

Can Satan Walk Upright?

Commentary for July 1, 2024 — Is This God's Humor?

I wonder if you ever noticed a paradox between verses in Genesis and Job? In Genesis chapter 3, after eating from **"the tree of the knowledge of good and evil"** (Genesis 2:9, 17), God confronted Eve and Adam. Then God punished the serpent AND the supernatural being speaking through the serpent:

"Then Yahweh Elohim said to the SERPENT [*nachash*]:

'Because you have done this, CURSED shall you be away from every domestic beast and from every animal of the field! [How was the serpent cursed?]

[1] **On your torso** ["belly" as most English translations say] **shall you crawl, And**

[2] **soil shall you eat all the days of your life."**

• **Genesis 3:14, Concordant Literal Version**

Was YHWH speaking to the snake? Snakes do not have sentient intelligence. The snake was a vessel for Satan to attract the attention of Eve. If YHWH's curse only affected the physical snake, how would that punish Satan? God's curse did afflict Satan (the Adversary) as well:

"There was a day when the sons of Elohim would come to station themselves before Yahweh, and the Adversary [Satan] came also in their midst. Yahweh said to the Adversary, 'From where are you coming?'

Then the Adversary answered Yahweh and said, 'From going to and fro IN THE EARTH and from WALKING ABOUT IN IT.'

• **Job 1:6-7 (repeated in Job 2:1-2)**

Was YHWH's curse from Genesis in effect in Job? I think so. Imagine the scene as the Adversary approaches YHWH's throne, walking on all four legs, the same as on earth.

I think Satan likely "walks" on all four legs with his body close to the ground, perhaps like a salamander. Most readers think God cursed the animal (a

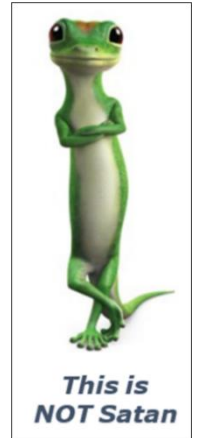


"serpent"), and not the Adversary [Satan] who spoke through the serpent. God did not curse only the serpent (which had legs as a few snakes have¹), but He cursed Satan, the spirit entity working through the physical serpent.² In the Book of Revelation this spirit being in Genesis is identified four ways in two verses in John's visions:

Revelation 12:9: "the great [1] dragon, ... [2] THAT OLD SERPENT, called [3] the Devil, and [4] Satan, which deceives the whole world ..."

¹ See the *Science* article, "[Four-legged snake fossil stuns scientists—and ignites controversy.](#)"

² This is similar to the donkey (often called "Balaam's ass") talking to the false prophet Balaam, who responded to the donkey! Numbers 22:21-35.



Revelation 20:2: **“the [1] dragon, that [2] old serpent, which is [3] the Devil, and [4] Satan ...”**

What Was the “Serpent”?

The spirit being (Satan) speaking through the serpent in the Garden of Eden did not possess a mere snake. It was a serpent called a *nachash* in Hebrew.³ This creature was a biological flying serpent sometimes associated with fire. (Perhaps it had a glow of luminescent or perhaps it could expel a flame from its mouth, giving rise to the dragons of folklore.) The flying serpents were not large, but they could and did injure people. If they lived a long time they would grow larger every year. Reptiles continue to grow all their lives.

Dr. Martin refers to these biblical creatures in his article [“Creation of Life in Contemporary Times.”](#) In my 2018 Commentary [“Fiery Flying Serpent,”](#) I expand his information by quoting ancient non-biblical authors. These sources wrote about these creatures in desert lands that occasionally became a problem to humans, and they were difficult to kill. The prophet Isaiah wrote about these reptiles in his day when God used them to plague the Philistines:

“Do not rejoice, Philistia, all of you, Because the club of your smiter is broken, For from the root of the SERPENT [*nachash*] a VIPER shall come forth, And its fruit will be A FLYING, BURNING SERPENT [*saraph*].”

• **Isaiah 14:29**

YHWH’s Humor

When the Sons of God gathered before YHWH (Job 1:6–12 and 2:1–7), **“The adversary”** was among them but he was not one of the sons of God. I think God’s curse upon Satan was still in effect when Job chapters 1 and 2 occurred. Perhaps God gave Job a vision of what happened. The adversary says he was **“going to and fro in the earth and from WALKING about in it”** (Job 1:7 and 2:1). When Satan is on earth, he walks on his belly; he did the same when he was before YHWH, also walking on his belly. What animal has four legs and walks on their belly? A salamander would fit all the criteria of what Satan might look like from the side when walking. The categories of modern taxonomy may be different than those in Scripture.

However, it seems that when Satan is stationary he is able to stand upright, as it says in a vision given to the prophet Zechariah:

“Then He showed me Joshua, the great priest, standing before the messenger of Yahweh, and Satan, STANDING at his right, to be his adversary.”

• **Zechariah 3:1**

When he is moving, I think Satan the “serpent” can only walk on all four legs like a legged snake or a salamander. We shall learn such things after Christ returns and Satan is imprisoned for 1,000 years, and perhaps ask Satan directly about such things.

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³ The term *nachash* occurs 31 times in the Old Testament: Genesis 3:1–2, 4, 13–14, 49:17; Exodus 4:3, 7:15; Numbers 21:8–9; 2 Kings 18:4; Job 26:13; Psalms 58:4, 140:3; Proverbs 23:32, 30:19; Ecclesiastes 10:8, 11; Isaiah 14:29, 27:1, 30:6, 65:25; Jeremiah 46:22; Amos 5:19, 9:3; Micah 7:17.