



May 13, 2021

## **Satan: The Early Years and His Strategy**

"How you are 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.'" - **Isaiah 14:12-14**

The devil is in heaven, engaged in warfare right now. The Bible speaks of three heavens: the heaven of the air around us, the heaven of the angels, and then the heaven of heavens, the place where God himself dwells. According to Paul, Satan's realm is that first heaven where he is "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). John also called him "the prince of this world."

As we see in the story of Job, Satan also occasionally goes into the highest of the heavens into the presence of God. Why would God allow that? God is demonstrating to all the citizens of the heavens that he has an agenda. As we have seen, that agenda involves creating a community of free beings who have the power to act contrary to God and to undergo temptation. Satan is serving God's purposes on earth as part of that arrangement.

Satan is described as a special angel who at one time oversaw what we now call the earth, and possibly the entire solar system. This is what Paul was referring to when he called Satan "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). At first this rule would have been a benevolent one, overseeing a part of God's good and perfect creation. At some point, however, he desired to be like God and fell away from God. We see a description of this above, in the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah. Part of this may sound familiar, very much like the serpent's temptation of Eve: "You will be like God" (Gen. 3:5).

The prophet Ezekiel further described Satan's rebellion against God. In the beginning of chapter 28, Ezekiel is dealing with a specific historical situation involving the king of Tyre. But then verse 13 states, "You were in Eden, the garden of God." Surely the king of Tyre couldn't have been in the garden of Eden. Once again, as in Isaiah, we find the shift that so often happens in the prophetic books, and suddenly another figure begins to emerge ([read Ezekiel 28:12-17](#)). We may learn that in his original form, Satan had a primary role in relation to the earth, undoubtedly the role of the governor of the earth. But in rebellion against God he fell from his exalted position and became the tempter of human beings.

**Reflect:** *The only way the devil can hurt God is through humans, and so he focuses upon us. His strategy is to try to frustrate God's purpose for humanity, beginning at "the beginning" in the garden of Eden. Through deceit and temptation he succeeded in diverting the plan of God for Adam and Eve and their descendants. But you must understand this: Satan can do nothing about God's unshakable kingdom directly, but only indirectly through human infirmity and rebellion. His way of doing that is to persuade, and to tempt, and to deceive humanity. (Q) Maybe it's just me, but would you agree that we make it too easy for the devil to jerk us around in order to hurt God, ourselves, and others around us? Maybe it's time to become those who are not overcome by evil, but through discipleship to Jesus, are learning how to overcome evil with good.*