

DEVIL

1

DID GOD CREATE A DEVIL?
by Herbert W. Armstrong
1978 edition

The Bible pictures the whole world under the sway of an invisible devil. Where did he come from? Did God create a devil to tempt us and to lead us astray? Here are the answers from God's word!

IS THERE a devil? Many people talk about the devil and Satan. Others scoff and say it's just superstition and imagination.

But is there a devil? According to most Christians the Bible is supposed to teach that the devil is "the god of this world."

Did God create a devil? What does the Bible actually teach?

To find out let's look back to the very beginning. Open your Bible to Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning God" God was before all. The next word in the King James version is "created." "God created." He created the heaven and the earth.

But the very next verse says this: "The earth was without form, and void." The Hebrew words for "without form, and void" are tohu and bohu. Translated into English they mean chaotic, in confusion, waste, and empty.

When God created the heaven and the earth, did He create this earth originally in a state of confusion? Did He create it all topsy-turvy and chaotic?

World NOT Created in Chaos

We read in I Corinthians 14:33 that "God is NOT the author of confusion." God is the author of peace. God is the author of order and of law.

Why would He create the earth in disorder and then have to straighten it out? That doesn't make sense! One scholar points out that the Hebrew word for "created," bara, used in Genesis 1:1, "implies that the creation was a perfect work." That very word "created" implies a perfect and a beautiful order and system, not chaos or confusion!

The book of Job shows God talking with Job about the creation. God is saying to Job, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" There is the implication here that Job had directed the building of some very great edifice -- such as the great pyramid of Giza in Egypt. Job was righteous and somewhat proud of his accomplishments. God was whittling him down to humility by a comparison of accomplishments.

God continues, "Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened [margin, "sunk"]? or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4-7.)

It is significant that the great pyramid is a building where the corner stone is not laid in the foundation, but the final stone to be laid -- at the pinnacle. The "morning stars" are light-(truth-) bringing angels and archangels, according to Biblical interpretation of symbols. As creations of God, they also are referred to as "all the sons of God." So this, too, implies a perfect and glorious creation of the earth.

Then how did it become chaotic?

DEVIL

2

In Genesis 19:26, the same Hebrew word hayah is used which is translated "was" in Genesis 1:2. (See also Genesis 2:7 and 9:15.) And there it is translated into the English word "became." In the first three chapters of the Bible, and many other places where you find the Hebrew word hayah, in almost every case it denotes a condition that was different from a former condition. In other words, the earth "BECAME" chaotic. It had not always been that way.

The Earth BECAME Chaotic

Plainly the word "was" (hayah) here has the meaning of "became." The Rotherham translation of Genesis 1:2, out of the original Hebrew language, is this: "Now the earth HAD BECOME waste and empty." It hadn't always been that way.

In Jeremiah 4:23, Isaiah 34:11, and in other places in the Bible, you find the same words, tohu and bohu, meaning "chaotic" and "in confusion." In every case that condition is a result of sin.

No Chaos Originally

Notice Isaiah 45:18. "Thus saith the Eternal that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not is vain." "In vain" is an inappropriate translation. In your Bible, if you have the marginal references, you will find in the margin a preferable translation, "waste."

The original Hebrew word there is TOHU. This Hebrew word is the identical word used in Genesis 1:2, meaning "confusion," or "emptiness," or "waste" -- a result of disorder, a result of violation of law. In Isaiah 45:18 we have the plain statement that God created the earth NOT tohu, that is, not in confusion, not in disorder. But in Genesis 1:2, the earth was (because it had become) chaotic and in confusion!

Then it became that way after it was created. Now, what could have caused that confusion -- that disorder? What sin could have wrecked the earth and brought it into the condition in which it was found in Genesis 1:2?

Life Before Adam?

Now, what was the sin then that caused this physical destruction to the earth? It was not a sin caused by humanity, because there had been no man on the earth until the sixth day of that re-creation or that remaking. So it was not a sin of man. Adam was the first man. We find in I Corinthians 15:45 that Adam is called the first man on this earth. In Genesis, Eve is called the mother of all living human beings. There was no other race prior to Adam and Eve.

So the sin which brought chaos was not caused by man. And yet life must have populated the earth because a sin had occurred on the earth that brought it into a condition of chaos and confusion by breaking the laws of God.

What kind of life could it have been? It wasn't human life. Then what kind of life had populated the earth prior to Adam, prior to the week called "creation week"?

Next, let's turn to II Peter 2:4: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned" Here is the sin of angels mentioned.

Sin of Angels!

Now read the next verse, "And spared not the old world," between Adam and Noah, "but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly." There it mentions the sins from Adam to Noah, and it mentions the physical destruction to the earth as a result of the flood, a chaotic, physical condition brought about on the earth by the sins of those men.

Was there a chaotic condition brought about on the earth as a result of the sins of angels? The sin of the angels is mentioned first, and it occurred first! There was a devil already there in existence by the time Adam was created. So the sin of the angels happened before the creation of man.

Now read II Peter 2:6. "Turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes [God] condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly."

Universal sin was in those two Canaanite cities. Physical destruction came to the entire part of the surface of the earth which those people occupied as a result of that sin. Then didn't such a destruction come to the earth as a result of the sins of the angels which occurred before Adam?

Now quickly turn over to Jude. In the sixth verse, you read this: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation [they had a place where they lived, a habitation, an estate, and they left it], he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Notice! It is the sinning angels who are reserved in those chains under darkness, restrained from light, restrained from truth until the judgment of the great day.

Angels Possess the Earth!

How plain! They had an estate which they didn't keep. In Hebrews 2:5 we read this: "For unto the angels hath God not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak." In other words the world tomorrow, the kingdom of God, we not be under subjection to angels. The present one is under subjection of fallen angels. The demons, and the devil who is their head, rule this present earth and sway its inhabitants. The Bible everywhere indicates and affirms that very fact.

How did they obtain their dominion? How did they acquire their power? How did they maintain their control? Where did the devil get the power to control and to lead and to rule this world?

The devil is the leader of fallen angels, as you will find in a number of places (John 12:31; Matt. 12:26; 25:41; Rev. 12:9). In II Corinthians 4:4 the devil is called "the god of this world." He is the king or the prince of the evil world that we live in today. Let's see something about the origin of the devil.

Turn to Isaiah 14, beginning with verse 4, "Thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!"

Here is a king of Babylon.

This account continues to tell how he had disrupted the earth. He was an invader, a conqueror. He was a warmonger, trying to take away from others and trying to acquire all he could. He had just the opposite philosophy from that of God. In other words, he had the philosophy of the devil.

He represented the devil. The king of Babylon was the devil's instrument and tool.

DEVIL

Rebellion of Lucifer

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4

This "king of Babylon" is the future ruler over the prophesied "United States of Europe" -- the coming resurrected "Holy Roman Empire," described in prophecies of Revelation 17 and 18. It is a system described in Revelation 13 which was given its power and seat by Satan.

Then in verse 12, the type -- this human king of Babylon -- lifts to the arch-antitype, Satan. Satan is to be removed and bound after the Messiah's coming. Ezekiel's prophecy, to be described later, reveals that he is the former archangel cherub, Lucifer.

So continue, verse 12.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 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: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isaiah 14:12-14). The 15th verse returns to the human king.

Notice, this former archangel had been placed as ruler over the angels that sinned. He had a throne. He said he would exalt his throne above the stars (angels) of God. It already was exalted above the angels on earth -- the angels that sinned with him. Now he was going to exalt it over GOD'S ANGELS in heaven. He was going to invade God's heaven, knock God off the throne of the universe, and rule the whole universe!

We learn much more about this cherub who became Satan in Ezekiel 28. Here, beginning verse 1, the human prince of Tyre is referred to, wealthy (chapter 27), surrounded by perfect beauty, saying in his vain heart, "I am a God," -- "I sit in the seat of God" (verse 2) -- compare with II Thessalonians 2:3-4.

Compare also Ezekiel 27:7 with Revelation 18:16. All these refer to the same system. However, Ezekiel 26 refers to the ancient Tyre, as a forerunner or type of the present and yet future system. Then, as in Isaiah 14, the human type lifts to the satanic antitype in Ezekiel 28:12:

"Son of man, take up a lamentation [dirge] upon the king of Tyrus [Tyre]" The whole prophecy of chapters 27 and 28 refers, not to the ruler of the ancient city of Tyre (as does chapter 26), but to an important personage, in Satan's hand, of our time -- and immediate future -- just before the coming of the Messiah to remove Satan and bring in world peace. Therefore the prophecy points to the END of this great personage ruling spiritually over nations -- as well as to Satan's removal from swaying mankind on earth. Now, beginning with verse 12, and on to the middle of verse 17, it speaks of Satan himself.

So, continue: "... And say unto him, Thus saith the Lord Eternal; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering ... the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes [music] was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created."

A Created Being

Notice, this is not speaking of a human, but a created being. God would never say of a human that he seals up the sum total of

DEVIL

wisdom, perfection and beauty. Then who was this great created being, originally?

"Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set

5

thee so," answers God. In Exodus 25:17-20, you will find the description of the very throne of God in heaven, from which He rules the entire vast limitless universe. On this throne are two cherubim -- super archangels -- whose wings spread out and cover the throne. This personage, then, is the former Lucifer, who was at the very throne of the universe, thoroughly experienced in the Government of God over the universe. Now he is pictured as being on earth. But he had been, formerly, at the very throne of God, as the next words plainly say:

"... Thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity [lawlessness] wast found in thee."

Then God attributes to him violence, sin, corruption of wisdom, perversion, saying he became proud -- his heart lifted up because of his beauty. Then, in verse 17, the immortal spirit antitype descends again to the human type, who will be a chief instrument in Satan's hands in the tremendous world events just prior to, and leading to the coming of the Messiah to establish the GOVERNMENT OF GOD over all earth's nations.

This human personage, claiming to be God, sitting in his sanctuary (verse 18) showing that he is God (II Thess. 2:3-4), is to be destroyed by FIRE, brought to ashes (verse 18). Compare with Revelation 19:20. In the latter, two human personages, instruments of Satan, are pictured -- one a civil ruler over ten kings and their nations, the other called a great "False Prophet" (Rev. 19:20). The prophecy of Isaiah 14 pictures the king of Babylon as the civil ruler.

Lucifer Becomes the Devil

So now, let's recapitulate thus far. The earth was a perfect creation. The angels shouted for joy. From creation, it was populated by angels.

There was a throne, on which sat Lucifer, a super archangel, a cherub. He had been thoroughly experienced in the administration of the Government of God, having been at the very throne of God in heaven. God had placed Lucifer on the throne on earth to administer THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD over earth's angels.

There was happiness, peace, joy on earth. Of Lucifer, the Moffatt translation reads: "From the day you were created, you lived a perfect life, till you were discovered doing wrong" (Ezek. 28:15). GOD DID NOT CREATE A DEVIL, but a beautiful, perfect superangel. But God did give to His angels free moral agency -- minds that were free to think and reason -- the right of free choice.

Lucifer had allowed his beauty and perfection to fill him with vanity -- with SELF-glory, SELF-desire. He became envious of God's power, resented authority over him. He plotted with his angels to marshal them into an invading army, to invade the heaven of God, to knock God off the throne of the Universe.

Lucifer was going to BE God. It is his deceptive sway over the "Prince of Tyre" that will yet cause this personage to claim that HE, a man, is God.

So Lucifer was no longer "LIGHT-Bringer" but now an ADVERSARY -- an aggressor, a competitor, an enemy. The name Satan means "Adversary." His angels now became DEMONS.

DEVIL

How the Earth Became Chaotic

A third of the angels united with Satan in the rebellion. That is

6

what caused the chaos of this earth. The sin of angels reached into the heavens and brought chaos on earth. What the geologists and astronomers see is not an evolving universe, but the wreckage of a titanic battle waged by spirits throughout -- a battle fought before man's creation.

The earth was created perfect. Then it BECAME chaotic as a result of rebellion. And in six days, God remade the earth, reshaped, refashioned it, and created human beings upon it (Psalm 104:30).

He gave Adam a chance to take the place of Satan the devil, sit on earth's throne, and restore the Government of God on earth. Adam rejected the tremendous opportunity, yielded to Satan who to this day remains on earth's throne as the god of this world. Christ, the second Adam, will soon come to sit on that throne and restore the Government of God (Acts 3:19-21). Remember, Lucifer had been placed in rulership.

God placed the great cherub, Lucifer, to carry out His government on the earth, but Lucifer refused to carry out God's will, God's commands, God's government. He wanted to substitute his own. So he disqualified himself.

Adam had the chance to supplant him. In the contest to see if Adam would conquer, if he would obey God, he failed. He obeyed the devil instead, and man became the property of the devil, and the whole human race has been sold down the river to the devil ever since.

Jesus Christ came 4,000 years later and He entered the great contest -- the contest of the temptation on the Mount. He REFUSED to obey the devil. He quoted scripture correctly. He obeyed God.

Finally, He turned to the devil, and He gave Satan a command. He said, "Get away from me," and the devil obeyed!

From that time on, the successor of Satan has been qualified to take over the rule of the earth. But Jesus went to heaven for 1900 years. He is soon coming again, and when He does, the devil will be DISPLACED. Christ will rule the earth, God's Laws will be restored. Order and peace will come at last!

So God did NOT create a devil. He created a cherub, Lucifer -- perfect in his ways, but with the power of free choice -- and Lucifer transformed himself into a devil by rebellion against the Government of God!