

**Sin and Satan
in the Qur'ān
and Bible**

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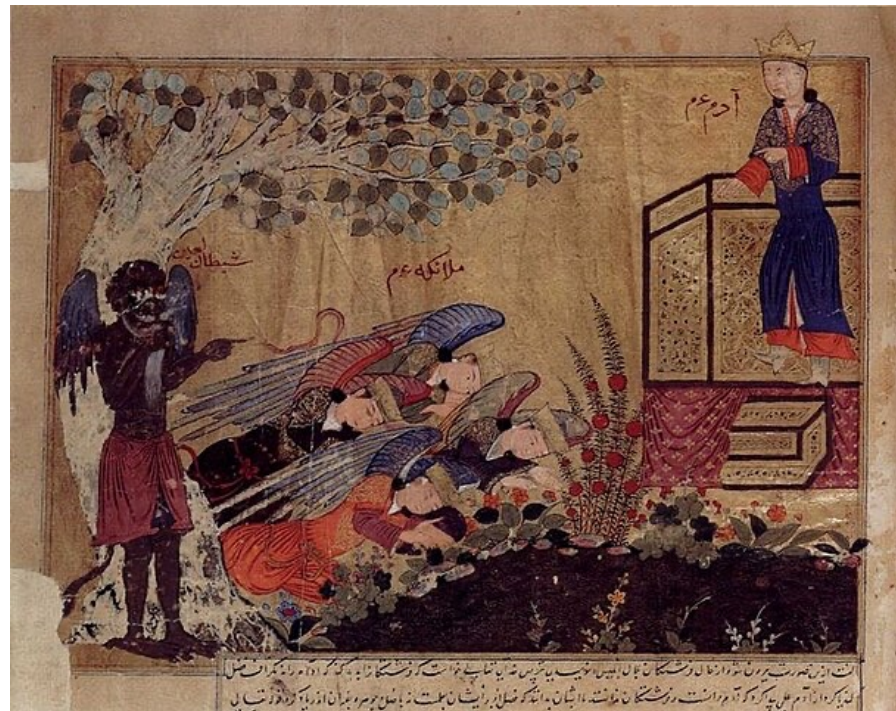
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Thesis

Based on my reading of the Bible, Qur'ān, and publications about them, I assert that ideas of embodied sin and the personification of Satan evolved over at least a thousand years (between 500 BCE and 610 CE), through Biblical and Qur'ānic stories and exegetical understandings that are sometimes not substantiated by sacred texts.

Historical evolution presupposes a starting point, and this paper considers alternative perspectives for the first Biblical mention of sin.

Footnotes and text sources are in the full paper, available on <https://katysblog.wordpress.com>

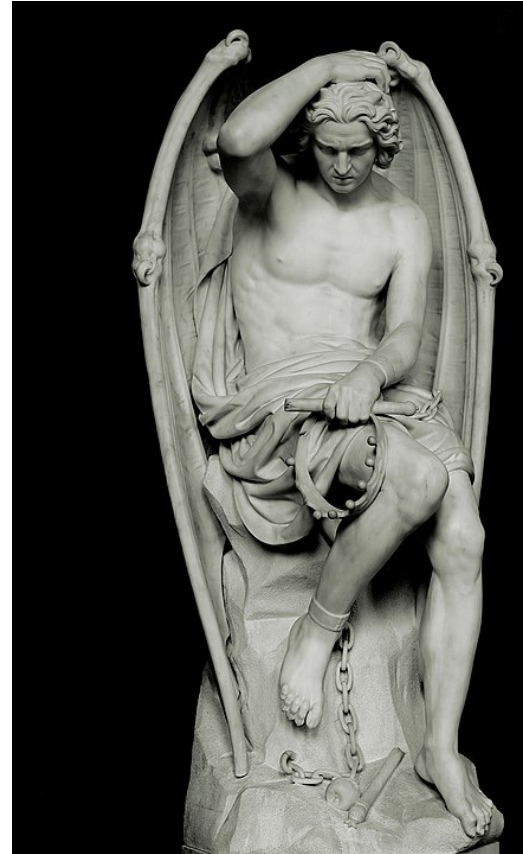


(Satan with Angels and Adam) Bal'ami, Annals of al-Tabari manuscript, 1413-1416, Topkapı Saray Museum, Istanbul, Turkey, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iblis#/media/File:Adam_and_the_Angels_watched_by_Iblis.jpg

Traditional Satan

Satan (or other names, including the devil, the adversary, Beelzebub, or the dragon) as an individual is mentioned about a hundred times in the Bible, both in the Hebrew Bible and Christian New Testament. Satan (also called the devil, the deceiver or accursed, Iblis and other names) is also mentioned over sixty times in the Qur'ān.

Traditional characteristics of Satan that may be found in Biblical and Qur'ānic scriptures and commentaries include, he is an adversary / enemy to humans, liar, tempter to evil, leader of other devils, outcast from Heaven / Paradise (a fallen angel or jinn), arrogant / prideful, and powerful but less so than God / Allah.



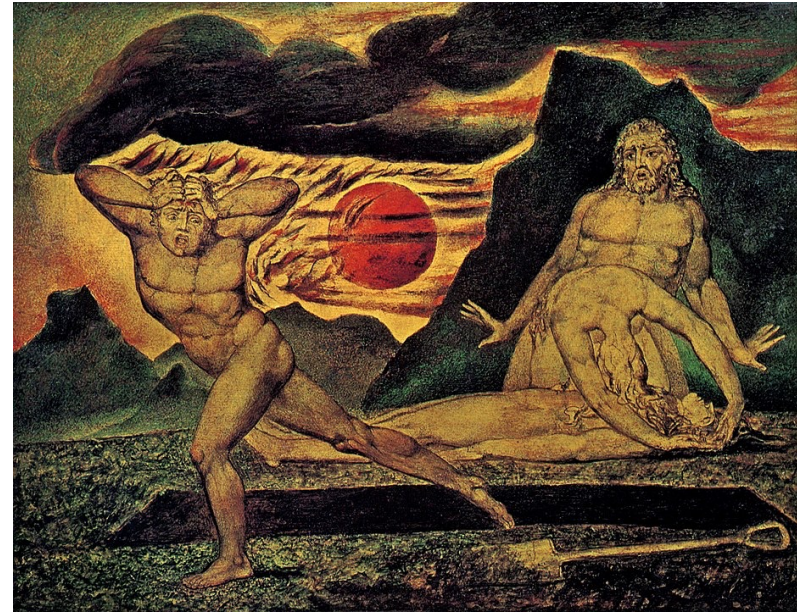
The Genius of Evil (1848) by Guillaume Geefs
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satan#/media/File:Lucifer_Liege_Luc_Viatour.jpg

Satan and Sin in History

I take as a starting point for the evolution of Satan the motivated, embodied (but unnamed) sin in Genesis 4:7 in which God says to Cain, “sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it.”

Sin is part of the oldest version of the Joseph story (Genesis 39-50), is in the first extensive characterization of Satan in the Bible (Book of Job 1-2), appears in the earliest stories of Jesus in Mark (the first Gospel), as well as later Christian gospels, the letters of Paul, and notably in the Revelation to John.

Finally, there are many mentions of Satan and of sin throughout the Qur’ān. I will particularly consider Biblical and Qur’ānic references in the stories of Joseph and Job.



The Body of Abel Found by Adam and Eve by William Blake, 1826
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cain#/media/File:Blake-Abel.jpg>

Genesis 4:7

For this paper, Genesis 4:7 is considered the first Biblical use of the word *sin*. Visualizations of this verse are popular on today's web, with online images showing a variety of lurking demons, carnivores, and other scary figures.



Sin is Crouching at the Door - Uplifting Christ



What does "sin is crouching at the door" mean? - Genesis 4:7 ...



at Your Door—Be on Your Guard!



Sin is a demon crouching at the door" (Gen 4:7, REB) - Blog Posts ...

Approximate Timeline of Bible and Qur'ān Text Creation

1000 BCE	700 BCE to 400 BCE	500 BCE	Year Zero	46 CE to 100 CE	610 CE to 632 CE
Writing of Genesis text started	Writing of the Book of Job	Genesis text reaches present form	New Testament stories started	New Testament text reaches present form	Qur'ān revelation

This information comes from many sources, but the table as a whole is original.

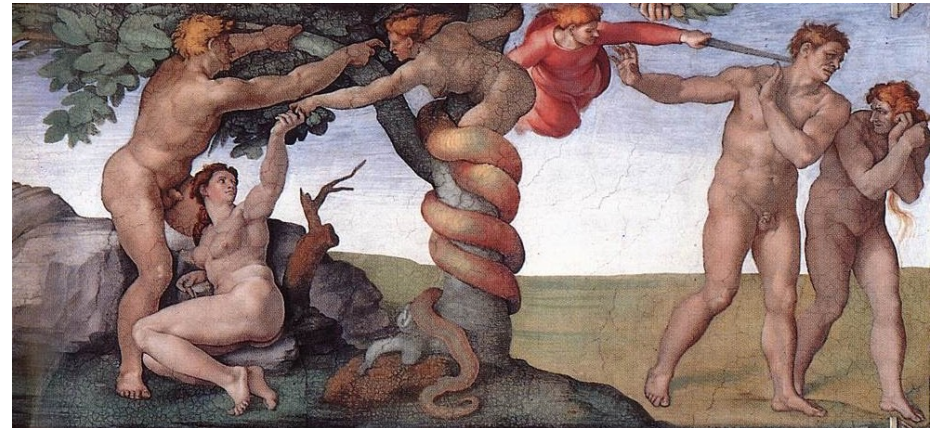
Two Alternatives: Later Exegetical Understandings

1) **The Serpent in Eden:** The Qur'ān does not mention serpents being in the garden of Paradise. Genesis 3:1 and 3:14 only describe the serpent in Eden as a wild animal or wild creature.

Later: It was not until the first century CE (at least 500 years after Genesis) that the snake was identified with the devil. Many Christians today regard Eden's serpent in Genesis 3 as the first Biblical appearance of the devil. Art showing Eden's serpent as half snake / half woman was popular beginning medieval times.

2) **Original Sin:** Either the sin committed by Adam as the head of the human race, or the sin he passed on with which every human being is conceived and born.

Later: Concept is first found in the New Testament. Genesis 3 Eden story is often taken by Christians as an account of original sin, but the word *sin* never occurs in it. There is no concept of original sin in the Qur'anic world view.



The Fall of Adam and Eve by Michelangelo, as depicted on the Sistine Chapel ceiling (1475-1564)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam_and_Eve#/media/File:Michelangelo_Sündenfall.jpg

Sin and Satan: Joseph

Names for Satan are not mentioned in Genesis, but the word *sin* appears about six times, depending on the scripture translation. In this text and throughout Genesis (except for 4:7), *sin* means wrongdoing and does not suggest a personality or evil embodiment. That is, except in the first usage, sin is a bad action without the implication of a being adversarial to humans.

In telling Joseph's story, Surah 12 includes the three references to Satan, and further mentions of *sin*. Later adventures of "Yusuf and Zulaikha" were the subject of several major medieval Islamic poems, romances, and artworks, an example of interpreting and extending scripture. In Surah 12, Satan acts within traditional evil expectations.



Yusuf and Zulaikha, miniature by Behzād, 1488
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yusuf_and_Zulaikha#/media/File:Yusef_Zuleykha.jpg



Joseph and Potiphar's Wife, Filippo Falciniatore
(1737-1768)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Potiphar%27s_wife#/media/File:Joseph_and_Potiphar's_Wife_by_Filippo_Falciniatore.jpg

Sin and Satan: Job

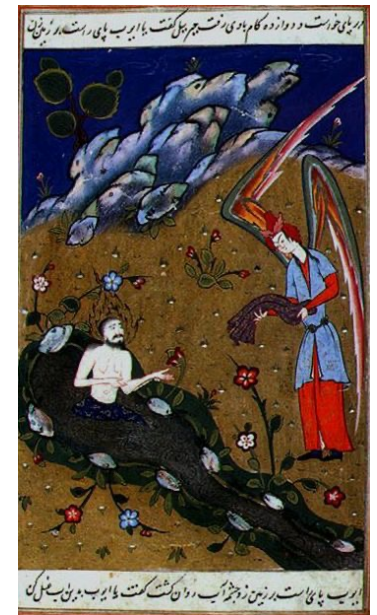
The character of Satan in the Book of Job is partway evolved between the embodiment of evil seen Genesis 4:7. The Satan of Job is not quite yet the evil, antagonistic figure he would eventually become in Jewish and Christian tradition, but here this enemy of the righteous begins to emerge.

Much of the Biblical story of Job considers the ancient question of theodicy, why bad things happen to good people. Theodicy and sin are not in the story of the Prophet Ayyub (Job) in the Qur'ān. Instead, God presents the restoration of his family as an example, “a sign of Our mercy and a lesson to all who understand” (Q 38:43).

There are later Muslim traditions and stories about this prophet (another example of extending and interpreting scripture), but in the Qur'ān, his story is only a few lines.



Job's Evil Dreams, by William Blake, 1805
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Blake%27s_illustrations_of_the_Book_of_Job#/media/File:Job's_Evil_Dreams-butts.jpg



Job in the curing water, from a Persian manuscript,
Prophet Ayyub (Job), 11th century
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_\(biblical_figure\)#/media/File:Job_the_prophet.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_(biblical_figure)#/media/File:Job_the_prophet.jpg)

Satan Fully Developed

The fully developed Satan is featured in the Biblical Revelation of John (written about 81 CE to 96 CE), “The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him” (Revelation 12:9).

The Satan featured in Qur’ān Surah 12, “Satan is man’s sworn enemy” (Q 12:5), and in Surah 35, “Satan is your enemy – so treat him as an enemy – and invites his followers only to enter the blazing fire” (Q 35:6), seems consistent with the fully developed evil character in Revelation.



Lucifer (1980) by Franz Struck
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satan#/media/File:1-Luzifer.jpg>



Questions?