

23 The fight against sin - The devil and satan

The sources of sin and evil

What do these verses say about the source of sin in the world?

Mark 7:20-23

James 1:14

Romans 7:18-21

Jeremiah 17:9



What about the sources of evil?

'Evil' is often used to mean simply 'sin', as in Zechariah 1:4 - 'Turn ye now from your evil ways and from your evil doings' - but not always. What does it mean in these passages, and where does 'evil' come from?

Genesis 6:5

Genesis 37:20

Isaiah 45:5-7

Job 2:7-10

So what is the difference between sin and evil?

Satan in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, Satan is an ordinary Hebrew word meaning 'adversary'. Can you find 'Satan' in these passages? Who is referred to as the adversary?

Numbers 22:22

1 Kings 5:4

1 Kings 11:25

Psalms 71:13

Compare 2 Samuel 24:1 with 1 Chronicles 21:2

So what is 'Satan' in the Old Testament?

The Devil in the Old Testament

The word 'devil' only occurs in four places in the Old Testament: Leviticus 17:7, Deuteronomy 32:17, 2 Chronicles 11:15, and Psalm 106:37.

What does it mean?

The Devil and Satan in the New Testament

Many times the Authorised Version translates the Greek word 'diamonion' as 'devil' (as in Matthew 7:22, 9:33-34, 10:8, 11:18, ...). This is used in the context of people who were sick, and it's a different subject which we will think about some other time. The NIV always translates the word as 'demon'.

Satan in the New Testament

'Satan' is a Hebrew word, not Greek. So where it occurs in the New Testament it must be for a particular reason. What does it mean in these passages?

Mark 8:33

Luke 13:11-16

1 Thessalonians 2:18

1 Timothy 5:15

Acts 5:3

Matthew 4:1-10

So what is Satan in the New Testament?

The Devil in the New Testament

The Greek word for devil is 'diabolos', which means 'accuser'. In 1 Timothy 3:11; 2 Timothy 3:3; and Titus 2:3 it is translated as 'slanderer', 'malicious talker' or 'false accuser'. The devil stands for whatever accuses us before God, and we know from the earlier parts of this study that it is our sins, which come as a result of the temptations within us.

John 6:70

Ephesians 6:11

James 4:7

1 Peter 5:8

So what is the devil in the New Testament?

Finally, spend some time thinking about Hebrews 2:14

What was destroyed in the death of Christ?

How does his death help us in our battle against our human nature?

How can you try to resist temptations better?