**WHO HAS THE POWER OVER DEATH** Part 2

There is a verse in Hebrews that many claim gives proof that the Devil has power over death, or at least, at one time in history had power over death. The verse is Hebrews 2:14. Here it is from several translations:

“Since then the children referred to are all alike sharers in perishable human nature, He Himself also, in the same way, took on Him a share of it, in order that through death He might render powerless him who had authority over death, that is, the Devil” (Weymouth)

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” (KJV)

“Since, then, the little children have participated in blood and flesh, He also was very nigh by partaking of the same, that, through death, He should be discarding him who has the might of death, that is, the Adversary.” (CLNT)

“Therefore because the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner hath been partaker of the same: that, through death, he might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil:” (Douay-Rheims)

With these four versions we are led to believe that the Devil/Adversary has/had the power, authority, might, over death, and the empire of death.

Two of the versions (Weymouth, KJV) tell us the Devil “had” the power/authority over death. One version (CLNT) tells us the Adversary “has” the might (power) of death, and one (Douay-Rheims), I think, to place more fear in their flock say him who had power over the “empire” of death, I presume they mean (I may be wrong) that empire is hell, or this earth.

Where in the Scriptures do we read that the Devil/Satan ever had, or has the power, might, authority over death, or the “empire” of death?

Short answer: nowhere, except in this one slightly mistranslated verse.

**NOT HIS POWER**

 Many commentators explain the above verse from Hebrews in this manner:

“The Devil, who at that time, before he convinced Eve to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, held sway over death. If he could get her, and then Adam, to just taste this fruit, he would have passed this power onto them, thereby destroying God’s plans for humans to live forever in paradise. He was successful and we now see the results of his power over death, as now all humans die.”

So, now, with this type of understanding we have a very false teaching; “the Devil” had the power over death, the Devil caused death (was the catalyst that got the dying process moving), and the Devil passed the power of death onto all humans who obey him rather than God.

**WHERE DID THIS TEACHING COME FROM?**

Many believe that the Devil was a powerful arch angel, that rebelled against God, and was cast down to earth, causing the disruption of Genesis 1:2 ; without one verse of scripture to prove that theory, other than the verse that plainly tells us: “the earth became a vacant and void”. Even those who do not believe the Devil was created perfect and rebelled against God, believe he was cast down to earth and caused the disruption in Genesis 1:2, again, with not one verse to prove their theory. And, when the Devil was cast down, he brought the power of death with him. Where did he get that power from? Did God give him that power? Or did the Devil create that power (death)?

Many use Job 26:13 as their proof of God’s creation of the Devil. Here is that verse from a few translations:

“By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.” (KJV)

"By His breath the heavens are cleared; His hand has pierced the fleeing serpent.” (NASB)

“By His spirit the heavens were made seemly; His hand travailed with the fugitive

serpent.” (CLOT)

“The heavens became bright when he breathed, and the escaping sea monster died at his hands.” (CEV)

“It is his breath that made the sky clear, and his hand that killed the escaping monster.”

(GNT)

Every translation I have read either says God pierced, killed, or formed the serpent. Half of the dozens of translations seem to be in agreement, and half do not. One commentator says; “His (God’s) hands trembled as He formed the crooked serpent.” Leading the reader to believe this “serpent” that was formed by the trembling hand of God, Who knew what its mission was to be, was none other than the Devil.

So it is obvious from the many different translations of this verse that there is much confusion among the translators about what happened to the crooked serpent that was formed, pierced or killed in this verse, and it seems also; “who” is/was this crooked serpent.

To confuse things even more, The Dabhar translation translates Job 26:13 this way:

“By His spirit-wind He has unfold the heavens; His hand has whirled through the absconding serpent.”

Absconding:to go away [suddenly](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/suddenly) and [secretly](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/secret) in [order](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/order) to [escape](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/escape) from [somewhere](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/somewhere): to go away [suddenly](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/suddenly) and [secretly](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/secret) because you have [stolen](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/stolen) something.

Dabhar leaves us to believe that the serpent (after its creation)suddenly and secretly escaped through God’s hand, taking with it something that did not belong to it (death?). This verse alone would have to give pause to the teaching that God hurled this serpent out of heaven and down to Earth.

So, did the serpent (Devil) outsmart God? Many believe that is what happened, and his out smarting God caused a rebellion that got him kicked out of heaven and tossed down to planet Earth.

There are two views closer to the truth. When we read this portion of Job we notice two topics unfolding. In verse 12 we read:

“By His power He stirred the sea, and by His understanding He crushed Rahab.”

Rahab was believed to be a mythological sea serpent or dragon, defeated at the time of creation. So as we read on into verse 13 we see that this serpent/dragon was defeated/pierced/killed/died. So those who claim that the creation of the Devil is the one that verse 13 is speaking of have a problem; first this serpent is said to be in the sea, and second; they have a dead Devil, long before the incident in the Garden.

Bullinger in his KJV Companion Bible notes tells us what he believes this serpent is that Job speaks of:

“Serpent here is referring to the constellation Serpens.”

This makes sense when it is seen in the context of the verses surrounding (and including) this verse. Why would the speaker (Job) speak of God’s power in creation, and then go into the forming/piercing/killing/out smarting (your choice) of the serpent (Devil)? A Devil who is believed by many to not die (Revelation 20:10).

I think we can eliminate Job 26:13 from the proof text, that the Devil here is spoken of as the created being (serpent), that escaped God’s hand with the power of death.

**SO, WHO THEN BROUGHT DEATH ON?**

“On the day you eat from it, to die you shall be dying.” (Genesis 2:17)

“For since, in fact, through a man came death” (1 Corinthians 15:21)

It is obvious from the above verse from Genesis that death was a part of creation. It did not just create its self, no more than life in creation created itself. Why else would God tell them that they would die (their life would eventually end) if they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, if death did not exist?

And it is obvious from the verse from 1 Corinthians who death came through.

Many teach, and believe that Adam and Eve were created immortal. If this is so we have to change the meaning of immortal. As it means life beyond the reach of death. Also, it would mean that when we put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:53-55) we too could still be subject to death, or at the very least the dying process. I doubt Adam was created immortal, as we read:

“You are free to eat from any tree of the garden,but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.”(Gen.2:16-17)

After they ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, we read what would have kept them alive if they were permitted to stay; the Tree of Life. Once access to it was denied then the dying started, which eventually led to their (certain) death:

“The Lord God said, “Since man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live forever.” So the Lord God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove man out and stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life…..So Adam’s life lasted 930 years; then he died.” (Genesis 3:22-24, 5:5)

Death was already alive and well at the creation, it is as much a part of creation as life.

**DID/DO WE HAVE SOME CONTROL OVER DEATH?**

“Life and death are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”

(Proverbs 18:21)

I do believe we have some control over these lives of ours, as we are our worse adversaries (*satans),* and we can bring them to an early demise:

“Don't be excessively wicked, and don't be foolish. Why should you die before your time?” (Ecclesiastes: 7:17)

“God, You will bring them down to the pit of destruction; men of bloodshed and treachery will not live out half their days. But I will trust in You.” (Psalm 55:23)

We have an allotted amount of time here, yet we read that we can shorten that time by our lifestyles and actions and reactions: “**die before your time**”, **“ not live out half your days**.” Many believe that we have no control over what we do, that God controls every part of our lives, from our foolish decisions, to a destructive lifestyle, to our righteous behavior. And to deny this means you deny the sovereignty of God; God’s control over all things. God is Sovereign. He is the Ruler. But there are times when He gives us the desires of our hearts (He is the One Who is in control), even when those desires are destructive to us. The verses above show that. (see also Ezekiel 14:1-5 where God answers them according to the idols of their heart).

So, with those verses above, and several others, I believe we have some power over our time of death, as these verses above show, we can cause, or at least have a part in our lives coming to an end before our time. This does not in any way take away from God’s Sovereignty, as we read in Romans chapter one where God gives them over to the lusts/desires of their hearts.

**HEBREWS 2:14**

“The last enemy is being abolished: death.” (1 Corinthians 15:26)

When we read the disputed verse from Hebrews we should ask ourselves about the capitalization of the word adversary. We know it is not a name of someone, or something, only in religion is it the name of someone. All other’s call adversary an opponent, which could be anything or anyone that opposes. In boxing each fighter is an adversary to the other. In war each side is an adversary to the other. Radical Muslims call America “The Great Satan”.

Yet, only in religion is Satan capitalized to mean the name of an individual being. That is why this verse in Hebrews has been so mistranslated by the translators.

An adversary can be an enemy, and often is.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians about an enemy that holds sway over all creation: death.

Death is the last enemy to be abolished. It is an adversary we look at every day in the mirror. Look at a photo of yourself when you were young, and then look at yourself in the mirror today, and you will see dying in operation. You will see the adverse effect it has on your body, and as we age even more we will feel its effects on the body. It is an adversary.

So, let’s look at the verse from Hebrews to see if the Devil is the adversary Paul is writing of, or is it something else. I’ll use the CLNT version, although anyone will do.

“Since, then, the little children have participated in blood and flesh, He also was very nigh by partaking of the same, that, through death, He should be discarding him who has the might of death, that is, the Adversary.” (CLNT)

 When we look at this verse we see that we are spoken of as the ones having “flesh and blood.” Then we read of Him (Jesus) who partook of the same (flesh and blood), that He, in partaking of flesh and blood would discard him; the might of death. Who is him that is being destroyed in this verse? From the context it seems to be flesh and blood. We do know from scripture:

“that flesh and blood is not able to enjoy an allotment in the kingdom of God, neither is corruption enjoying the allotment of incorruption.”

(1 Corinthians 15:50)

In the Hebrew verse it is not speaking of the Devil who has the power over death, it is our flesh and blood that has the power over death in it, that is the adversary that is spoken of here. That is the adversary that is the cause of all death, our flesh and blood (mortality). Christ came to destroy death, and He had to come in flesh and blood in order to do that.

So here is how this verse should be translated, and remember, punctuation was added centuries later, and often times it has distorted a verse completely:

“Since, then, the little children have participated in blood and flesh, He also was very nigh by partaking of the same, that, through death, He should be discarding him who has the might of death, that is the adversary.” (CLNT)

Not the Devil, or Satan, but our flesh and blood has the power of death in it, and it holds us back, at present, from entering the kingdom of God physically, and will continue to do so as long as we are corruptible, mortal, flesh and blood.

“Lo! a secret to you am I telling! We all, indeed, shall not be put to repose, yet we all shall be changed, in an instant, in the twinkle of an eye, at the last trump. For He will be trumpeting, and the dead will be roused incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality.
Now, whenever this corruptible should be putting on incorruption and this mortal should be putting on immortality, then shall come to pass the word which is written, Swallowed up was Death by Victory. Where, O Death, is your victory? Where, O Death, is your sting? Now the sting of Death is sin, yet the power of sin is the law. Now thanks be to God, Who is giving us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ”.

(1 Corinthians 15:51-57)

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