

## Theology for Beginners – Satan, Original Sin and the Fall

### Satan

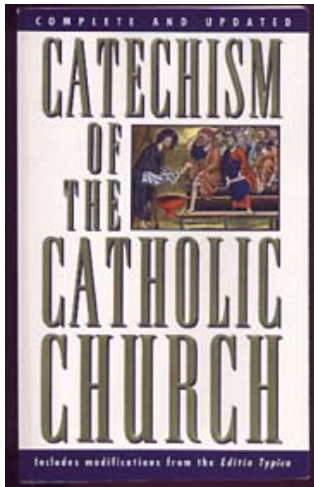
As we have seen, God created both spiritual and material beings. Man is unique in that he has both spiritual and material “properties”. In the beginning, God created the angels as pure spirits with both knowing and loving characteristics and with supernatural life.

Having free will, some of them chose to turn away from God (**CCC # 391-395**). The most prominent of these was Lucifer and he is also known by other names such as Satan and Beelzebub. While we do not know for certain what their sin was most theologians believe that it was pride (**CCC # 385-390**). That is, they wanted to put themselves in God’s place – to be god. In this act, they became separated from God while the remainder of the angels stayed in the Beatific Vision.

There is a popular misconception that Satan is not real, or not a real creature. The Catechism (**CCC# 395**) makes it quite clear that Satan is a creature and that he is not infinite. Although Satan may act out in the world out of hatred for God and the Kingdom of Jesus – often in a spiritual or physical nature – any action is only as permitted by divine providence. It is a great mystery why divine providence allows such diabolical activity but we know that in everything - that God works for the good of those who love and serve Him.

### Satan works in the world today

The church teaches that Satan and demons do exist. To deny this truth is to also deny the redemptive work of Jesus. Man himself is responsible for any evil that he commits – whether enticed by demons or not. Man has free will to chose evil or God. Demonic activity is real – although discernment and careful investigation is needed to determine what is really happening. Modern man has been conditioned by the media to be naïve about the supernatural – falling right into the hands of Satan. Remember the comedian of



the 1960’s who used to say “the devil made me do it”? Never underestimate the value of your personal faith to resist evil. While evil may be a mystery, each culture must accept the challenge of the Cross that Jesus gives us.

### The Fall and Original Sin

The beginning of the human race is found in Genesis Chapters 2 and 3. God created man with an immortal body and soul. In this creation - man was the perfection of nature – with immunity from suffering, death and integrity. Man fell from favor with God by the temptations of Satan – which began a war that will not end until the end of time. Satan tricked our first parents into believing that through disobedience they would become gods. Adam was not only a man but also the representative Man for all of mankind. The consequence for all of mankind was to be born without sanctifying grace. Therefore, Original Sin is not so much of a stain on the soul but the absence of that all-important sanctifying grace. The sacrament of Baptism gives the soul sanctifying grace.

The Fallen Race was restored through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. The plan of redemption began about 4000 years ago when God spoke to Abram. Abraham’s children were to be God’s chosen ones and through them would come the redemption of all mankind.

### Personal Sin – CCC # 1846-1876

In addition to effects from Original Sin there is also personal sin – that sin committed by each individual. We have a lifetime goal of doing God’s will (**CCC # 1854-1861**). A mortal sin is a fundamental rejection of God’s love. For a sin to be mortal there must be (1) serious matter, (2) sufficient reflection on it, and (3) full consent of the will. A venial sin is a less serious rejection of God’s love. It is like a spiritual sickness that does not kill but weakens God’s grace presence within us. God will forgive any sin – if asked – over and over again (**CCC # 1864**). We only have to be truly sorry.

*Note that (CCC #) refers to the Catechism of the Catholic Church*