

## **The Authority of Satan**

Satan seems to still “bear the imprint of his exalted position and majestic character. Even Michael the Archangel did not directly oppose him but said ‘The Lord rebuke you.’ ” (Sarles)

In addition to still being noticed as a creature in a position of authority by holy angels, he is the leader of the fallen angels and exercises authority over them.

### *1. Baalzebul*

Satan is referred to as “*Baalzebul*.” The origin of this name is Canaanite, meaning “Lord of the High Place” or “Baal of the High Place.” The Israelites changed the name to “*Baal-zebub*,” meaning “Lord of the Flies” as an insult to the false gods of the pagans. The use of the name for Satan implies that he has some authority.

### *2. Authority recognized by Christ*

In Luke 11 Jesus talks about the authority of Satan as the leader of demons.

Luke 11:18

“And if Satan also is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul.”

### *3. Authority over the world*

Satan is called the “ruler of the world” (John 12:31), “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4), and “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2).

In addition, Satan’s own actions show his authority. In the book of Job we see that Satan had the authority and the power to oppress Job. Satan had control over Job’s circumstances, over Job’s environment, and over Job’s health; being limited in what he could do to Job only by God Himself.

When Satan tried to tempt Jesus, Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world (Matthew 4:8-10). The offer indicated that Satan was offering something he did have control over. Unless he did have control over what he offered, the temptation would not have been valid. In addition, we do not see Jesus rebuking Satan regarding the dominion over these kingdoms, but rather about who alone is to be worshiped. Just because Satan does have authority over the kingdoms does not earn him the right to be worshiped, that is only the right of God.

A temptation is not measured by the susceptibility of one being tempted, but by the intent of the one tempting.

Satan’s authority over the world may also be attested to by the state of nature. As a result of man’s sin the earth was cursed (Genesis 3), and we are told by Paul that creation is suffering as a result of sin (Romans 8:19-22).

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Romans 8:19-22, “For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.”

Clearly what we see now as nature was not what God originally created. The flood certainly had something to do with this, but to what extent we do not know. What we do know is that the perfect world God created is not what we live in.

In the same way that we cannot know when holy angels are being used by God to protect us from material or spiritual harm, or when they are God’s tool for keeping us from sin, we cannot know when or if Satan or his evil angels are behind the destructive forces of nature.

Satan also has the ability to control the forces of nature, at least when permitted by God. We see this in Job 1.

Satan’s authority is seen in his power over the nations, and their leaders. In Daniel, demons are spoken of as princes of nations, denoting their authority (and therefore Satan’s) over the nations. In Ephesians 6:12 we are reminded that it is against these powers or world forces that we are in struggle against.

Psalm 2:2, “ The kings of the earth take their stand,  
And the rulers take counsel together  
Against the LORD and against His Anointed”

“The nations are part of the Satanic cosmos and are ultimately governed by the devil and his angels” (Sarles).

Governments and leaders are appointed by God. In His common grace God determines who is to lead a nation, any nation or any country. No one is ever in a position of authority without God being in control of the situation. Indeed, all authority is established by God (Romans 13:1).

Romans 13:1, “Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.”

The essence of the world, or the “kovsmw/β,” we live in “is a comprehensive, Satanically-inspired, Christ-rejecting system which operates independently of God, refusing to recognize His sovereignty or give Him the honor He is due. It includes all humanitarian ideals and morals and all good works done independently of God’s will. It is evil in essence and is built upon the supreme lie.” (Sarles)