

# The church of Christ

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## Satan, the enemy of all that is right [Audio](#)

2 Corinthians 2:11

*Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.*

When writing to the Corinthians in his second epistle, Paul made a remark about Satan in the context of Christians forgiving one another. Paul had exhorted the Christians in Corinth to forgive someone who had sinned and had been disfellowshipped but had since repented and asked forgiveness. The device of Satan in this immediate context is that of a hard heartedness that will not forgive offenders even when they have put away their sin, repented, and asked forgiveness. This is a device that Satan uses in order to gain an advantage over Christians and thereby cause strife and discontent among them.

Notice Paul used the plural form when referring to Satan's devices, meaning there is more than just the one he alluded to in the immediate context. Paul and the rest of the Christians were aware of how Satan operates. They were familiar with his tactics and his methods of causing trouble within the brotherhood and within the world. They knew the enemy, they were familiar with his devices and knew how to recognize his workings in his attempt to bring them to destruction.

Usually one comes to services with the idea of learning more about God. It is not often that we devote our precious time to a study of Satan, but if we do not know who we are up against, and if we are not familiar with his devices, then we will not be prepared to face him or his temptations when, (not if, but when), we are confronted with them. We need to be able to recognize Satan's devices so that we can know when we are under attack. So this lesson is going to be devoted to gaining some insight as to just who Satan is and why he desires to destroy us. Hopefully by better understanding Satan, we will realize that it is best to avoid him altogether and more urgently seek the righteousness of God instead.

### The name Satan

The word Satan in the original language means an adversary. This word is not always used to mean the person of Satan. In the Old Testament, King David said that the sons

of Zeruah were behaving as an "adversary [Satan in the original language]" to him when they advised him to kill Shimei in (2 Samuel 19:22); Solomon proclaimed that God had given him rest on every side and that there was "*neither adversary nor misfortune*" (1 Kings 5:4). The Hebrew word for adversary in this verse is Satan. This word also means to "accuse" or "resist." The psalmist complained that those who rendered him evil for good were acting as "adversaries" [satan] to him in Psalms 38:20.

In the OT Satan as an individual is pictured as an adversary against God's people either by attempting to seduce them to do evil or by accusing them before God for their sins. But in each case Satan's power is limited and he acts only within God's permissive will. Job chapters 1 and 2; Zechariah 2:13.

### **Is Satan Real?**

There are many in the world that believe Satan is just a figure of evil and that he is not a real and living entity that exists as a literal singular individual. This idea is to be utterly rejected in light of clear Biblical teaching. We are all familiar with the account of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness by the person of Satan. In Luke 4:2-3 we see that Jesus "*Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.*" Here we see a singular individual referred to as the "Devil" speaking to Jesus. In Jesus' rebuke of Satan's request for worship on that occasion, Jesus specifically referred to the Devil as Satan; Matthew 4:10, "*Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*". Jesus was not visited and tempted by a figure of evil. He was visited and tempted by a singular individual who he referred to as "*Satan*". The Satan that opposed and tempted Jesus is real. He exists and he is a force to be recognized, understood and dealt with. There are many uses of the word Satan in scripture, but the one we are going to focus on today is the Satan which is identified as the Devil or the "*evil one*".

### **How did Satan come to exist?**

God is the only eternal self-existent being represented in the Bible. Isaiah 41:4, "*I the Lord, the first, and with the last; I am he.*" Isaiah 45:6-7, "*That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.*"

Moving to the New Testament we find some teaching that will lead us to draw the conclusion that Satan is indeed a created being. Looking in Colossians 1:16-17, we read, "*For by him [Jesus Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*" We cannot exclude the person of Satan from being included in the description of those things which were created by Jesus Christ so the only conclusion is that Satan is a created being.

## Was Satan Created Good Or Evil?

Turning to Genesis 1:31, we read, "*And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good...*" Since God created Satan and everything that God created was "*very good*", then we can deduct from this that Satan was created "*very good*". Satan was given the choice whether to do good or to do evil, just like mankind was, and he chose to do evil. God did not force Satan to deceive Eve in the garden. That was wholly Satan's decision and he acted upon it. From this we learn that all beings created by God were given the freedom to make the choice whether or not to obey God. As the creator of all things, God has the right to expect the obedience of those who he created. Satan chose to reject obedience to his creator thereby choosing evil and because of that, he fell and was cast down.

## Indications Of Satan's Fall

In Jude 6, verses 6-7 we read, "*And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.*" At some point in time, heavenly messengers left their own habitation, which we generally believe to be heaven, and the place they forsook heaven for is generally understood to be right here on earth. They left their heavenly home without any authority from God and since we have plenty of Biblical evidence that puts them here on earth, we figure that the earth is where they went that got them into so much trouble.

When speaking to Jews on one occasion, Jesus spoke regarding the Devil in John 8:44-45, "*He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*" From this verse we learn the Devil was the malignant force which came to the garden of Eden in the beginning and became the father of lies here in the physical realm. In Revelation 12:9, we see all three designations for Satan used in the same context, "*And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*"

The individual who deceived Eve was the Devil, named Satan in the form of a serpent. Notice that the writer of Revelation made a reference to Satan's angels. Satan was not just deceiver of mankind either. He also deceived some of the heavenly host and they unwisely chose to follow him in opposition to the will of God which brings us to Satan's rebellion in heaven which was the reason he and his angels or followers, we cast out. Backing up a couple of verses from Revelation 12:9 to verse 7 we get the whole picture of what happened in this context. Revelation 12:7-9, "*And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*"

We get another reference in scripture to the angels that chose to follow Satan. In 2 Peter 2:4-5 we read, "*For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment*". In the original language the word for "hell" in this verse is "*Tartaroosas*" which is where the word "Tartarus" comes from. This place is defined as being the deepest abyss of Hades which is the abode of the dead where all who are there await the final resurrection and judgment.

Satan and his followers at some point rebelled against God and tried to overthrow Him in heaven. It did not work out well for them as they were defeated and cast out of heaven, never to return. At this time, these evil forces found themselves powerless to inflict any harm on God in heaven. The scripture in Revelation says that Satan and his angels were cast to the earth. We know from scripture that there were evil spirits on the earth in the days of Christ. Multiple scriptures speak of evil spirits and demons being cast from various people so we know that at least for some time they were here on earth. Since Peter said they had been cast down to hell, it stands to reason that their presence on earth was for a limited time.

Colossians 2:15 gives us an indication of why these evil spirits were here on earth for a time being, "*Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.*" Paul is writing here in the context of the Jewish authorities which were in power, however, this letter was written before the destruction of Jerusalem which was the final overthrow of the Jewish state. God showed His omnipotent power over the forces of evil publicly. Jesus cast them out publicly, the apostles cast them out publicly, the evil spirits were in subjection to God's authority and this was made evident to all. Basically speaking, God kicked the rebellious angels out of heaven and they made a stopover on earth where they were kicked around a little as a public demonstration of God's superiority over them. The application we need to make is that God is in charge and nothing Satan can do will ever change that. We can be assured that Satan will never be able to overcome God. That has already been tried and it failed miserably.

### **Major Defeats Of Satan In The Bible**

Satan and his evil followers suffered and continues to suffer defeat at the hands of righteousness. In addition to the war in heaven and the casting out of the demons and their public humiliation, Satan suffered defeat in his trial of Job. He was defeated by Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11). He was defeated when Christ was resurrected from the dead (Colossians 2:14-15; Hebrews 2:14-16; 1 John 3:8).

Looking at Hebrews 2:14-18 we read;

*"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham."*

God does not give help to the angels that sinned. They have no hope. They have no chance for forgiveness. Jesus died for us, but He did not die for them. Satan and his angels know that God is undefeatable and that they are doomed to eternal condemnation. Matthew 25:41 records Jesus saying, *"He will also say to those on the left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels"*. Which brings us to why Satan hates us so much.

God loved us enough to die for us but did nothing for Satan and his angels. They rebelled and were cast out of heaven with no hope of reconciliation. They know God refused to help them when they rebelled and they hate him for that. They know each and every one of us has the chance to escape the fate that awaits them and they hate us for that. They know they can't defeat God or overcome Him in any way so they do the only thing they can at this point. They recognize how much God loves us and they know the only way they can demonstrate their hatred for God is to destroy the ones God loved enough to die for. That would be us; mankind. Satan wants to hurt us because he knows God loves us and he can't do anything else to hurt God at this point than to take us with him to eternal destruction.

### **Satan is still active on earth**

Even though Satan's followers have been cast into the abyss, the forces of evil are still active. 1 Peter 5:8 reads, *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"*. But Satan has restrictions on his activities. Paul writing to the Christians in Corinth said, *"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it"* (1 Corinthians 10:13). Satan is not permitted to inflict more on us than we are able to withstand. We do not know how, but we do know that somehow God has placed a restriction on Satan so that he can operate but only within a certain range.

Satan has power but it is limited, Ephesians 6:11-13, *"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."* We can withstand Satan but it takes the whole armor of God to do it. James wrote in chapter 4:7-8, *"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you"*.

### **How Satan Attacks Us Today**

James 1:14

*"But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."* Satan knows that if we sin, the consequences are death if we do not repent. If he can get sin to be full grown in us, he will triumph over us in the end. Satan is not

allowed to force us beyond what we can endure so he resorts to the only avenue he has left. He has to make sin look good. He has to entice us. He has to disguise sin's ugliness and make it look more desirable to us than obedience to God's righteousness. The tools Satan has at his disposal is the Lust of the flesh and the pride of life (1 John 2:16).

The lust of the flesh is obvious. All temptations which have their roots in appetites and desires of the body are included in this. These appetites of the body are not in themselves sinful. It's when we allow lust, or our desires to act on and satisfy those appetites that we succumb to the lust of the flesh.

The lust of the eyes is what we see that we want. Covetousness, desiring what others have and willing to set those things up ahead of God's righteousness and obtain these things by unjust means.

Pride of life, also translated as the vain glory of life ... This is the desire of the human ego itself. The utterly selfish instinct in all human life that insists upon achieving the fulfillment of the person itself, the inherent passion of the soul to do its own will, fulfill its own desires, glorify its own ego, and to occupy the inner control center of life. This is what drives or compels us to sin. This is the self gratification of both the flesh and the will and our salvation in Christ requires that this be denied.

In short, Satan uses our own desires and our built in natures to achieve our destruction. He knows he can bring us down in defeat if he can get us to succumb to our desires, our pride, our vanity. Satan was unable to resist his pride and his vanity and he is going to pay the price for that. He hates us and wants us to share in that fate so he does what he can to entice us, to lure us, to deceive us, to tempt us to give in to our desires and join him in his condemnation.

Satan has already lost His war against God, but we haven't. There is hope for us as long as we live. There is no good reason for anybody to suffer the eternal condemnation and agony of hell with Satan. We have a choice. The way to avoid the fate of Satan is found in the same context as John's teaching on the lust of the eyes and pride of life. 1 John 2:16-17, "*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever*".

Satan does not have a choice in his eternal destiny but we do. Satan cannot go back and change the mistakes he made. But because God loved mankind so much that He gave His only begotten Son to pay the penalty of death we have a choice. Just like Satan, none of us can go back and change our beginnings. But because of the love of God, we each can start from this point right now and make ourselves a new ending.

We can't get off this ride of life we are on. We have to make a choice. To choose to do nothing is to choose to die. We can't just live our life in denial of the facts. Satan is real, Hell is real, God is real and there is a spiritual war going on between good and evil and we either emerge victorious and live, or we fall short and die. The Bible is very clear on what we must do to be victorious against our adversary. We must first.



Hear and believe the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ, John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"*. But is that all we have to do? The same Jesus that John quoted in chapter 3:16 also said in Matthew 7:21, *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."* There's obviously more to being saved than just belief. We have to do something more.

God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30), Jesus said *"except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:3). Repentance is therefore necessary. Repentance is a sorrow of heart that leads to a change of one's behavior. We have to stop living like we did and live for Christ. We have to make a change in our lives, in our attitudes, in our behavior.

Paul wrote in Romans 10:10, *"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* Jesus said, *"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."* We must confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

On Pentecost, when the Jews realized they had killed the Son of God and were convicted of their sins, they asked, *"brethren what shall we do?"* Peter answered them saying, *"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..."* Acts 2:38. Jesus said in Mark 16:16, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."* When Speaking to Nicodemus about being born again, Jesus told him, *"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* (John 3:3). We must be born again, buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4).

And after that, we live obediently in service to Jesus Christ, John 14:23-24, *"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings..."* Mark 13:13 *"he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."* Revelation 2:10, *"be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life"*.

That's how we defeat our adversary. That's how we come through this life victorious. That's how we hurt Satan. Satan wants to kill us. He's already dead in condemnation so we can't kill him, but we have a choice whether or not we die with him or live with God.

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**Matt 11:28-29**

*"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."*