THREAT: FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND SATAN'S SCHEMES

INTRO

- The third enemy we must be alert to is Satan himself…failure to know what he is like and how he attacks believers can lead to giving into temptation
- The devil constitutes a serious foe believers must be aware of in their pursuit of holiness
- There is a real devil who is engaged in a real conflict for the purpose of destroying the lives of real believers
- Added to this, there are legions of demons who do Satan's bidding and actively oppose believers

- We used to belong to Satan and his satanic system

Ephesians 2:2 ~ you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience

- We used to be one of Satan's possessions since he was our father
- We were under his influence, we followed his ways, and we belonged to him

John 8:44 ~ You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father

- The good news is that we have been delivered from his power and have been adopted into God's family
- We were rescued out of Satan's fortress, out of his evil world system, and out of his false ideologies
- This is the power of the Gospel and the work of Christ to redeem us and adopt us into his family

Colossians 1:13-14 ~ For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins

- However, the bad news is that Satan is still committed to our destruction
- Although we may not belong to him anymore, he is still a very aggressive and formidable enemy
- We face an enemy that is so strong, clever, deceiving, and subtle that he will go to great lengths to make us stumble spiritually…we are literally at war with the devil

John 12:31 ~ Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

2 Corinthians 4:4 ~ in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

1 Peter 5:8 ~ Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour

1 John 5:19 ~ the whole world lies in *the power of* the evil one.

- He thwarts the work of God in us and through us…what God desires to do in us, Satan does the opposite
- "A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing; our helper he, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing. For still our ancient foe does seek to work us woe; his craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate, on earth is not his equal" (A Mighty Fortress is Our God)
- "Our cold and ruthless enemy, his pleasure is our harm" (Our Great God)

- "Sometimes it is hard to recall the threat the Devil poses. Popular culture, after all, trivializes him as one who sits on shoulders of cartoon characters and comically whispers into their ears, twirling his pointed tail. Such depictions suggest that Satan is easily overcome, but God's Word paints a far different picture. He is a lion on the prowl who seeks people to devour, indicating his strength (1 Peter 5:8)."[1]

SATAN'S NATURE

- 7 OT books and every NT book refer to the existence of Satan…Jesus frequently spoke of Satan

Matthew 13:39 ~ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.

Luke 11:18 ~ If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul.

He is a Created Being

Ezekiel 28:15 ~ You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, until unrighteousness was found in you.

- He was created as part of the angelic realm, probably very early on day 1 of creation (see Job 38:4-7)
- He was created the highest in rank of them all (see Ezek 28:12-14)
- He is a limited creature…he is limited by God (see Job 1:12)…he is not God's equal (see 1 John 4:4)
- He is not omniscient, omnipotent, or infinite in any way

He is a Spirit Being

Ephesians 2:2 ~ in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

Job 1:6 ~ Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

- As a Spirit being, he has no body…his is one of non-corporeal existence

He is a Person

- He possesses intellect

2 Corinthians 11:3 ~ But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity [of devotion] to Christ.

- He possesses emotion

Revelation 12:17 ~ And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

- He possesses will

2 Timothy 2:26 ~ and they may come to their senses [and escape] from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

[1] https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/the-devil

He has Many Names

Satan (Job 1:6)	Adversary or opposer
Devil (Matt 4:1)	Slander, falsely accuse
Beelzebub (Luke 11:15)	Chief of the demons
Belial (2 Cor 6:15)	Worthless, wicked
Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12)	The Vulgate translation of "son of the morning"
Evil One (1 John 5:19)	Evil in character
Dragon (Rev 12-13)	Fierce nature
Prince of Demons (Matt 12:24)	Leader of demonic realm
Accuser (Rev 12:10)	Accuses the brethren
Tempter (Matt 4:3)	Tempts people to sin
Ruler of this World (John 12:31)	Leader of current fallen world system
Prince of the Power of Air (Eph 2:2)	Ruler of fallen world
*God of this World (*2 Cor 4:4)	Deceiver of unbelievers
Deceiver (Rev 12:9)	Deceiver
Adversary (1 Pet 5:8)	Opponent of believers
Father of Lies, Murderer (John 8:44)	Liar
Angel of Light (2 Cor 11:14)	Disguises of Good, but is Evil

His Career

The Pristine Period – from his creation to his fall

- This was a very short pre-fall period of time, perhaps just a few days

The Present Period – from his fall to Revelation 12 (his banishment to earth)

- This time period is characterized by him walking about seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8)
- During this time, he is the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph 2:2), the "god of this world" (2 Cor 4:4)
- He has access to God's throne room during this period (Job 1-2)
- His abode is in the heavenlies (Eph 6:11-12)

The Period on Earth – from Revelation 12 to the 2nd Coming of Christ

- During this time, he is expelled from heaven and banished to earth (Rev 12:7-12)
- His primary activity during this time is the persecution of Israel during the Tribulation (Rev 12:13-17)
- He deceives with signs and wonders (2 Thess 2:9)
- The Restrainer is removed (2 Thess 2:6-7)

The Period in the Abyss – for 1000 years during the Millennium until his release

- He is held captive in the abyss, unable to deceive the nations any longer (Rev 20:1-3)

The Period of Release – for a short time until the Great White Throne Judgment

- Satan is released from the abyss for a short time to make one last ditch effort to destroy Christ (Rev 20:7-10)

The Period in the Lake of Fire – for eternity

- He is cast into this lake of fire to be tormented day and night (Rev 20:10)

His Fall

John 8:44 ~ the devil…was a murderer from the beginning…there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.

1 John 3:8 ~ The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning…

Isaiah 14:12-15 ~ How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! 13 But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' 15 Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit.

- The context of this passage is God's judgment upon the King of Babylon but clearly the power behind him was Satan…thus this is likely a description of Satan's fall
- In fact, Jesus possibly referenced Isaiah 14:12 in Luke 10:18 to describe Satan's fall…the preincarnate Christ was a witness to Satan's fall

- Satan is called "Lucifer" in v. 12 ~ star of the morning, son of the dawn

- Lucifer became Satan when God cast him out of heaven (v. 12 ~ you have been cut down to the earth)

- It was Lucifer's pride, his desire to be like God himself, that led to his fall
- The 5-fold "I will" statements in vv. 13-14 depict this pride
- This ultimate form of pride (v. 14 ~ I will make myself like the Most High) fits the description of Satan's fall in 1 Tim 3:6

- Notice the consequences to Satan's pride in v. 15 ~ Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit

Ezekiel 28:12-18 ~ Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The ruby, the topaz and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx and the jasper; The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, Was in you. On the day that you were created They were prepared. 14 You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created Until unrighteousness was found in you. 16 By the abundance of your trade You were internally filled with violence, And you sinned; Therefore I have cast you as profane From the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, That they may see you. 18 By the multitude of your iniquities, In the unrighteousness of your trade You profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; It has consumed you, And I have turned you to ashes on the earth In the eyes of all who see you.

- The context of this passage is God's judgment upon the King of Tyre but clearly the power behind him was Satan…thus, most likely this is a reference to the fall of Satan, which the King of Tyre illustrates

- This is a prophetic lamentation over the "King of Tyre" who is described in language that fits Satan's fall and not a mere human king

- The terminology in this passage that describes Satan's attributes and appearance: "seal of perfection" (v. 12)…"you were in Eden" (v. 13)…"you were the anointed cherub" (v. 14)…"you were on the holy mountain of God" (v. 14)…"you were blameless in your ways" (v. 15)
- These terms refer to more than just a mere human being

- There came a time when this "anointed cherub" became unrighteous: "until unrighteousness was found in you" (v. 15)…"you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned" (v. 16)

- Pride was the cause of this unrighteousness: "your heart was lifted up because of your beauty" (v. 17)

- As a result, God cast Satan out of heaven: "I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God" (v. 16)… "I have destroyed you, O covering cherub" (v. 16)…"I cast you to the ground" (v. 17)…"I have turned you to ashes on the earth" (v. 18)

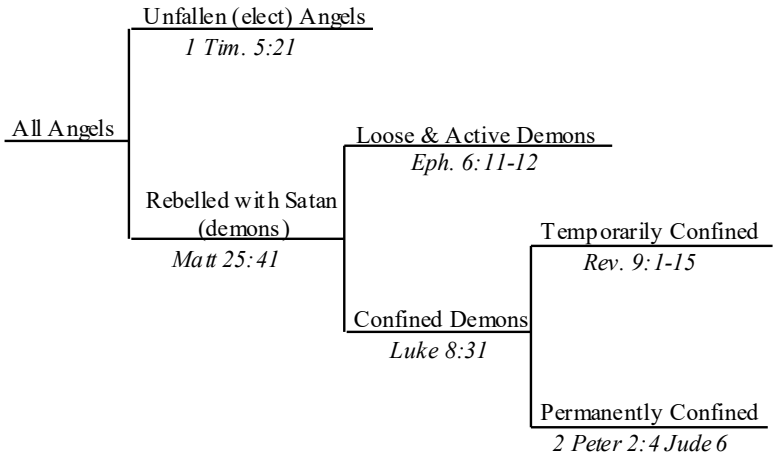
He Commands a Demonic Army

- When Satan fell, he took one third of the angels with him…they became demons

Revelation 12:3-4 ~ Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. 4 And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

- How many angels fell with Satan in his rebellion? ➔ the number is not known but it is vast
- The number of angels around God's throne is described in Rev 5:11 as "myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands"…in other words, nearly innumerable
- Since one third of the angels fell with Satan and Rev 9:16 says that 200 million demons will be released during the 6th trumpet judgment, there must be at least 400 million holy angels
- But we know the number is higher than those since there will be other demons released from the abyss during the 5th trumpet judgment…and still other demons are free to roam the earth currently

- Some of these demons are loose and active, able to work Satan's schemes and oppose God (Eph 6:12)
- Some of them are temporarily confined (Luke 8:30-31; Rev 9:1-2)
- Some are permanently confined because they are so wicked (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6)



SATAN'S SCHEMES

- "Beloved in our dearest Lord, Christ, the Scriptures, your own hearts, and Satan's devices, are the four prime things that should be first and most studied and searched. If any cast off the study of these, they cannot be safe here, nor happy hereafter. It is my work as a Christian, but more as I am a Watchman, to do my best to discover the fullness of Christ, the emptiness of the creature, and the snares of the great deceiver; which I have endeavored to do in the following discourse…"[2]
- "Heeding Brooks' warning, our thoughts concentrate primarily on Satan's devices (Eph. 6:11). For only by knowing his battle plan can we be armed with a sure knowledge of Satan's attempts on our lives…The Bible serves as the battle manual for God's army. It outlines by instruction and illustration the specific schemes in Satan's bag of tricks (2 Cor. 2:11). No victorious military strategist would enter battle without first poring over detailed intelligence reports on his adversary. So God has provided us with vivid descriptions of our enemy's past exploits. Ignorance can never be used to excuse defeat at Satan's hands."[3]

2 Corinthians 2:11 ~ so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

Ephesians 6:11 ~ Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

- We must know our enemy…we must know his battle plan and how he attempts to exploit us

He Doubts God's Word

Genesis 3:1 ~ Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "**Indeed, has God said**, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"

He Distorts God's Word

Genesis 3:3 ~ but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it **or touch it**, or you will die.'

He Denies God's Word

Genesis 3:4-5 ~ The serpent said to the woman, "**You surely will not die!** 5 For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

He Seeks to Destroy the Person and Work of Christ

Genesis 3:15 ~ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

Matthew 4:1, 3, 5-6, 8-9 ~ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil…3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."…5 Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU'; and 'ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'"…8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; 9 and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me."

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[2] Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices,* 15-16.
[3] Richard Mayhue, *Unmasking Satan*, 11-12.

Matthew 16:21-23 ~ From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. 22 Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." 23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

John 13:27 ~ After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

He Snatches Away God's Word

Matthew 13:19 ~ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.

He Fosters Temptations within Marriage

1 Corinthians 7:5 ~ Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

He Blinds the Minds of Unbelievers to Veil the Gospel

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 ~ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

He Resists and Discourages Believers in Ministry

2 Corinthians 12:7 ~ Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!

He Deceives the Minds of Believers

2 Corinthians 11:3 ~ But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

He Counterfeits God's Program

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 ~ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

He Tries to Keep Believers in Perpetual Immaturity

Ephesians 4:14 ~ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

He Tries to Exploit Our Anger and Divide the Church

Ephesians 4:26-27 ~ BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity.

He Hinders Believers' Work for God

1 Thessalonians 2:18 ~ For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet Satan hindered us.

He Tempts Believers

1 Thessalonians 3:5 ~ For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor should be in vain.

He Desires to Disgrace the Reputation of Church Leaders

1 Timothy 3:7 ~ And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

He Promotes Deceitful Doctrines to Divide the Church by False Teaching

1 Timothy 4:1 ~ But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,

He Seeks to Fill the Church with Selfishness and Worldliness

James 4:6-7 ~ But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." 7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

He Tries to Defeat Believers in General

1 Peter 5:8 ~ Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

He Instigates Persecution Against Believers

Revelation 2:10 ~ Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

He Accuses Believers Falsely

Job 1:9-11 ~ Then Satan answered the Lord, "Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face."

Revelation 12:10 ~ And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night.

DEFENDING AGAINST SATAN'S SCHEMES

- Responding to Satan's attacks does not require what we normally hear about engaging in spiritual warfare
- "No one today has authority over demons and disease like the apostles did. In fact, 2 Peter 2:10-11 and Jude 8-10 imply that believers are below demonic spirits on the 'authority ladder' and need to implore the Lord when dealing with them. So 'taking authority' over demon spirits or negative circumstances is not a biblical concept. Our method of dealing with Satan is to resist him, firm in our faith."[4]

[4] John MacArthur, *How to Meet the Enemy*, 60.

- Confronting Satan and demons are the mark of false teachers

2 Peter 2:10-11 ~ and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. **D**aring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, 11 whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.

- Even Michael, the highest-ranking angel, did not dare confront Satan:

Jude 8-10 ~ Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. 9 But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" 10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed

- Nowhere in the NT are believers called to initiate confrontation with Satan or demons
- Even if some would conclude that this should be practiced, there is no clear instruction about how it should be carried out
- The clearest passage on "spiritual warfare" (Eph 6) says nothing about this kind of offensive approach

- Instead, believers are called to resist Satan which is primarily done through living a holy life in submission to God…we are to stand firm against Satan

Ephesians 6:11, 13, 14 ~ Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil…13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm…14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,

- We are to resist him…taking up a defensive posture against his schemes

James 4:7 ~ Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

1 Peter 5:8-9 ~ Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

- "'Resist' is a military term that speaks of taking a firm stand against an enemy. We are to stand against our hellish foe by being firm in the faith…That speaks of purity in both doctrine and conduct. Do you want to be firm in the faith? Shun evil and draw near to God. When Satan or fleshly desires tempt you, resist. If we do that, Scripture guarantees that devil will flee."[5]
- We do this by donning the armor of God, which has been provided to be victorious in the spiritual battle
- This defensive posture repels Satan's attacks and prevents him from gaining a foothold in our life

Ephesians 6:11-20

1. The belt of truth – the content of God's Word but primarily the outworking of that content in our lives
2. The breastplate of righteousness – practical righteousness, holy living, a godly, blameless life
3. The shoes of the gospel of peace – peace with God (objective) and peace of God (subjective)
4. The shield of faith – faith which resists doubt and distrust of God
5. The helmet of salvation – the assurance of salvation and the resulting confidence it brings
6. The sword of the Spirit – the Word of God…the only offensive weapon in the armor of God
7. The prayer of dependence – prayer which links us to God's power

[5] MacArthur, *How to Meet the Enemy*, 68.