stars of God.

That's exactly the ambition that caused Babylon to come into existence. And for Isaiah, or God through Isaiah, to say to the king of Babylon as the representative of that nation that he ruled, You said I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.

And later on I will ascend above the heights of the clouds and be like the Most High. There's certainly nothing about this that could not be applied to the king of Babylon, especially if you allow for a little bit of poetic imagery here. But much of it is quite literal.

That's exactly what Babylon's ambition was. Now, furthermore, if you look at the passage in Isaiah, you will also see verse 16. Speaking to Lucifer still, it says, Those who see you will gaze at you and consider you saying, Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed cities? You know, some people believe that the actual human king of Babylon is being addressed from verse 4 but that the prophet shifts gears at verse 12, stops speaking to the man and begins speaking to an angelic being, Lucifer.

But the Bible doesn't say that Lucifer was an angelic being. It does not say that Lucifer is the devil. Lucifer is just a word that means morning star, a lofty title for a royal figure.

In this case, the king of Babylon. Is an angel in view here? No. In verse 16, it says, Those who look at you will consider you and say, Is this the man who made the earth tremble? If we're supposed to understand an angel is in view here, why doesn't it say so? Why does it say it's a man? It says to him also in verse 19, You are cast out of your grave.

What, the devil, a spirit is going to be in a grave? Men get buried in graves, not spirits. Verse 20, You will not be joined with them in burial because you have destroyed your land and slain your people. This is talking about a man who will not be buried with a noble burial.

He'll be cast out of his grave. People will look and say, Is this the man who terrified the nations? Look at him now. He's just like the rest of us.

In fact, that's exactly what is said of the king of Babylon in the earlier verses of that chapter. Verse 6, He who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he who ruled the nations in anger is persecuted and no one hinders. In other words, there is absolutely nothing in this chapter that necessarily points to any person other than the king of Babylon who is addressed in verse 4. The king of Babylon is addressed in verse 4. It may be to our disadvantage that we're inserted by the editors, including my Bible that I'm looking at has a subtitle over verse 12 that says the fall of Lucifer as if the subject has now changed from the previous verses, but it hasn't.

As far as Isaiah wrote it concerned, verse 12 just follows after verse 11 as part of the same burden. It's simply the case that the king of Babylon is called the morning star.

Now, some people have been concerned about this because we know that Jesus is called the morning star in the book of Revelation, chapter 22.

Jesus says, I am the bright, the morning star. Many people who thought that Lucifer is a reference to Satan have been confused because they know Lucifer means morning star. Now, Jesus is called morning star.

Is there some identifying of Jesus with Satan? No, there isn't. But there is a transmission of the same title and the morning star was simply a title of royalty, a title of illustrious glory. And many such titles that are applied to earthly kings are applied to Jesus elsewhere in scripture.

For example, in Daniel chapter 2, Daniel said to the king of Babylon, to Nebuchadnezzar, he said, you, O king, are a king of kings. Why did he say that? Well, because Nebuchadnezzar was a king of Nebuchadnezzar. And Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar, you are a king of kings.

Well, in the New Testament, that expression is just of Jesus, king of kings and lord of lords. That shouldn't confuse us. That doesn't mean that Nebuchadnezzar and Jesus are the same person.

It just means that certain titles that apply to royalty apply to human kings and are also taken up and referred to Christ as well because the terms of royalty that were in common use are suitable for use of referring to Christ. He's a king also. He's a bright and morning star.

But so is the king of Babylon, according to Isaiah. But we don't have any reference to Satan here. At least if so, there's no exegetical reason in the world to say that Satan is addressed in this passage.

The only thing that inclines us to believe that probably is the fact that we've always been told that he's the king of Babylon. How do we discover that? And how can we discover that in Scripture when this is the only place that Lucifer is mentioned? It doesn't anywhere say that he's Satan. In fact, it tells us who he is.

He is the king of Babylon. And there was an earthly king of Babylon and all these things that are said about Lucifer can apply to him. So why go beyond that? Why go beyond the obvious and try to find esoteric hidden meanings and basics for finding additional meanings to the obvious in the Scripture? You can't just say, well, I just got a hunch that it's got a second meaning, too.

Well, people have had that hunch about this passage for a very long time. As early as the time of Tertullian, one of the church fathers of the early church believed that this was referring to Satan. But where he got it, I don't know.

I mean, it's not really stated in the Scripture. And by the way, the church fathers believe a lot of things I don't believe. So I'm not convinced that Isaiah has anything to say about the origin or fall of Satan.

Satan's not even mentioned there. The other passage, of course, of significance is the Ezekiel passage. Ezekiel 28.

Let's look at that because that one's a little more... There's a little more there to deal with. Now, once again, the passage in Ezekiel addresses a king, an earthly king, it would appear, because in Ezekiel 28.12, it says, And say to him, And then we get this prophecy that is usually applied to Satan. Yet we're told that it's to the king of Tyre.

Once again, those who want to apply these verses to Satan usually say, Well, it's addressed ostensibly to the king of Tyre, but in fact, it's addressing the spiritual power behind the throne, which is Satan. Well, maybe. Let's just see if there's any reason for believing that.

As I pointed out before, there are a couple of reasons that people believe that. Among them are the statements that he was full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. Certainly these expressions are perfect in beauty, full of wisdom, and yet there's no reason why such terms can't be applied to a human being or to a society even.

If you look back at earlier in this chapter, verses 3 through 5, well, let me go back even further. Let's go back to chapter 27, verse 1. The word of the Lord came again to me, saying, Now, son of man, these are about Tyre. And say to Tyre, You who are situated at the entrance of the sea, merchant of the peoples on many coastlands, thus says the Lord God, O Tyre, you have said, I am perfect in beauty.

Does that sound familiar? Tyre has said of itself, I am perfect in beauty. In fact, Tyre was a very beautiful city, very wealthy, very rich. It was the people of Tyre who said of their own city, Our city is perfect in beauty.

And now in chapter 28, verse 12, the king of Tyre said, You are perfect in beauty. The same thing is said of the city of Tyre, not of Satan. It bothers me sometimes that people say this of Satan.

I've heard preachers say it many times. Oh, the devil, the devil is a beautiful creature of God. The most beautiful thing God ever made.

The wisest, most intelligent, most beautiful thing God ever made. Where do they get that? They get it from this passage in Ezekiel applied to Satan. I would just warn you, if this passage does not apply to Satan, then we're flattering the devil in a way that I don't know is very healthy to do.

I don't find anywhere in the Bible that flatters the devil. And I guess surprising their

audiences, preachers do sometimes say, well, Satan's beautiful, Satan's wise, Satan's intelligent, as if, you know, I don't know, somehow this has been true to Scripture. I don't read anywhere in the Bible of the devil being wise or beautiful or good or anything like that, ever.

The king of Tyre was perfect in beauty. That is, his domain was, as I said, perfect in beauty. Now, as to Tyre, look at what he said to Tyre in verse 2. Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord God, because your heart is lifted up and you say, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God in the midst of the seas, yet you are a man and not God.

Look, he's not talking to an angel. It is true. The king of Tyre thinks he's God, too.

But he's not God. But it doesn't say, you're an angel, not God. He says, you're a man.

He's talking to a human being. You're a man. You're not God.

Though you set your heart as the heart of God, behold, notice in verse 3, you are wiser than Daniel. There is no secret that can be hidden from you. With your wisdom and your understanding, you have gained riches for yourself and gathered gold and silver and your heart is lifted up because of your riches.

Now I'm saying you're wiser than Daniel. That's stated in sarcasm. But it is addressing Tyre's self-opinion.

As far as the people of Tyre and the king of Tyre were concerned, their city was the perfection of beauty and wisdom. They had become masters of merchandising and they credited their own wisdom. They were proud of their beauty.

All of these things are said earlier. And now when he speaks to the king of Tyre and says, you are the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, he's just echoing the things he's already said about Tyre earlier. He's not talking about an angel here.

He's talking about Tyre and the king of Tyre. But then what about that business in verse 13? You were in Eden, the garden of God. You were in Eden, the garden of God.

Every precious stone was your covering, the sardius, topaz, etc., etc., etc. There are some who believe that this is referring to Satan as a serpent living in the garden of God. But they think, well, this must be before the gap of Genesis 1, 1 and 2 because we don't read of the garden of God being a place of trees, but a place of gems.

There's actually people who suggest that the garden of Eden, before Genesis 1, 2, actually existed as a place of gemstones rather than a place of trees and plants. Because it says you had your covering for your covering all these gems. Now frankly, I was made to believe from my childhood that Satan as a snake used to live under, you know, like snakes live under rocks, but the rocks he lived under were like gems and diamonds and

things like that in the garden of Eden.

Sorry, I don't think that means that. He's talking to the king of Tyre and says you're covered with jewels. Does that mean that he's a snake living under a rock? No, it means that he's a king wearing a lot of jewelry.

Every precious stone was your covering, the sardius, topaz, etc., etc., and the workmanship of your settings and your sockets was prepared for you the day you were created. Now, this is talking about a man bedecked with jewels, like a king is. But what about this business of being in Eden, the garden of God? Now, it's true, as far as we know, only four persons have ever been in the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve, God, and the serpent.

Because after that, Adam and Eve were protected from the garden and it was guarded by a cherub that would not allow people to go in. So, if we're talking about somebody from the story of the garden of Eden in Genesis 3, there's really, by the process of elimination, no one that could be but the serpent or the devil. But is that how we're supposed to understand it? Are we supposed to believe that this person who is addressed here as the king of Tyre was actually one of the characters in the drama of Genesis 3? Well, before you answer that question, here we have another prophecy against another king.

This one is a prophecy about Assyria. As chapter 28 was talking about Tyre, chapter 31 is talking about Assyria. And verse 3 of Ezekiel 31 says, Indeed, Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon with fine branches that shaded the forest, and of high stature, and its top was among the thick boughs.

Waters made it grow, underground waters gave it height, etc., etc. It says in verse 5, Therefore its height was exalted above all the trees of the field. Its boughs were multiplied, its branches became long because of the abundance of water, etc.

Down to verse 7, Thus it was beautiful in greatness, and the length of its branches because its roots reached to the abundant waters. The cedars in the garden of God and the chestnut trees were not like its branches. No tree in the garden of God was like it in beauty.

I made it beautiful with a multitude of branches so that all the trees of Eden envied it that were in the garden of God. Now who is this about? Is this about the devil? No, it's not about the devil. It's about the Assyrians.

It's about the Assyrian nation. It's figurative language, symbolic. It's sacred, healthy, prominent.

And where is it planted? In Eden, in the garden of God. And then it gets cut down. All the other trees in the garden envy it.



The imagery of being in the garden of Eden in Ezekiel does not necessarily mean that he's talking about somebody who is back in the story in the literal garden of Eden. He's using the term Eden, garden of God, very similarly to the way we might use the term paradise today. If you go to Hawaii you might call that a paradise.

If you go to Tahiti you might call that a paradise. When I came down to Honduras and Rob and Tracy were there for a while before me, I said, how do you like it? They said, it's like garden of Eden, it's like paradise down here. Well, that kind of expression is not uncommon.

Obviously Ezekiel uses it. He uses it to speak of the Assyrian. In chapter 31 he uses it to speak of the king of Tyre and it's not to take it literally when it's applied to the king of Tyre than there is to take it literally in chapter 31 when it's applied to the Assyrian.

And we know it's not literal in chapter 31 because the Assyrian is said to be a tree and that's not literal. We're not talking about a snake in a garden, we're talking about a tree in a garden. You were in Eden.

Just like the Assyrian was, so was Tyre. In other words, when the judgment came on Assyria these nations had it made in the shade. They were in paradise.

Everyone in paradise envied them. But this doesn't mean that the prophecies are addressed to an actual person who was in the literal garden of Eden because the persons addressed are people, human people. Now there is one other problem, only one that I can see in Ezekiel 28, and that is in Ezekiel 28, 14 where he says, you were the anointed cherub who covers.

Now, a cherub is not a human being. And probably this, along with the statement about Eden in this passage, these two factors are the only two things that really point to most people's minds in the direction of saying we're not talking to a human being here, we're talking to a cherub. Now, even if we allow that cherub is to be taken literally here, and if we allow that Satan is the person being addressed, then we would have to say that Satan was a cherub at one time.

Those two assumptions I'm not convinced of, but if we said Satan was a cherub, that still doesn't support this notion of him being one of three archangels. Archangels are not cherubs. Cherubs are different than angels.

They are apparently angelic creatures, but Ezekiel has described the cherubs he saw in chapter one and in Ezekiel chapter 10 he saw them, they have four faces each. Each cherub has a face of a lion, a face of an ox, a face of a man, and a face of an eagle, and they have four wings, and they're very strange looking creatures. Now, that doesn't mean that Satan couldn't have been one of these creatures, but if he was, he was not one of three archangels, and that kind of throws sand at the person.

A cherub, in verse 14, is no more literal than to say he was in the Garden of Eden, in verse 13. This is the imagery of Ezekiel's writing. It is symbolic.

A cherub, actually cherubs are spoken of more in Ezekiel than almost any other part of the Bible. The only other place where they're spoken of And, of course, in Genesis we have a cherub or cherubim that stand guarding the Garden of Eden, but Ezekiel actually describes cherubim. He's the only one who does.

He's into them. But, here when he says of this king that he was an anointed cherub, the cherubim, whenever they're seen to stand over the mercy seat, guarding the mercy seat, or when they guard the Tree of Life in Genesis chapter 3, they seem to always be guardians. And to say you, king of Tyre, were like a guardian angel to your people would be entirely possible to say without being literal at all.

In fact, not to say that the Hebrews had to speak like we do, because guardian angels may not be very common, but I've heard it used of people, and no one ever intended that we take it literally that they're angels. In fact, if someone says to another person, you're an angel, you're a perfect angel, we don't assume that this is communicating that these people are superhuman beings that come directly from heaven. We use the term figuratively, but what does it mean? Not a god, not an angel, but a man.

That he makes very clear in verse 2. He is the king of Tyre. That is made very clear in verse 12. He uses figurative language to talk about what a lovely, placid, idyllic situation this king had before he fell into sin and had to be judged by God.

But what kind of sin is it? Was this a rebellion against God, leading the angels against God, that this person fell into? No, look at verse 16. Speaking to the same person, it says, By the abundance of your trading, you became filled with violence within, and sin. Therefore I cast you out as a profane thing out of the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones.

Trading? I think the King James says, Merchandise. Tyre was a merchant city. It was a seaport city.

It became wealthy by its trade. This person, who is called the King of Tyre, became corrupted by trading, by merchandising, by materialism. There is not a description here of an angel being lifted up with pride to overcome God and lead a rebellion against God.

There is a description here of a wealthy city and its king, arrogant, self-sufficient, proud, and corrupted by wealth. That is what is described here. Now, if you have a hard time letting go of traditional ideas, you are certainly welcome to believe that Satan is secretly referred to here behind the scenes, but there is not anything in the passage to necessitate that conclusion.

And I tend to shy away myself from conclusions that do not have anything necessarily to

support them. And so, I must say, I have grave skepticism about this idea that Satan is a fallen angel, simply because the passages that are said to teach it do not teach any such thing at all. Seen in their context, there is no such teaching in Scripture.

Besides that, I always had some serious questions about the doctrine. I never really doubted that it was true. I just had questions as to how it worked out with other things.

Like, when did this happen? If Satan was an angel and he fell, when did it happen? If it happened before Adam sinned, then why was the devil still in heaven in the book of Job and other times? And if it happened after Adam sinned, how was it that he was evil when Adam was good? I mean, it is hard to fit it in to any scenario when did Satan fall? When was he good and when did he turn bad? I've always wondered this too, and I've been asked this by people before too. How could an angel who is said to be perfect in wisdom or full of wisdom be guilty of such a crass miscalculation as to think he could overthrow God? I mean, men sometimes may think such things, but that's because men are stupid. And it's also because men have never seen God.

I might think that I could take on Michael Jordan in a free throw contest, but I've never seen the guy. If I saw him, I'd revise my estimates of the outcome of such a contest. A man, a king on earth, may feel that he can overthrow God.

He's never seen him. But an angel that looks on the face of God and knows the infinite power of God and the finite limitations of his own person, is there really anything about such an angel that could be called wise if he thinks he can overpower that God? I've never understood this. I thought either Satan must have been the stupidest angel ever, in which case it's strange that he's said to be full of wisdom, or else this never occurred, this scenario that I've always heard about, this angel trying to revolt against God.

Actually, there is another possibility. And if this possibility is correct, then it overthrows the more popular theory. Look at what Jesus said in John chapter 8, in verse 44, speaking to the hostile Jews who were opposing him.

Jesus said in John 8, 44, You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. You know, the expression he does not stand in the truth does not is an italics in the New King James.

That means it's not in the Greek. I'm not a Greek scholar, so I don't know what the best translation would be, but I have seen modern translations that say he never stood in the truth. What does the New American Standard say about that? Does not stand in the truth.

Does anyone have another translation here? No other translation to represent him? Abode or did not remain in the truth. But I have seen translations, I don't remember

which were that said he never stood in the truth, but that's not an important point to me. I just wondered if anyone had a translation that read like that.

The important thing is that it says Satan was a murderer from the beginning. Now to say that somebody was a certain thing from the beginning ordinarily tells us that he was always that way and never was any other way. Now what would we do with a verse like this if we had a clear teaching elsewhere in Scripture that Satan was a fallen angel? I'll tell you what I would do if I had a clear teaching elsewhere from Scripture that Satan was a fallen angel, I would have to take this Scripture to mean he was a murderer from the beginning of his recorded activities in the Bible.

You know like from the Garden of Eden, that's where we first read of Satan. From the beginning of his recorded activities he was a murderer. He was already bad when he first shows up in the Garden of Eden.

We never see him before that. And after all Genesis does say in the beginning. That's the beginning of something.

But I could argue that maybe he was an angel who fell prior to that. But from the beginning meaning the beginning of human history, the beginning of Satan's activity in the human history, from that time he's always been a murderer. I could come up with that concocted explanation of this if I had firm and clear teaching elsewhere that Satan was a fallen angel.

But in the absence of such clear teaching, Jesus' statement would more naturally be understood to mean he's always been the way he is now. He was a murderer from the beginning. And John said something obviously inspired by what Jesus said here.

Over in 1 John chapter 3 in verse 8, 1 John chapter 3 in verse 8, it says, He who sins is of the devil. For the devil has sinned from the beginning for this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil. Notice, the devil has sinned from the beginning.

Now this expression from the beginning is the difficult thing here. What does it mean? The beginning of what? The beginning of recorded history or the beginning of the devil himself? Did the devil have a beginning? Well, everyone agrees he did. The devil is a created being.

He's not eternal like God. He's not infinite like God. He's a created being.

So he had a beginning. The question is, what was he like in the beginning? What was he like when he began? Was he a good angel who turned bad? Or was he made bad? Was he made in the first place what he is now? Now, when we ask that question, our answer to it often is dictated more by our sentiments and our philosophy than by direct statements of Scripture. For example, if we were to go by direct statements of Scripture,

we would tend to think that Satan has always been bad.

The Bible says he sinned from the beginning. He was a murderer from the beginning. In the absence of any information in Scripture to the contrary, that certainly would suggest that he's never been any better than he is now.

But, there are reasons why people are interested in making Satan out to have been at one time better than he is now. One of those reasons is philosophical and emotional. And that is this, that if Satan was made the way he is now, doesn't that make God the author of evil? If God created the devil, doesn't that make God somehow responsible for the things the devil does? And, that doesn't set well with Christians generally.

Therefore, the solution is, and by the way, this has always been a favorite answer to the hard question of if God's a good God, why is there evil in the universe? Hard philosophical question. Christians have always enjoyed resorting to this simple explanation. Well, God is a good God, but the reason there's evil in the universe is not because God created it, but because the devil brings evil in the universe.

And some say, well, didn't God make the devil? Yeah, yeah, but he made him good. God only made good things. God didn't make any devils.

He only made angels. And, this particular angel turned bad. And that's where evil came from.

But that doesn't answer all the questions, and it certainly doesn't absolve God of the points that people are trying to absolve him of. When you think about it, if God made an angel knowing that that angel was going to become a devil, and made him anyway, why not skip the middle man and just make the devil in the first place? I mean, what does it make God any less responsible for the devil's presence? Does it make God any less responsible for the devil's existence and his activities? If God, knowing that if he made this angel, he was in fact going to be making a devil because that angel was going to turn into a devil. Couldn't he have avoided making the angel in the first place? Doesn't it suggest that if he knew the angel would become a devil, and made him anyway, that he had use for a devil? That he had reasons for being a devil? Furthermore, if we went so far as some people do, and say, well, God doesn't know the future of free moral choices people make, or angels, and some people would actually say that God didn't know that Lucifer would fall, that Lucifer, they suggest, was an angel, and God made him intending for him to always be an angel, but didn't know for sure.

He knew that he could, but didn't know that he would fall and become a devil. Therefore, God is innocent of the matter. Well, there are still problems here.

If God wanted to make sure there would be no devil, there's a couple of things he could do. Even if he didn't know what Lucifer would do, he could make creatures that were

incapable of becoming devils. After all, God did that with the animals.

Animals can't rebel against him. He could have made angels without the capability of rebellion also. But he obviously, if he made a creature that was capable of rebelling, he at least left open the possibility that this angel would rebel, and therefore, again, becomes in some measure a cause of the existence of this devil.

But there's something more. Whether God did or did not anticipate Lucifer falling, we still have the phenomenon of God tolerating him after he fell. By anyone's theology, if Satan is a fallen angel, God could have taken that rascal as soon as he fell and threw him in the lake of fire and that would be the end of him.

Instead, he kept him around and has made use of him for lo these 6,000 or more years. Now that is something that no theology can get around. You can say God didn't know he'd fall, God knew he'd fall, but he's not responsible for it.

You can say all these things, but what can you do with the fact that Satan, after allegedly falling, God kept him around? Is God incapable of stopping him? Is God incapable of annihilating him? Couldn't God at any moment he wished just take the devil and hurl him into the lake of fire? The Bible indicates that an angel can put him into a pit and that someday he's going to be thrown into the lake of fire. Why wait? Why didn't God get rid of him sooner than this? There's a fact of Scripture we're going to have to live with and that is that God has use for the devil. That's a fact.

If God had no use for him, he'd get rid of him right now. He could. There's nothing preventing it.

God has use for a devil. That is biblical. It says in Proverbs 16, the Lord has made all things for himself, yes, even the wicked, for the day of doom.

God has made all things for himself, yes, even the wicked, for the day of doom. Now, it doesn't specify that the wicked here is a reference to the devil. Certainly, it could apply to wicked people.

But whether it applies to the devil, as I think it does, or whether it applies to wicked people, the point remains that God is not shy about saying, yes, these wicked creatures, I made them. I made them for my purposes. I mean, if we say, why is there wickedness? Why is there evil in the world? We don't have to try to keep God's hands clean by saying, well, God didn't make any evil things.

God only made good things, and some of those turned evil. God is not shy about saying, yes, I made the evil. I made the evil people.

I made the evil devil. I made all things for my purposes, even the wicked, for the day of doom. God is not trying to defend Himself against any charge of being responsible for

evil.

He's not responsible for evil. But He doesn't deny that He made the wicked for His own purposes. Now, we can see in Scripture that God actually does have a use for temptation in the life of the believer.

Let me show you something over here in Deuteronomy 13. This is not a passage about the devil, but it is a passage about the character of God that may tell us something about God's purposes for making a devil. In Deuteronomy 13, verses 1-3, Moses tells the people, If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, Let us go after other gods which you have not known, and let us serve them.

You shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. Now, notice this part. For the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Now, as I said, that's not a passage about the devil so much as a passage about the character of God. But it is relevant to the question of whether God might make a devil. We're told that there will be false prophets that will come and do signs and lying wonders among Israel and try to lead them after other gods.

God says, Don't follow them. Well, interestingly, He doesn't say, Don't follow them because they're demonic. Don't follow them because the devil is behind it.

He says, Don't follow them because the Lord is using them to test you to see if you love Him with all your heart and your soul. Isn't that interesting? God allows lying wonders, demonic signs, false prophets to test His people's loyalty. Now, why would He do that? Does He have to do that? Anyone twisting His arm making Him do that? No.

It's in His purposes to test the loyalty of His moral creatures. That's why He made moral creatures so that they could either be loyal or not. But it would make no sense to make creatures that were capable of being disloyal but no options.

Only one option, and that is to be obedient. But if there is no option of disobedience, if there is no inducement to consider another way than the right way, then the loyalty of God's people would be of no meaning whatsoever. God has use for a divinely appointed tester of the loyalty and faithfulness of His moral creation.

It would appear that some of the angels failed the test. We don't know how many or what were specified, but three angels have failed. And they didn't.

All humans are. And they must be tested. It's in the purpose of God that we should be tested.

And if God desires that our moral and spiritual loyalty to Him and our love for Him be tested, why would He not make a tester in the first place? Why go the long way around and make an angel and wait for Him to fall? No need to, especially since the Bible doesn't ever claim that God did such a thing. God could just make a divinely appointed tester. Now you might say, doesn't that make God the author of evil? Well, that depends on what we understand the nature of Satan to be.

Certainly he's evil. No question about that. He's called the evil one and the wicked one.

But is he actually doing personally any harm himself? Or is it that he induces people to do harm? You know, all the evil in the world comes when people listen to the devil and submit to the devil and so forth. It's not so much that the devil makes anything happen in terms of sin in the world. He does take captive people who are foolish enough to listen to his lies and to be in captivity to him.

But that's their fault. That's their choice. Adam and Eve were not made to fall.

What the devil simply did was try to persuade them to... Well, he deceived them, basically. But they didn't have to be deceived. Satan was simply there offering an alternative, convincingly, that was contrary to the alternative God had of obedience to himself for them.

And they took the wrong alternative. Is God responsible for that? No, they are. But God may have made the devil.

Well, of course he made the devil. Everyone agrees with that. Not everyone agrees that he made him a devil, but God made him.

He exists and continues to exist by God's decree and will cease to have a career as soon as God decides that he's finished with him. We can't deny that God wants there to be a devil for the time being. Sarah was asking me during the break about a perplexing passage at the end of 1 Kings 22 where Micaiah the prophet sees a vision.

And God is surrounded by these spirits in heaven. And he says, Who will go and persuade Ahab to fall at Ramoth-Gilead? Ahab was a wicked king. God intended to judge him in battle.

But he had to find some way to induce Ahab to go out to battle. And it says that in this vision that Micaiah the prophet had, one spirit came forward and suggested one thing, another suggested another. Apparently none of the plans really convinced God until finally a spirit came forward and said, I will persuade him.

And God said, how? And the spirit said, I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophets. And God said to that spirit, Go and do so. Interesting.



God sending an evil spirit, a lying spirit to the mouth of Ahab's false prophets to persuade Ahab to go and fall in battle. Now, I don't know what that does to your ideas about the spiritual scene or anything, but what that tells us is that God is the Sovereign One. The demons even do His bidding whether they like it or not.

We know that the things that came upon Job came upon them because the devil had malice toward Job, and the devil was used by God to test Job. God did not have to allow Satan to touch Job. And the devil complained about that, said, I can't get near him.

You put a hedge around him and everything he has, I can't touch him. But if you allow me to, then I can make him curse you to your face. He's accusing Job.

And God is willing to test Job's loyalty. So he says, okay, Satan, I haven't let you near him until now, but I'll let you near him now. Only this much, though.

No more. We see God as the one who is totally in control. It's not as if this spiritual warfare thing was really a touch-and-go kind of thing.

I wonder who is going to win this thing. There's never been any question about who is going to win this battle. The question is when and through what means is God going to win the battle.

But Satan is not God's equal, not even close. He's a created being. He's as much below God as the earth is below the heavens.

He's not God's equal and not even a rival. But he is a creation of God who is there that God wanted to contest. He didn't want just to have a world full of pigeons and storks that fly at their appointed times to the right places and animals that do all the things their instincts tell them to do and ants and beehives where everyone does their own thing just the right way because it's built into them and they've got no other choices.

God didn't just want a mechanical creation. He wanted a moral creation. He wanted moral beings.

And morality requires choices on moral issues. And in order for there to be choices, there have to be options. And therefore, though God wants all people to obey Him, He wants them to obey Him having chosen to do so over other options.

If there are no other options, their obedience is meaningless and of no value. Therefore, it would appear that God wants His people to be tested. And He uses the devil.

He uses demons. We find that an evil spirit from the Lord came against Saul at a certain point. The New King James actually says a distressing spirit from God came upon Saul.

That is a euphemism. That's the New King James translator trying to get out of the uncomfortable situation that the Bible actually says that an evil spirit from the Lord

came against Saul. They don't like that, so they change it to a distressing spirit from the Lord.

But actually, it's saying that evil spirits were sent by God against Saul as a judgment upon him. But God can use demonic forces. Look over at 2 Corinthians 12.

2 Corinthians 12, verses 1-5. Paul says, It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will now come to visions and dreams.

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago, whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know. God knows. Such a one was caught up to third heaven.

I know such a man, whether in or out of the body, I do not know. God knows. How he was caught up into paradise and heard inexpressible words, which is not lawful for a man to utter.

Such a one I will boast, yet not of myself, etc., etc. In verse 7, And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan, to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing, I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

And he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, most gladly, I will rather boast in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities and reproaches and needs and persecutions and distresses for Christ's sake.

For when I am weak, then I am strong. Now, what's interesting here is that he's got a messenger of Satan. The source of this messenger is Satan, seen one way.

What were the source of Job's trials? Certainly, he could have said Satan was. But what did Job say? Job said the Lord was. Job said the Lord gives and the Lord takes away.

He didn't say the Lord gives and the devil takes away. It is true the devil was instrumental in Job's trials. It is also true that the devil was instrumental in Paul's trials.

He was a messenger of Satan. However, this was all within God's purposes for Job to be tried, for Paul to be tried. And when Paul prayed that this messenger of Satan be taken away, God says, No, that's okay.

You can endure it. I'll give you more strength. I'll give you more grace.

Paul said this thorn in the flesh, this messenger of Satan was sent to him so that he wouldn't be exalted above measure. In other words, for some spiritual reason of a positive sort, God allowed this interaction with a demonic affliction. Now, this may tweak your brain a little bit to consider this, but it is quite consistent with Scripture to believe that God would create the devil to test us, to test our loyalty, and that we are in a battle

not only to remain loyal against such temptations, but to bring others out of darkness who have succumbed and have not passed the test to bring them into a place of loyalty to God.

And this is the contest. This is the battle that we're involved in. Is Satan a fallen angel? I really don't know.

The Bible doesn't say he is, so how would I know? Or would I get information about it if not from the Bible? And if the Bible's silent, how could anyone have any information at all on it? I think it is a philosophical necessity for some people to say that God didn't make a devil, he made an angel, and the angel turned into a devil, because they think that somehow insulates God from the criticism that he made the devil. But it doesn't really do the job. God either made a devil knowing that it's an angel knowing he'd be a devil, in which case, might as well skip the middle part and just make the devil in the first place.

He had use for him as a devil. Why start out with an angel? And especially since the Bible doesn't say he did that. Or else, if God made an angel not knowing he'd fall, then God could have gotten rid of him once he fell.

He certainly knew it then. But he didn't. It's clear that God has use for this war.

God has use for this contest. It is accomplishing something. It will not go on forever, and it will have an end and Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and there will be no more tests after that.

But there is a reason for the testing. And it is a contest that we need and that we have to be engaged in for the souls of others. Let me just say this.

There is one other problem that some have had with the idea that Satan may have been created for this purpose, and that is that we find him being thrown into the lake of fire at the end of time. And some people think it's not really very fair for God to make a devil who has no choice but to be a devil. He's made to be a devil and he carries out his work very faithfully.

He does exactly what he's made to do. And then he gets punished for it by being thrown in the lake of fire. Is that really just of God to do that? Well, my answer to that is it depends somewhat on what we understand to be the devil's ongoing experience once he's thrown into the lake of fire.

The Bible nowhere says that the devil is tormented forever and ever. The lake of fire may consume him. It may be the end of him.

Hey, Christians have died in fires. It's not the ultimate in cruelty to exterminate or to burn up, to incinerate something that ceased to be useful. The human body, many godly

people have died, their bodies have died in fires.

It's not a judgment or a punishment of God if we die in flames. The real issue is we don't know if Satan's an eternal being or not. The simple fact that he's thrown into the lake of fire doesn't tell us whether his torment goes on and on and on and on or not.

We don't read of what happens to him after that. Perhaps he's burned up. Maybe it's just getting rid of him, getting rid of a tool that has served its purpose.

I don't know. In any case, I don't really feel that the clay has the right to say to the potter, why have you made me thus? If God makes a vessel for dishonor, that's his business. And if Satan is such a vessel, we can count on God being no less just than we would be ourselves.

In fact, he'd be more just than we would be. And we don't know exactly all the things that we may be curious about. The fact of the matter is we cannot say with certainty whether Satan is a fallen angel or not.

Most people assume that I think he is not. And I think they're right. I do think he is not.

But I can't be sure simply because the Bible is not explicit. The most explicit comments on the subject that exist are Jesus' comment that Satan was a murderer from the beginning and John's comment that Satan sinned from the beginning. And if that means what it sounds like it means, then it seems to me that Satan never was any better than he is now.

If those statements don't mean what they sound like they mean, then they might mean something else. What they mean, then, is open to question, open to speculation. But we do not have any plain statement in Scripture that Satan ever was an angel.

And since we don't have a clear statement from the Scripture on it, I'm not going to postulate that as a likelihood. If he was, then there's some other problems. Why would an angel be stupid enough to rebel against God who has seen Him face to face and tried to overcome Him? Now, if you say, well, aren't there some fallen angels that rebelled against God? Yeah, but it doesn't say they tried to overcome God.

There was some way in which they were tempted to do what was wrong. It's not the same thing as trying to replace God on His throne. Anyway, there are some mysteries left unanswered in Scripture.

The Bible apparently does not, as God who wrote the Bible or inspired it, did not think it necessary for us to have clear information on the origin of Satan himself or of demons for that matter. We'll talk about demons eventually here too. Much of what we think about demons is based on tradition also and not so much on Scripture as we might think.

But I just leave you with these scriptural passages to consider. And if you deduce that there's not enough there to make a decision, then maybe we should deduce that God doesn't care for us to be overly concerned about the origin of Satan. Whether he's a fallen angel or not, we know what he is now.

And that's what we have to contend with. We don't have to contend with an angel, theoretical or real. We have to contend with a real devil.

One who is evil now, whatever he may have been before. And so, in some ways, it's a moot point, a matter of curiosity merely, whether the devil is ever an angel. If he was, it might give us some philosophical comfort to know that God didn't make a devil.

But even if God did make a devil, that doesn't mean that God wanted the devil to have any success. If God made the devil, it would just mean that God wanted us to be tested. But to say that he wants us to be tested doesn't mean he wants us to fail the test.

Obviously, God wants us to pass the test. But we can't pass a test if there's no tester. And that's what temptation means, is testing.

The word temptation means testing, and Satan is called the tempter or the tester in Scripture. And so that's what he is now. Whether he was anything else before is open to question, but that's what he is now, and that's what we're going to be contending with.

We'll talk about some of the practical details of spiritual warfare in the following lectures. It's just necessary early on to talk about who it is we're up against and what he's there for. And we'll set some perspective, I think, on the other things we have to talk about in terms of our spiritual warfare.

We'll stop there. And if anyone has any questions, feel free.