



Church of God Ministries

Spanish Fort, Alabama

Will Satan be Destroyed?

The Bible records that Satan has been destroyed and/or will be destroyed. How is this possible since he is a spirit being?

The angels that God created are spirit beings. The book of Hebrews states: “But to which of the angels has He ever said: ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool?’ Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” (Hebrews 1:13-14).

When speaking of those who would be in the resurrection at His return, Jesus said, “But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection” (Luke 20:35-36). So it’s clear from the Bible that *spirit will not die*.

Many do not realize that the devil was at one time a righteous angel! Therefore, he also, is a spirit being. The prophet Ezekiel spoke of Satan before he rebelled. We are told he was an “anointed cherub [an angel at God’s throne] who covers,” a reference to those angels honored to be at God’s throne (Ezekiel 28:14; see also Exodus 25:20). Isaiah 14:12 tells us that his name at that time as a cherub was Lucifer. “Lucifer” is translated from the Hebrew word *heylel*, which means “shining one” (Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew Lexicon).

Ezekiel continues describing Lucifer “You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created” (verse 15). However, at some point (which it does not say exactly when) this high-ranking angel became corrupt. He turned egotistical, violent, and self-centered. Lucifer sinned against his Creator! And in doing so, he became Satan, meaning “adversary” (International Standard Bible Dictionary).

Other scriptures in the Bible indicate that Satan convinced one-third of the other angels to join his rebellion in an attempt to overthrow God (Revelation 12:4, 7). Because of his rebellion, God said to him: “I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain [symbolic of government] of God; and I destroyed you O covering cherub from the midst of the fiery stones” (Ezekiel 28:16).

Christ told His disciples that He had personally witnessed this momentous event (Luke 10:18). So, let’s see how Satan could be destroyed, even though he is a spirit being.

If Satan is destroyed, then how?

To understand this apparent contradiction, we need to consider the contextual meaning of the Hebrew word translated “destroyed.” This Hebrew word, *’abad* (Strong’s #6), is commonly used in the Hebrew Scriptures, and may be translated “to perish, to vanish, to destroy or to put to

death” depending on the context and the verb stem in the Hebrew (The King James Version Old Testament Hebrew Lexicon).

In the context of this passage, Satan was “destroyed ... from the midst of the fiery stones.” The sense is that God is going to cause Satan to vanish or be removed from His presence. When we compare what is said in Ezekiel 28 with other scriptures pertaining to Satan’s fate, it becomes clear that God is going to eventually bind the devil permanently, rendering him useless in terms of continuing to deceive humans.

Many centuries after Ezekiel penned his prophecy, Paul wrote to the Corinthian church about Satan, calling him “the god of this age” (2 Corinthians 4:4). This scripture and many others prove that the devil was alive and actively opposing God on earth during the life of Paul and the rest of the apostles. Satan remains alive and committed to the destruction of God’s saints today (1 Peter 5:8).

Even though Satan is a spirit being, God is going to “destroy” the influence and power that the devil has had over mankind. Christ’s death facilitates this action. As the writer of Hebrews explains, “Through death He [Christ] might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14).

Even though Satan will not die, God *will render him useless* in his efforts to deceive humans by restraining him along with his angels (demons). Again, the word “destroy” in this passage does not mean to destroy in the sense of do away with or make nonexistent. The word translated “destroy” is from the Greek word *katargeo*, meaning “to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative; to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency; to deprive of force, influence, power” (The New American Standard Greek Lexicon).

Even though Satan will not die, God will render him useless in his efforts to deceive humans by restraining him along with his angels. As the book of Jude confirms, “And the angels who did not keep their proper domain [the responsibilities God originally assigned to them], but left their own abode, He [God] has reserved in everlasting chains [some spiritual means of restriction] under darkness for the judgment of the great day” (Jude 1:6).

Spirits Cast Down to “Hell”

The apostle Peter spoke of a time when Christ “preached to the spirits in prison” when Noah was building the ark (1 Peter 3:19-20). The Scriptures do not clearly tell us what Jesus said to them. Perhaps it was a warning and reminder of their fate. Peter also mentions these demons as being those who sinned and were cast down to “hell” along with their leader, Satan (2 Peter 2:4). The word hell in this passage is translated from the Greek verb *tartaroo*, and it indicates a condition of restraint for spirit beings.

Interestingly this is the only place in Scripture this word is used. Peter actually borrows it from Greek mythology and applies the word in a completely different way than pagan traditions did.

The concept of “restraint” would have been familiar to his audience, and it was an effective way to make the point.

The current restraint apparently limits Satan’s access to God’s throne (see Job 2:1; 1 Kings 22:21-23; and Revelation 12:7-9). Revelation 12 implies that Satan and the angels that followed him fought the righteous angels, as well as God Himself, before the creation of Adam. The same reference implies a follow-up rebellion at the end of the age, just before Christ returns.

Again, what Peter wrote agrees with the other writers concerning the destruction of Satan by binding or restraining him. The devil’s powers are limited to what God allows in order to fulfill His Divine purpose.

Satan Restrained for 1,000 Years?

Jesus prophesied through John of a future time when Satan would be bound for 1,000 years. During this time he will not be permitted to influence humanity in any way—not until the very end of the millennial rule of Christ on the earth.

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while” (Revelation 20:1-3).

Why will God release Satan at the end of the Millennium? The Bible does not give an exact answer, leaving us only to speculate on the purpose. It is clear, though, that after the 1,000 years have expired, the devil will be released from his “prison”. He will be allowed to deceive the nations one last time. Since God only allows Satan to do what fulfills His will, whatever happens will work toward God’s purpose. Scripture records that the devil will successfully manage to agitate nations to rebel against God’s government at Jerusalem in a final attempt to destroy the saints and eliminate Christ’s rule.

What is Satan’s destined end or finality? The Bible shows that the devil will not die, but rather that he will suffer torment. After Satan’s deception following the 1,000 years, he will be “cast into the lake of fire and brimstone” where he “will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (verse 10). The fire will have no effect on him because he is composed of spirit.

So We See Torment, not Death

On one occasion during Christ’s earthly ministry, several demons asked Him a question. “When He [Jesus] had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, ‘What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?’” (Matthew 8:28-29).

The evil demons that possessed these two men knew that their future fate would include some sort of torment. The demons did not say to Christ, “Have you come here to kill us before the time” or “to totally abolish us before the time”; but rather they asked, “Have you come here to torment us before the time?”

A place of never-ending torment is what many incorrectly teach is the fate of humans who reject God’s offer of salvation. Ironically though, a never-ending torment is the fate of Satan and his demons. (Don’t confuse this with the fate of the incorrigibly wicked human beings, who will be cast into the Lake of Fire, which will be the end of their existence. Humans can die; they do not live forever in torment.)

God Will Destroy the “Works” of the Devil

The apostle John wrote, “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” (1 John 3:8). Notice John said that God will destroy *the works of the devil*, not the devil himself.

When writing to the Galatians, Paul spoke of the normal, natural acts of humans apart from God, called “works of the flesh”: “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness [unrestrained lust], idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21). All of these evil actions represent the works of the devil. Humans who refuse to repent of these works will be destroyed forever.

So, Okay then, will Satan be Destroyed?

From all we have seen, both the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures reveal that Satan, (as well as his demons), will be spiritually bound and constrained by God in darkness forever. Satan’s influence, his deception, and his evil works will be eliminated and destroyed forever. However, Satan and his demons will, as spirit beings, continue to exist, albeit in a tormented state of mind—a just and fitting punishment administered by an all-powerful and righteous God.

If we may be of further help in regards to this topic or other questions, please let us know.