

Satan's Fate—Life or Death?

by Melvin Hershberger

For years, I have believed that it seemed unfair and unjust for the being called Satan, who is considered the most corrupted being and the author of evil, be able to keep its life forever and pain free both physically and spiritually. Meanwhile, people under Satan's influence who have not repented, must suffer greatly in their final demise by giving up their lives.

Since God is Sovereign, of course, God will do as He desires. Being that God is also merciful, fair and just, then maybe another examination of the fate of Satan is in order.

Lucifer's Creation and Sin

In Ezekiel chapter 28 there is a clear description of a created being that is not mortal.

Ezekiel 28:11 ¶ Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

12 "Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say unto him, 'Thus saith the Lord GOD: "'Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering: the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold; the workmanship of thy taborets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth, and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

We also read in Isaiah 14:12-14, the following about fallen angels.

Isa. 14:12 "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, who didst weaken the nations!

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north.

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High.'

We also read that this being was called Lucifer and was in heaven where it exalted itself, weakened nations, tried to be like God and probably tried to dethrone Him. A third of the angels apparently followed Lucifer and were cast to the earth with this spirit being. Revelation 12 relates that a third part of the stars were cast to the earth. The word stars in Revelation usually refer to the angelic realm.

Rev. 12:4 And his tail drew a third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to be delivered to devour her child as soon as it was born.

Satan is also found to deceive the whole world in the twelfth chapter of Revelation, as well as the accuser of the brethren.

Rev. 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out—that serpent of old called the Devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world. He was cast out onto the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in Heaven, "Now have come salvation and

strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night.

The book of John states that Satan is a murderer and a liar.

John 8:41 Ye do the deeds of your father.” Then they said to Him, “We are not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.”

44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it.

If you are like most people, you may never have given much thought to how the mind of Satan was created. At best you might just imply that God was unprepared for this change and rebellion. However, there is more than one way to create, what we would call, the mind, (preprogrammed robotics, freewill, imitational, etc.). God chose and designed the mind to have the ability to choose. It therefore follows that He was fully prepared with a penalty for sin before Lucifer was even created. Does it seem logical, for God not to have been prepared, in how to deal with this being that was created with a mind and that would have a choice to follow God or reject Him?

Wages of Sin

Many people believe of course that man is an immortal soul and will suffer pain for eternity in an ever burning hell along with Satan. In other words, the wages of sin is eternal life in hell.

Other's believe it is death for people but life in darkness for Satan. It is believed that Satan will suffer mental anguish by seeing its works destroyed.

But consider this example. A mother having to watch her small child burn up in a fire is probably the epitome of mental torment. Now to compare the anguish that Satan would suffer in watching its works destroyed to the aforementioned mother's torment is a gross insult. Even a family losing their home to a fire would probably suffer greater torment than the losses it would cause to Satan, because people are created to need homes or shelter but Satan doesn't need or require any of those physical things.

Surely the most evil and abominable creature in the universe deserves a greater punishment than to see its works destroyed and still keep its life in some dark place with a lot of company. One wonders if darkness would really distress Satan since the scriptures connect Satan to darkness.

Eph. 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Col. 1:13 He hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son,

So what is the penalty of sin?

It is clear from the following scripture that the penalty for sin is death and that the scriptures clearly show that Satan is a sinner.

Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. So it would appear that Satan will be given the death penalty.

Jesus was asked about marriage in the resurrection. Part of His answer is used to show that Satan won't die.

Luke 20:34 And Jesus answering said unto

them, “The children of this world marry and are given in marriage. 35 But they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that World and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, 36 neither can they **die any more**; for they are equal unto the angels and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

So we see that this scripture seems to indicate that angels can not die. But we need to watch the conclusion that might be drawn.

There is a church of God doctrine that most seem to hold to which teaches “that Satan can not die but God could”. Have you ever thought about that? The doctrine teaches that there was an eternal God who became a man and really died and rose from the dead by another God Being. But the inferior created being (Satan) could not be destroyed.” Surely this can not be correct.

Jer. 32:27 “Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there any thing too hard for Me?

We have read in Luke 20:36 that spirits live forever, but can not God destroy anything that He creates?

Mat 19:26 But Jesus beheld them and said unto them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

There is another principle which probably applies to Satan as well. ¹

Deut. 19:16 If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong, and further on in Deut. 19:19 then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to

¹”Satan Dies”, Robert and Martha Shimmel Ministry Publications of God

have done unto his brother; so shalt thou put the evil away from among you.

It is clear that Satan is a murderer and wants to kill us and therefore deserves death. God desires to avenge His saints and it would seem the principles from these scriptures would also apply to Satan.

Ps. 18:47 It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people under me;

Rom.12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written: “Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”

2Thes. 1:6 For it is a righteous thing with God to recompense with tribulation those who trouble you; and in verse 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who know not God, and who obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Eternal Torment

Concerning eternal torment we read the following in the book of Revelation.

Rev. 20:10 And the devil who had deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Let us look at one more scripture before we analyze this one.

Rev. 14:10 the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out unmixed into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and

whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”

We see in v 11 that these people have no rest day nor night and their smoke goes up forever. If they have no rest, than they are in torment forever. We will see from other scriptures that the wicked will be destroyed. So they clearly can not be tormented after that. The smoke of course goes up as smoke does but the fire eventually burns out.

Now notice in Rev. 20:10 that the torment of the devil is described in the context of the lake of fire which will also eventually burn out.

Certainly many of us are aware that the word forever does not always mean eternity in the Bible.

Let us notice a few scriptures.

Jude 7 even as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

We know that Sodom and Gomorra were destroyed by fire and the fire has burned out. So we see the eternal fire is an expression that shows permanent results. Jesus did show in Mat 10:15 that mercy will be extended to these two cities.

Mat. 10:15 Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for that city.

Ex 12: 21 ¶ Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said unto them, “Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the Passover.

22 And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and

dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out from the door of his house until the morning... 24 And ye shall observe this thing as an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever.

We clearly do not strike our door jambs with blood on Passover anymore.

Lev. 16:24-31 24 and he shall wash his flesh with water in the Holy Place and put on his garments, and come forth and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself and for the people. 25 And the fat of the sin offering shall he burn upon the altar. 26 And he that let go the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp. 27 And the bullock for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, shall one carry forth outside the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins and their flesh and their dung. 28 And he that burneth them shall wash his clothes and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp. 29 ¶ “And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country or a stranger who sojourneth among you; 30 for on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. 31 It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever.

This statute also lasts no longer than the human family does.

Mat. 5:17 ¶ “Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I am not

come to destroy, but to fulfill. 18 For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle shall in any wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.

Jesus showed that after the law has served it's purpose and in the new heaven and earth some of it will no longer be needed.

As we shall see, neither humans nor demons will burn forever in a hell fire.

Death is feared by most people. Even hardened criminals on death row use appeals that take many years to run their course. One convicted murderer in Ohio refused appeals and volunteered to be executed. He was attacked by other inmates for seemingly putting their lives in jeopardy. Finally, the inmate received his wish and was executed.

We read in the book of James that the demons are terrified of God.

James 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well. The devils also believe—and tremble.

Could it be that they tremble because they have seen God when He was angry and fear the condemnation to death?

God's character is such that He does not desire to torment beings for eternity. He is not a sadist. However, the devil is. If banishing demons to outer darkness is indeed a great deal of torment, then that would seem to rule out that punishment.

Lake of Fire

Let us notice what is said by Christ on the judgment day.

Mat. 25:41 “Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the

devil and his angels.

Notice that the fire is prepared for the devil and his angels. The wicked and the devil both appear to receive the same sentence. It does not appear that the fire is only to consume the wicked and all the works of Satan but to leave him unscathed.

Mat 25:41 “Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. and in verse 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.”

This clearly is where the wicked meet their final fate. But will the devil be cast into the lake of fire that is prepared for him?

We need to look again at a scripture discussed earlier.

Rev. 20:10 And the devil who had deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

So, yes the devil is cast into the fire. So far we see the same punishment meted out to the wicked and Satan.

But what happens to the wicked? What is the end result of them suffering in this place?

Mal 4:1 ¶ “For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble. And the day that cometh shall burn them up,” saith the LORD of hosts, “that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. 2 But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves from the stall. 3 And ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes

under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this,” saith the LORD of hosts

Notice how explicit the language is here. The wicked are burned up and become ashes. They are utterly consumed. No further pain or torment.

But what happens to Satan?

Satan Destroyed

Ezek. 28:16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned; therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Here the word of God says “I will destroy thee”. But I had been taught that this is a wrong translation. Is it really? Let us look at the Hebrew word for destroy which is “abad” in another scripture.

Ezek. 32:13 I will destroy also all the beasts thereof from beside the great waters; neither shall the foot of man trouble them any more, nor the hoofs of beasts trouble them.

We see that God says “I will destroy (abad) also all the beasts”. Also, look at Ezek 30:13, “Thus saith the Lord God; I will destroy (abad) the idols,”.

Is there more evidence that Satan will be destroyed? Yes, there is.

Heb 2:14 ¶ For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death—that is, the devil—

Again our teachers want to change this word destroy. So we will see how this word

destroy in Greek “kattargeo” is translated in another scripture.

2Thes. 2:8 And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy (kattargeo) with the brightness of His coming—

It is plain that the Lord will consume and destroy (katargeo) that wicked person who is a servant of Satan v.9. even him, whose coming is according to the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders,..... Can we accept that Satan is to be destroyed ?

Now let us continue with this story in Ezekiel.

Ezek 28:17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness. I will cast thee to the ground; I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic. Therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee; it shall devour thee; and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. 19 All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee; thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.”

This subject does not appear to change until v 20. Notice that in v.18 that a fire comes out from his midst and devours him. And he is turned to ashes. Mal. 4:1-3 also states that the wicked will be turned to ashes. It seems to be clear that the wicked and Satan share the same penalty.

Outer Darkness

But what about the scriptures that depict Satan in outer darkness? Aren't the

scriptures clear in declaring Satan's fate as being banished in outer darkness? These are fair questions.

2Peter 2:4 For if God spared not the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment;

Here we see a description of fallen angels reserved in darkness until the judgment. This certainly seems to be right here on earth.

Jude 6 And the angels who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great Day—

This scripture of course is describing the same situation.

Jude 13 raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

These wandering stars are very likely the fallen angels. It says that the blackness of darkness is reserved for them forever. Should we really view this as their existence in a dark corner of the universe forever, in light of all the other scriptures describing that of fire, ashes, and destroy? Let us dig a little deeper and maybe we can get a balanced view. So far we have seen that if we look at the language for both the wicked and evil spirits, "destroy, fire, ashes," the language is the same.

Mat. 8:12 But the children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Here Jesus says that people also shall be cast into outer darkness. So why don't we want to accept this scripture as literal as well as the

previous ones concerning demons? What happens in the parable to the man without a wedding garment?

Mat. 22:13 Then said the king to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Again outer darkness is depicted. Notice what happens to the unprofitable servant.

Mat. 25:30 'And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The same language is used again. Are we beginning to understand?

Let us continue reading in the book of 2 Peter.

2 Peter 2:1, 1 ¶ But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction....

Continuing in verse 10 thru verse 13 we read:

10 ¶ but chiefly those who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise governance. Presumptuous are they and self-willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities, 11 whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. 12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption, 13 and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own

deceptions while they feast with you.....

We see that these evil people deny the Lord, walk after their own lusts, speak evil of dignitaries which the angels do not do will utterly perish. But notice further what the scriptures say will happen to these evil people that I have clearly established in other scriptures, as well as this section here, that they will be destroyed.

2 Peter 2:17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried by a tempest, for whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

It very clearly says 2 Peter 2:12 that these people who are destroyed are in the mist of darkness forever. If Jude 13 proves that fallen angels will live for ever in darkness, then I submit that 2 Peter 2:17 proves the same for the wicked. We have seen that the same fate awaits the wicked and evil spirits. It should be clear by now that this darkness is the state of mind in death. Utter and total void and darkness forever. The thoughts of the dead perish.

Ps. 146:4 4 His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Eccl. 9:5 For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything, neither

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I don not agree with everything in this article, but it brings up many scriptures and points that many have overlooked. For more on this subject, ask for *What Does The Bible Say About Eternal Judgment?* free from the above address.

—Norman Edwards

have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.

One might ask if God can destroy spirit. Spirit certainly doesn't die of itself but it is still thought that whatever God can create, He can destroy. Even Herbert Armstrong's envoy Gerald Waterhouse has declared that God can destroy Satan. But, he also said that he just felt that the Bible teaches that he won't.

If you accept that there have been two spirit beings (God) from eternity, and one volunteered to become flesh and die, then certainly you can see that if Satan has to be physical to be destroyed that God can surely turn Satan to flesh also. Was not Christ flesh?

1 Cor 6:3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?

When you find yourself in the judgment day perhaps as a jurist for the demons, how will you vote?¹

Life or death?

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¹ "Satan Dies", Robert and Martha Shimmel Ministry Publications of God