

ECCLESIA CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST
Pastor Luther H. Holmes, Jr.
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Bible Study Series



OUR SPIRITUAL ENEMY: SATAN

KEY VERSE: Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. (I Peter 5:8)

INTRODUCTION

This lesson introduces your spiritual enemy, a powerful force of evil known as Satan. You will learn of his origin, his former position, how he fell from his former position, and of those he took with him when he fell. You will learn the attributes of his nature, his sphere of activity, and receive an introduction to his strategies. In warfare in the natural world, a soldier must first identify the enemy before entering the battlefield. He must study all available information on the enemy, his nature, and strategies. This is why military forces spend much time gathering intelligence information on the enemy. The same is true in the spirit world. You can only war effectively if you identify your enemy, understand his nature, and recognize his strategies. As you have learned, the evil forces you face are not clothed in flesh. They are spiritual hosts of wickedness.

THE ORIGIN OF SATAN

Satan was originally created by God: **All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. (John 1:3)**
For by Him 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. (Colossians 1:16)

God does not create evil. Satan was perfect when he was originally created by God, but was given a free will to choose good or evil:

Thou was perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created till iniquity was found in thee. (Ezekiel 28:15)

THE FORMER POSITION OF SATAN

The Bible describes the original position of Satan in Ezekiel 28:12-17. Read this passage in your Bible before proceeding with this lesson. When Satan was originally created, he was an angel of God. He was one of the Cherubim class of angels, holy, wise, beautiful, and perfect. He was the leader among the cherubs and is called a "guardian" or "covering" cherub. His name was originally Lucifer which means "*light bearer*" (Isaiah 14:12). He was decked with precious stones set in gold (Ezekiel 28:13; Exodus 28:15-11). He was given a position on God's holy mountain and apparently led in worship (Ezekiel 28:13).

What a brilliant, beautiful picture of Satan in his original position is given in the Word of God. He is described as a gem of precious stones. But a gem has no light of its own. It is not beautiful in a dark room. Its beauty is in its ability to reflect light from without.

When God created Lucifer, He made him with a capacity to reflect the glory of God to a greater degree than any other created being. God was the light that made Lucifer radiate beauty.

THE FALL OF SATAN

But Satan did not retain this glorious position. The Bible describes his rebellion and fall:

How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning. How art thou cut down to the ground which didst waken the nations.

For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north;

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High.

Yet thou shalt be brought down to Hell, to the sides of the pit. (Isaiah 14:12-15)

Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hadst corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness. (Ezekiel 28:17)

Satan's fall from his angelic position occurred because of pride and rebellion demonstrated in five wrong attitudes. Satan said:

I WILL ascend unto Heaven: He desired to occupy the abode of God--Heaven--desiring equal recognition.

I WILL exalt my throne above the angels (stars) of God: He not only desired to occupy God's abode, but he also coveted His rule over the angelic hosts.

I WILL sit also upon the mountain of the congregation: According to Isaiah 2:2 and Psalms 48:2, this is the center of God's earthly rule. Satan desired to rule the earth as well as the angels.

I WILL ascend above the heights of the clouds: The clouds speak of the glory of God. Satan wanted God's glory for himself. (The following verses document clouds in relation to the glory of God: Exodus 13:21; 40-28-34; Job 37-15-16; Matthew 26:64; Revelation 14:14- 16).

I WILL be like the Most High: God has many names by which He is called. Why did Satan choose this particular name? He selected this title because it reflects God as "possessor of Heaven and earth."

RESULTS OF SATAN'S SIN

Here are the terrible results of Satan's sin:

1. **BANISHMENT FROM HEAVEN:** Because of his rebellion, Satan was cast out of Heaven by God: ...

I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God...I will cast thee to the ground... (Ezekiel 28:16-17)

2. CORRUPTION OF CHARACTER:

Lucifer, once created for God's glory, became Satan with a character that opposed all God is and does.

3. PERVERSION OF POWER:

Satan's power was once used for God's glory. Now it is turned to disruptive and destructive purposes. According to Isaiah 14 he weakens the nations (verse 12), causes the earth and governments to tremble (verse 16), and those taken as his prisoner have no relief (verse 17).

4. DESTINED TO THE LAKE OF FIRE:

Satan was destined to the lake of fire (Isaiah 14:15).

5. AFFECTED OTHER ANGELS OF GOD:

When Satan fell from Heaven he did not fall alone. He took with him a portion of the angelic host of Heaven who participated in his rebellion against God. This group of angels are now part of an evil force of demons.

6. ENTRANCE OF SIN IN THE UNIVERSE:

When Satan rebelled, sin entered the universe. As a result, there were two actions God could have taken:

1. He could have struck down Satan and killed him. But if God had brought down the first enemy in this way, there would always have been the possibility of another rebellion. The history of Heaven would have been clouded with similar disasters.

2. The other action open to God was the one which the Bible indicates He took. The claims of Satan to superior power should have their complete trial on earth in the span of eternity we call time.

When God created the first man and woman, the trial on earth began. **The battle is still in progress on earth.** *That is what spiritual warfare is all about. Satan is still seeking power, position, and worship. But the believer knows he is already a defeated foe. Jesus overcame the power of Satan through His death and resurrection.* The final destiny of Satan is already revealed in the Bible.

WHERE IS SATAN?

Satan, in spirit form, is present in the world:

And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. (Job 1:7)

Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. (I Peter 5:8)

Although Satan is present in the world, he is not omnipresent, which means he cannot be every place in the world at one time as God can. This is why he employs a host of demons to accomplish his plans.

SATAN'S ACTIVITIES

Satan has access to the presence of God and operates on the earth, including the "air" or region above the earth:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.

And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. (Job 1:6-7)

Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. (Ephesians 2:2)

We may summarize the activities of Satan by noting that they are always directed against God, His plan, and His people. He will attack you in the areas of worship of God, the Word of God, your Christian walk, and your work for God.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF SATAN

As you have already learned, Satan is a spirit, but he also has attributes of a real personality. The Bible teaches that he is:

INTELLIGENT AND SUBTLE: But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtily, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. (II Corinthians 11:3)

EMOTIONAL: And the dragon was wroth with the woman... (Revelation 12:17)

SELF-WILLED: And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. (II Timothy 2:26)

POWERFUL: ...Prince of the power of the air... (Ephesians 2:2)

DECEITFUL: Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (Ephesians 6:11)

FIERCE AND CRUEL: Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. (I Peter 5:8)

DECEPTIVE: And no marvel: For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. (II Corinthians 11:14)

THE NAMES OF SATAN

The Bible gives many names for Satan which reveal more about his nature and activities. As you previously learned, Satan was originally called the "anointed cherub" and "Lucifer" before his rebellion. Other names for Satan are:

Abaddon: (Hebrew word for a destroying angel) Revelation 9:11

Accuser of the Brethren: Revelation 12:10

Adversary: I Peter 5:8

Angel of bottomless pit: Revelation 9:11

Angel of light: II Corinthians 11:4

Apollyon (Greek word for destroyer): Revelation 9:11

Beelzebub: Matthew 12:24; Luke 11:15; Mark 3:22

Belial: II Corinthians 6:15

Deceiver: Revelation 12:9; 20:3

Destroyer: Revelation 9:11; I Corinthians 10:10

Devil: (Means slanderer) I Peter 5:8; Matthew 4:1

Dragon: Revelation 12:3

Enemy: Matthew 13:39

Evil One: I John 5:19 God of this world: II Corinthians 4:4

King of Tyrus: Ezekiel 28:12-15

Liar, father of lies: John 8:44

Murderer: John 8:44 Prince of the devils: Matthew 12:24

Prince of this world: John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11 68

Prince of the power of the air: Ephesians 2:2 Satan: (means adversary, opposer) John 13:27

Serpent: Revelation 12:9; II Corinthians 1:3

Tempter: Matthew 4:3; I Thessalonians 3:5

Roaring Lion: I Peter 5:8

Ruler of darkness: Ephesians 6:12

Spirit that works in the children of disobedience: Ephesians 2:2

You can recognize the power of Satan from his attributes and names. Because he is a deceptive, powerful enemy the Bible warns:

Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. (I Peter 5:8)

Neither give place to the devil. (Ephesians 4:27)

SATAN IS NOT...

Unlike God, Satan is not omniscient (knowing all things). If Satan could foresee the future, he never would have allowed Jesus to die on the cross. He would have known that the death of Jesus would overthrow his power and provide a way of escape from the bondage of sin for all mankind.

Satan is not omnipotent (all powerful). Jesus said the power of God within you is greater than the power of Satan. For those who believe in Jesus, Satan is already a defeated foe (John 12:31). He is strong only to those who yield to him. His power is limited by the power of God (Job 1:10-12) and he is only able to overcome a believer as they yield control to him.

Because Satan is not omnipresent (present everywhere) he dispatches a host of demons throughout the earth to do his will and accomplish his purposes.

LIFE APPLICATION

Satan is compared to a snake or serpent in the natural world. Consider the spiritual application of the following natural principles:

The venom of poisonous snakes falls into three categories:

- Neurotoxins: Which affect the nerves.
- Hemotoxins: Which affect the blood.
- Cardiotoxins: Which affect the heart.

Satan also affects your nerve (courage), your heart (to attack your worship and service of God) and tries to prevent the work of the blood of Jesus (salvation, healing, deliverance) in your life.

Snakes protect themselves by:

- Disguise: Some snakes are very hard to see because they look like the dirt or trees in which they are found.
- Imitation: Some snakes protect themselves by imitation. One example is the African tree viper which "freezes" itself and sticks its neck out like a twig on a tree.
- Increased size: The puff adder protects itself by blowing itself up as big as possible.
- Frightening sounds: Some snakes hiss or rattle, making frightening sounds to scare you away. Your spiritual enemy comes disguised as an "angel of light" and imitates the things of God. He also tries to frighten you by appearing large and threatening.

Snakes capture their food in four different ways:

- Strike: A swift attack.
- Constriction: Where the snake wraps itself around the target and slowly squeezes out its life.
- Throwing weight around over the prey to overcome it.
- Biting and holding the target in its fangs while slow poison paralyzes the target. Sometimes the snake's teeth are broken off in the struggle, but snakes

are constantly developing new teeth. The most dangerous part of a snake is its mouth. It shoots enough venom to paralyze, then devours its prey.

Do you see how these methods parallel those used in attacks of Satan? Sometimes he attacks with swift and deadly strikes. Other times he constricts your spiritual life with the cares of the world and sinful weights and entanglements. He is always trying to "throw his weight around" to terrorize you, and he loves to hold you in bondage while paralyzing you with his deadly venom.

Snakes locate their prey by picking up dust on their tongue which relays information to their brain. If you stand still, a snake cannot locate you. Satan spots you best when the dust is stirred up and you are running in confusion and fear. When the dust is settled and you stand against him fearlessly, just like snakes, he cannot strike you. This is why the Bible says "stand still." and "keep on standing."

In a panic situation, a snake will shoot all of its venom at once and is then rendered defenseless for a while until it can produce more venom. It is possible that this is what occurred in the wilderness temptation when Jesus used the Word of God against Satan's attacks and caused Satan to "depart from him for a season."

Here are some ways to avoid snake bite in the natural world. Note that they are also applicable in the spiritual realm:

1. Recognize poisonous snakes (know your enemy).
2. Wear protective clothing (your spiritual armor).
3. Avoid known snake territory (do not go into areas of known temptation or Satanic activity).
4. Have a friend with you (this illustrates the importance of being part of the Body of Christ).
5. Avoid walking after dark or in darkened areas. Snakes avoid direct sunlight. (as believers, we no longer walk as children of the dark but as children of light!)
6. Do not put your hands or feet into places you cannot look (guard your fleshly senses).

7. Do not sit down without looking around carefully (stationary targets are easier to hit than moving targets).

8. Do not go out of your way to kill a snake. Thousands of people are bitten each year because they try to kill them without knowing anything of their habits or habitats. (We are to resist the Devil when we encounter him, not go looking for him.

9. Know what to do in case of snakebite (defensive warfare).

In case of snakebite, the first thing that is done in the natural world is to make a cut in the shape of a **cross (+)** over each fang mark and then suck the poison out. What an illustration of the work of the cross of Jesus Christ in freeing us from the "poison" of sin.

We have authority over serpents. In Genesis 3, God pronounced a curse upon the serpent (Satan). He said that his head would be bruised by the seed of the woman (Jesus) and that the heel of the seed (Jesus) would be bruised by the serpent.

The "bruise" on the "heel" of Jesus speaks of the pressure resulting from bruising Satan's head on the cross of Calvary. When Jesus bruised the head of Satan, it was much like severing the head of a poisonous snake in the natural world. A snake's head can be severed from its body, but it still can bite for hours afterwards. The heart has been known to keep beating for two days and the snake's body can continue to move.

Jesus severed the head of the "serpent" at Calvary, but the serpent still has life. He is still active in the world today and he still has power. But Satan has no authority. The only authority he has in your life is what you give him and the power and authority within you (Jesus) is greater than his power.

(Lesson adapted from Spiritual Strategies: A Manual on Spiritual Warfare, Harvestime International Institute)