When meeting new people for the first time, some of the first questions asked are often about where we’re from and what we do. People are generally interested in learning how others perceive the world and what drives their worldviews and life-choices. What about the devil? Does he have an origin story worth knowing? The entertainment industry is not shy about creating movies, video games, comics, art, and music about him. He gets depicted in various ways. Whether as an attractive man, a comical horned being with a pitchfork, a half-man half-beast creature, or a creepy dark figure, there’s no lack of creative intellect being wasted in inventing all kinds of stories about him. At times he is portrayed as a misunderstood victim, and other times as the source of a dark power crucial for the “balance of the universe.” But is any of this accurate?

There are countless popular stories about the devil, but very few tell the truth about his origin, activities, and motivation. While it may not be the most uplifting topic to ponder, it’s vital to understand who God’s enemy is, where he’s from, why he chose to start a war with God, and what drives him to bring so much misery to this world.

This week we will study Lucifer’s fall. We will gain insights into his origins and see his reasons for starting the greatest controversy of all time. While Isaiah 14:12–17 will be our primary focus, the lesson will also draw from other key passages to provide a more complete picture.
Write out Isaiah 14:12–17 from the translation of your choice. If you’re pressed for time, write out verses 12–14. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the chapter.
On January 26, 1972, Vesna Vulović was a flight attendant aboard Yugoslav Airlines Flight 367, scheduled to fly from Stockholm to Belgrade. It never reached its destination. During the flight, a bomb that was planted in the baggage compartment exploded, causing the plane to break apart at an altitude of 33,000 feet. Vulović, who was in the tail section of the plane, was still strapped to her seat when she fell to the ground. Her seat somehow detached from the rest of the debris and slowed her fall as she plummeted. She landed on a heavily wooded slope covered in deep snow and now holds the record for the highest fall any human has ever survived. Isaiah 14:12 introduces us to a being who, after bombshell accusations against God, experienced a much higher and more devastating fall than Ms. Vulović: “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!”

Lucifer means “light bearer,” but the Bible gives this being many different titles and names such as Satan (Job 1:6), devil (Matt. 4:1), dragon (Rev. 12:3), and “the anointed cherub who covers” (Ezek. 28:14). Satan and devil are similar words that carry meanings of “accuser,” “slanderer,” or “adversary.” Lucifer was a created angel who was given some of the highest honors and greatest responsibilities in God’s government, and yet, this privileged angel somehow ended up as God’s adversary. Revelation 12:7–9 tells us that he instigated a rebellion, a war against God, and was consequently cast out of heaven with other angels who had committed to his cause. His ambitions were not small. He sought to dethrone God, his Creator (Isa. 14:13). He desired to take his seat above all of creation. He wished to “be like the Most High” (v. 14).

It’s difficult to understand how a “perfect” being (Ezek. 28:15) with no inherent sinful inclination, one who served in the holiest place of the universe—literally in God’s throne room—could come up with the desire to become God Himself. In the context of perfection, sin is irrational and absurd. Even so, one day, “iniquity was found in [him]” (Ezek. 28:15). Though it was a nonsensical choice, because of free will, Lucifer always had this option available, as all created beings do.

The implications of this foolish desire to usurp the throne are cataclysmic. God, through His omnipotence, is by definition the Personification and Provider of the laws that hold the universe together physically, metaphysically, and morally. Any hypothetical “replacement god” would need to inherently possess the ability to sustain and uphold reality and all existence in all dimensions. Not only could Lucifer never provide any of the “DNA” required to be God but he also abides by no laws. A universe centered in him would immediately collapse and cease to exist.
Isaiah describes the fall of the former light bearer, Lucifer, through a prophetic lamentation over the King of Babylon. The ultimate intentions of Satan were at first hidden in his heart, but it became increasingly evident that he was indeed staging a coup against God’s government (Isa. 14:13, 14). His rebellion of pride was fueled by a corruption of wisdom and love of self (Ezek. 28:17), as well as “by the abundance of [his]... trading” (v. 16), which in this context can be understood as slandering God’s character through lies. Scripture tells us that one-third of the angels joined the uprising (Rev. 12:4) and were eventually expelled from heaven (v. 8). Planet earth was dragged into this cosmic war when Satan successfully deceived Adam and Eve and used that victory over humanity as the pretext to claim rulership over this earth (see Job 1:6, 7). Only God could refute Satan’s assertions and claims.

The controversy between God and Satan continued to play out on the rebellious planet as God sought to win humanity back by teaching the truth and patiently displaying His love through His everlasting covenant. At the same time, He was also seeking to prove His integrity and trustworthiness to the unfallen angels, some of whom may have still had questions about Lucifer’s fall and his claims about God.

Fast forward a few thousand years to the culmination of God’s love in the form of Jesus, who took on human flesh to represent God to His created beings. God came as close to us as He possibly could. In the ultimate act of selflessness, Jesus gave His life on the cross for the salvation of all humanity and was resurrected, having regained rulership over this planet as the King of kings and placed God’s character on display in literally earth-shaking and undeniable terms, forever refuting Satan’s false claims. All doubts and questions about the purity of God’s heart, the authenticity of His love, and the integrity of His justice were settled at the cross. Satan was defeated at the cross. Anticipating His victory on the cross, Jesus exclaimed, “Now the ruler of this world will be cast out” (John 12:31). The cross stripped Satan of all legitimate claims to this world and guaranteed that Satan’s doom was sure. The blood of Jesus shed on the cross is our assurance that Satan will be finally destroyed.

Satan has been expelled from heaven, but has he been expelled from your life? or does he still have access? Maybe he used to be cast out but regained entrance through compromise. Why continue to host a defeated foe? Why not dethrone him and let Jesus, the true King of kings, take up residence in your heart instead, bringing in a reign of truth and love to your life?
What relationship do the following verses have with Isaiah 14:12–17?

Ezekiel 28:12–19
Revelation 12:1–12
Luke 10:18
Job 1:6, 7
John 12:31
Romans 5:18, 19
2 Thessalonians 2:1–4
2 Corinthians 11:14

What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with the primary passage?

Review your memorized verse from Isaiah 14:12–17.
CRYING FOR SATAN

Most people have seen a movie or read a book in which a character unexpectedly dies. These often dramatic scenes typically include the heartbreak of a loved one who witnessed the death. In the agony of the moment, the person may exclaim, “How?!” or “Why?!”

In a similar expression of pain, Isaiah 14 is a prophetic song of lamentation. Its wording and structure suggest it’s a funeral song of sorts. The “how” cry in verse 12 describes the lament that takes place at someone’s death, and while the song ends with a victory for God and His people, the cry at the beginning has undertones of profound sadness. With a heavy heart, God calls out in verse 12, “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground” (emphasis added). God created all angels, including Lucifer. With love, He carefully crafted each detail of these incredible beings and gave them life. Lucifer was perfect and exceptionally beautiful (Ezek. 28:15–17). God picked a lovely and meaningful name for him, gifted him a great purpose as a light bearer, and gave him the honor of being extraordinarily close to Him as a covering cherub.

God is Father to the angels. His bond with them is closer than a human father’s with his children. If a child’s entire life were filled only with endless love, any father would be heartbroken to see that child turn away from him and rebel against him unprompted. In the story of Absalom’s rebellion against his father David, we see a reflection of the kind of love God has for Lucifer-turned-Satan. Just as David cried out over Absalom’s death, “O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!” (2 Sam. 18:33), so God is utterly heartbroken at the rebellion, fall, and final destruction of His creation, Satan.

God loves to the end. It is who He is. Jesus displayed God’s heart when He accepted, mentored, served, and loved Judas despite knowing that he would betray Him. Jesus showed divine compassion when He prayed from the cross for His torturers and mockers: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34).

The overall chorus of Scripture portrays our God as a long-suffering and merciful God. We can confidently assume that in His interactions with Lucifer, He exercised abundant patience and compassion. It was certainly not pleasurable for God to expel Lucifer and the angels; nor will their execution at the end of time be pleasurable: “‘As I live,’ says the Lord God, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?’” (Ezek. 33:11). In His dealings with Lucifer, we see that God exemplified the command He gave to us through Jesus to “love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (Matt. 5:44). What an incredible God we serve!
**LUCIFER NO MORE**

“In great mercy, according to His divine character, God bore long with Lucifer. The spirit of discontent and disaffection had never before been known in heaven. It was a new element, strange, mysterious, unaccountable. Lucifer himself had not at first been acquainted with the real nature of his feelings; for a time he had feared to express the workings and imaginings of his mind; yet he did not dismiss them. He did not see whither he was drifting. But such efforts as infinite love and wisdom only could devise, were made to convince him of his error. His disaffection was proved to be without cause, and he was made to see what would be the result of persisting in revolt. Lucifer was convinced that he was in the wrong. He saw that ‘the Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works’ (Psalm 145:17); that the divine statutes are just, and that he ought to acknowledge them as such before all heaven. Had he done this, he might have saved himself and many angels. He had not at that time fully cast off his allegiance to God. Though he had left his position as covering cherub, yet if he had been willing to return to God, acknowledging the Creator’s wisdom, and satisfied to fill the place appointed him in God’s great plan, he would have been reinstated in his office. The time had come for a final decision; he must fully yield to the divine sovereignty or place himself in open rebellion. He nearly reached the decision to return, but pride forbade him. It was too great a sacrifice for one who had been so highly honored to confess that he had been in error, that his imaginings were false, and to yield to the authority which he had been working to prove unjust.

“A compassionate Creator, in yearning pity for Lucifer and his followers, was seeking to draw them back from the abyss of ruin into which they were about to plunge. But His mercy was misinterpreted. Lucifer pointed to the long-suffering of God as an evidence of his own superiority, an indication that the King of the universe would yet accede to his terms. If the angels would stand firmly with him, he declared, they could yet gain all that they desired. He persistently defended his own course, and fully committed himself to the great controversy against his Maker. Thus it was that Lucifer, ‘the light bearer,’ the sharer of God’s glory, the attendant of His throne, by transgression became Satan, ‘the adversary’ of God and holy beings and the destroyer of those whom Heaven had committed to his guidance and guardianship.” (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* [1890], 39, 40.)

“In the banishment of Satan from heaven, God declared His justice and maintained the honor of His throne. But when man had sinned through yielding to the deceptions of this apostate spirit, God gave an evidence of His love by yielding up His only-begotten Son to die for the fallen race. In the atonement the character of God is revealed. The mighty argument of the cross demonstrates to the whole universe that the course of sin which Lucifer had chosen was in no wise chargeable upon the government of God.” (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* [1911], 500, 501.)
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Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

How is God’s character of love revealed in the way He treated Lucifer?

How does God respond to Satan’s lies?

How did Jesus display God’s character?

How did the cross refute Satan’s claims forever?

What would have happened if Lucifer did replace God?

What are subtle ways we try to exalt ourselves to “be like the Most High”?

Why is pride and selfish ambition such dangerous character traits?

In what ways do you see popular culture promoting self-centered attitudes?

How can we learn true humility and contentment?