

# SCHOLAR'S CORNER

**Where in the Bible does it say Satan was originally an angel but rebelled against God and so was cast out of heaven? I know it's there somewhere, but I can't find it.**

You can't find it because it isn't there. The notion that before tempting Adam and Eve in the Garden, Satan and other angels were expelled from heaven is nowhere in the Bible. It's an example of a legend being passed on among Jews and Christians without being anywhere in the Bible.

You may have been taught that Ezekiel 28:12-17 and Isaiah 14:12-15 refer to Satan's fall, but however much they might sound that way, all the commentaries I have consulted (including moderate evangelical ones) say those passages were not written about Satan falling from heaven (though that is how Christians have traditionally interpreted them). Likewise, even conservative commentators say Luke 10:18 and Rev. 12:9 do not refer to a pre-garden fall of Satan.

The fall of Satan is, however, found in 2 Enoch 29:4-6:

"One of the archangels deviated, with the angels under him. He conceived the impossible idea to place his throne higher than the clouds above the earth and become equal to My power. I hurled him from the height, together with his angels. He then flew ceaselessly in the air above the Abyss. Thus I created the entire heavens. And the third day came."

(Scholars don't know when 2 Enoch was written, but it may be pre-Christian, as there are no distinctively Christian ideas in it.)

The story of Satan's fall found most frequently outside the Bible involves Satan refusing to bow down before Adam.

*The Questions of Bartholomew*

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(4:52-55) reads: "... God formed Adam .... And He showed him [Adam] reverence for his own sake because he was his image. Michael also bowed before him. When I [Satan] came ... Michael said: 'Worship the image of God, which he has made in his likeness.' But I said: 'I am fire of fire. I was the first angel formed. Shall I worship clay and matter?'....Then God became angry with me and cast me down..."

This story appears in other Christian literature (in the *Life of Adam and Eve*, *The Cave of Treasures* and *Slavonic Baruch III*). And it appears, strangely enough, in the Qur'an (7:11-13): "We said to the angels, "Make obeisance to Adam."

So they did obeisance except Iblis.... 'What hindered you from making obeisance when I commanded you?' He said, 'I am better than him. You created me of fire, while You created him of dust.' 'Then get forth from this (state)....' "

Non-Muslim scholars guess Prophet Muhammad heard this story from a Jew or Christian.

We don't know the origin of the fall of Satan idea, but it was probably after the Babylonian Exile, since there is little or no evidence of Jewish belief in Satan before then.

It just so happened that no account of Satan's expulsion from heaven was included in the Bible. But the idea has lived on in oral tradition.

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