

WARRIORS OF LIGHT

Bruised by the Battles
but Winning the War
Against Satan



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CHAPTER 1

WINNING THE WAR AGAINST SATAN



SATAN: Who is he?

Where did he come from?

What are his tactics?

What is his destiny?

In today's world, whenever Satan or the devil is mentioned, eyebrows are raised and skeptical smiles are common. Does anyone really believe there is a real arch evil? About 2600 years ago, Nephi of Book of Mormon fame, was shown our day. He recorded,

And behold, **others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none**—and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance. (2 Nephi 28:22)

For someone who is called “Satan” 150 times and “the devil” 182 times in the scriptures, it seems apparent that the Savior and His prophets and apostles knew that he is real. But how convenient for the devil to have convinced such a large number of Heavenly Father's children that he really doesn't exist. That allows him and his followers to carry on their work of destroying mankind without fear of being detected. The mythological representations of Satan, even in Christian art, seem to fictionalize his existence rather than portraying him as a real person.

Who is this evil character? Where did he come from? What are his

objectives and tactics? And what is his eternal destiny? Coupled with the answers to these questions, efforts will be made to draw from the scriptures the Lord's warnings against the devil and divinely revealed strategies to defeat him. Some scriptures will be used multiple times because of their broad application in identifying and overcoming the influences of Satan.

THE PREMORTAL EXISTENCE

In order to understand who Satan is, we must look at a time before the earth was created. We all lived in the presence of God, not as mythological creatures but as literal spirit offspring of divine Parents. “All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129).

For lack of understanding, the Christian world reels at the idea of Satan being a spirit son of Heavenly Father, thus being a spirit brother to Jesus Christ and all of mankind. They offer no explanation of why this cannot be, just that it is a preposterous claim. In his earliest efforts to deceive and destroy mankind, Satan proclaimed that he, along with all of Adam and Eve’s children, was a “son of God.” “And Satan came among them, saying: I am also a son of God” (Moses 5:13).

The Savior proclaimed His position in that premortal world when He said, “And now, verily I say unto you, I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn” (D&C 93:21). Some have gone beyond the scriptures and suggested that Satan, originally named “Lucifer,” meaning “light bearer” or “torch bearer,” was second born. There is no scriptural basis for such a claim. He was, however, called “a son of the morning” (see D&C 76:26).

Originally, like all mankind, Lucifer was an “intelligence,” which, according to what God revealed to Abraham, is the eternal uncreated part of man. He explained to Abraham:

Howbeit that he made the greater star; as, also, if there be two spirits, and one shall be more intelligent than the other, yet these two spirits, notwithstanding one is more intelligent than the other, have no beginning; they existed before, they shall have no end, they shall exist after, for they are gnolaum, or eternal. (Abraham 3:18)

Further expanding that concept, the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith,

Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be.

All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence. (D&C 93:29–30)

Like every other living thing, Lucifer's intelligence has existed forever. How did he get a spirit body? Likely the same way we all did, by our Heavenly Parents exercising their procreative powers.

Was Lucifer destined to become the archenemy from the time of his spirit birth? It doesn't appear so according to what the Lord said to Joseph Smith in D&C 93:38: "Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning."

Although not fully explained, Lucifer was influential enough in the pre-earth life to be given "authority," generally accepted to mean he held the priesthood. Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, in viewing a six-part vision that is unparalleled in the amount of light and knowledge it conveys (D&C 76), saw and recorded, "And this we saw also, and bear record, that an angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God . . ." (D&C 76:25).

How did he turn from being one in authority to one who arrogantly sought to dethrone God and Christ? He did it the same way he influenced a third part of his spirit brothers and sisters to join in his rebellion—by exercising agency in opposition to God's revealed plan of salvation for the eternal happiness of all His spirit children. The Lord revealed to Joseph Smith,

And it came to pass that Adam, being tempted of the devil—for, behold, the devil was before Adam, **for he rebelled against me, saying, Give me thine honor, which is my power; and also a third part of the hosts of heaven turned he away from me because of their agency; And they were thrust down, and thus came the devil and his angels.** (D&C 29:36–37)

We will consider these verses in greater detail later.

God revealed to Moses (after Moses had a face-to-face encounter with Satan) greater details about Satan's fall:

And I, the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying: That Satan, whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the beginning, and he came before me, saying—Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor.

But, behold, my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning, said unto me—Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever.

Wherefore, **because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power;** by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down. (Moses 4:1–3)

To ensure that we are understanding the Lord's definition of "the beginning," consider D&C 93:7: "In the beginning, before the world was."

The Lord designated the entire pre-earth life as "in the beginning." It is difficult to comprehend how Lucifer could fall so far and influence so many spirit children of God in an instant. However, there may be a clue in Alma's explanation of why some men became priesthood bearers and others did not qualify. Just for your consideration as a possibility—not intended as a declaration of the doctrine of the Church—consider:

And this is the manner after which they were ordained—being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works; **in the first place being left to choose good or evil**; therefore they having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith, are called with a holy calling, yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such. (Alma 13:3)

While it is definitely true "being left to choose" could mean "being allowed to choose," it could also mean that we may have resided in a space separated from God's immediate presence to exercise our agency. The rationale being that "no unclean thing can dwell in the presence of God" (see 1 Nephi 10:21; Moses 6:57). Thus, Lucifer could have slowly turned to the dark side, influenced "a third part" of Heavenly Father's children to rebel without allowing his uncleanness to pollute the pure presence of God where "naught but peace, justice, and truth is the habitation of thy throne" (Moses 7:31).

Perhaps you can come up with another explanation, but this one thing is scripturally sure: he did not keep his first estate or his pre-earth life.

And the Lord said: Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man: Here am I, send me. And another answered and said: Here am I, send me. And the Lord said: I will send the first.

And the second was angry, and kept not his first estate; and, at that day, many followed after him. (Abraham 3:27–28)

Joseph Smith taught,

The devil has no body, and herein is his punishment. He is pleased when he can obtain the tabernacle of man, and when cast out by the Savior he asked to go into the herd of swine, showing that he would prefer a swine's body to having none. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected by Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976], 181; cf. 297–98)

What was it that was so appealing in Satan’s proposed plan that influenced a third part of our spirit siblings to follow him? God explained to Moses,

And I, the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying: That Satan, whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the beginning, and he came before me, saying—Behold, here am I, send me, **I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor.**
(Moses 4:1)

That sounds pretty good—salvation without a single soul lost. However, the price was the destruction or surrendering of our agency—the very principle by which exaltation is obtained. “Wherefore, because that Satan **rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man**, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power” (Moses 4:3), he was rejected and cast out of heaven. Agency is central to the Father’s plan of salvation for His children. Destroy it and there is no plan.

But Satan’s arrogant proposal went further than just getting the power of God. Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon recorded, “And while we were yet in the Spirit, the Lord commanded us that we should write the vision; for we beheld Satan, that old serpent, even the devil, who rebelled against God, and **sought to take the kingdom of our God and his Christ**” (D&C 76:28).

Perhaps that is one aspect of Satan’s rebellion that we have not fully understood. Not only did he rebel against God and Christ, but he also sought to dethrone God. It is difficult to understand how one could be so arrogant and deceive so many when the stakes were so high. Failure meant being banished forever from the presence of God, denied physical bodies, and eventually consigned to outer darkness forever.

However, returning to a closer look at D&C 29:36, the reason for part of his success is revealed. “And it came to pass that Adam, being tempted of the devil—for, behold, the devil was before Adam, for he rebelled against me, saying, **Give me thine honor, which is my power**; and also a third part of the hosts of heaven turned he away from me because of their agency.”

When the scripture states that “the devil was before Adam,” it does not indicate that he was born in the premortal spirit world before Michael, the arch angel. Adam did not become Adam until he was placed in the Garden of

Eden. Before that, he went by his angelic name—Michael. What this verse means is that Satan rebelled before Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden.

But his success did not come by force. It came because of his ability to flatter, deceive, and lie. His followers exercised their agency to their eternal hurt. Continuing His explanation to Moses, God said, “And he became Satan, yea, even the devil, **the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will**, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice” (Moses 4:4).

In castigating Jewish leaders who refused to acknowledge His divine mission, the Savior said, “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**” (John 8:44).

The Savior also recounted the fall of Satan: “And he said unto them, **I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven**” (Luke 10:18). John, the Revelator recorded more of the details of Satan’s expulsion from heaven:

And there was **war in heaven**: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, **called the Devil, and Satan**, which deceiveth the whole world: **he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him**. (Revelation 12:7–9)

Only God knows the full reasoning behind Satan and his followers being cast down to the earth. Some have lamented that it would have been for our benefit if they had been cast onto another planet far from us. “But behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things” (2 Nephi 2:24).

The Lord, although certainly not beholding to Satan and his followers to accomplish His plans, does use them as part of the testing associated with mortality. The Lord revealed, “And it must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves; for if they never should have bitter they could not know the sweet” (D&C 29:39).

In a bone-chilling vision that God gave to Enoch, Enoch saw Satan with a

huge chain of darkness veiling the earth (see Moses 7:26). Then the premortal Savior made this sobering declaration:

Wherefore, I can stretch forth mine hands and hold all the creations which I have made; and mine eye can pierce them also, and among all the workmanship of mine hands there has not been so great wickedness as among thy brethren.

But behold, their sins shall be upon the heads of their fathers; Satan shall be their father, and misery shall be their doom; and the whole heavens shall weep over them, even all the workmanship of mine hands; wherefore should not the heavens weep, seeing these shall suffer? (Moses 7:36–37)

Some believe that the reason this is the wickedest world God ever allowed His spirit children to dwell on is that Satan and his angels were cast to this earth.

When the Lord showed Moses the countless worlds He had made and peopled, Moses's interest was piqued, and he wanted to know more about those worlds. The Lord limited Moses's access to information concerning other worlds by saying,

But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you. For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man; but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them. (Moses 1:35)

Included in that restriction is whether there are evil individuals like Satan on other worlds or whether Satan and his followers who were cast down to this earth can travel to other worlds. All that will be revealed in the Lord's own due time.

In addition to this being the wickedest world, there are specific times on this earth when wickedness is even more prevalent. People living at the time of the Savior were the only people who would be wicked enough to crucify the Savior. Nephi confirms this when he penned Jacob's teaching:

Wherefore, as I said unto you, it must needs be expedient that Christ—for in the last night the angel spake unto me that this should be his name—should come among the Jews, among those who are the more wicked part of the world; and they shall crucify him—for thus it behooveth our God, and **there is none other nation on earth that would crucify their God.** (2 Nephi 10:3)

We may be inclined to be thankful we were not alive during that wicked generation. However, Joseph Smith said,

I prophesy, in the name of the Lord God of Israel, anguish and wrath and tribulation and the withdrawing of the Spirit of God from the earth await this generation, until they are visited with utter desolation. **This generation is as corrupt as the generation of the Jews that crucified Christ; and if He were here today, and should preach the same doctrine He did then, they would put Him to death.** I defy all the world to destroy the work of God; and I prophesy they never will have power to kill me till my work is accomplished, and I am ready to die. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 328)

Even as the premortal Savior wept over those who are overcome by Satan, one may mistakenly believe that we were thrilled to be rid of him and his followers. However, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon saw just the opposite:

And this we saw also, and bear record, that an **angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God, who rebelled against the Only Begotten Son** whom the Father loved and who was in the bosom of the Father, was thrust down from the presence of God and the Son, And was called Perdition, **for the heavens wept over him—he was Lucifer, a son of the morning.**

And we beheld, and lo, he is fallen! is fallen, even a son of the morning! (D&C 76:25–27)

It is sobering to consider that we, who are here on earth with physical bodies, constituted the “Heavens” mentioned in the above verses. We wept over spirit brothers and sisters who followed Satan. It is not beyond reason to believe that many of our very good friends chose to follow Satan.

It is instructive to note that nowhere in scripture does it refer to “sons of perdition” when referring to Satan and those who followed him in his premortal rebellion. That term “sons of perdition” is reserved for those mortals who “suffer themselves to be overcome” by the devil. That allows for women to follow Satan in his premortal rebellion.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) gave his apostolic summary of Satan’s rebellion and his failed plan:

When the Eternal Father announced his plan of salvation—a plan that called for a mortal probation for all his spirit children; a plan that required a Redeemer to ransom men from the coming fall; a plan that could only operate if mortal men had agency—when the Father announced his plan, when he chose Christ as the Redeemer and rejected Lucifer, then there was war in heaven. That war was a war of words; it was a conflict of ideologies; it was a rebellion against God and his laws. Lucifer sought to dethrone God, to sit himself on the divine throne,

and to save all men without reference to their works. He sought to deny men their agency so they could not sin. He offered a mortal life of carnality and sensuality, of evil and crime and murder, following which all men would be saved. His offer was a philosophical impossibility. There must needs be an opposition in all things. Unless there are opposites, there is nothing. There can be no light without darkness, no heat without cold, no virtue without vice, no good without evil, no salvation without damnation.

And so, in the courts of heaven, the war of wars was waged. Christ and Michael and a mighty host of noble and great spirits preached the gospel of God and exhorted their brethren to follow the Father. Lucifer and his lieutenants preached another gospel, a gospel of fear and hate and lasciviousness and compulsion. They sought salvation without keeping the commandments, without overcoming the world, without choosing between opposites. (McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982], 666–67)

Now this former “son of the morning,” one who formerly was entrusted with authority of God, completely and forever reversed field and became an enemy to God. Mormon instructed his son, Moroni: “Wherefore, all things which are good cometh of God; and that which is evil cometh of the devil; **for the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually,** and inviteth and enticeth to sin, and to do that which is evil continually” (Moroni 7:12).

We can and should expect, as Joseph Smith taught, “In relation to the kingdom of God, the devil always sets up his kingdom at the very same time in opposition to God” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 365). Carrying that concept to a personal level, whenever you try to do anything that will take you closer to God, you should expect satanic opposition. More will be said of this principle later.

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