

Introduction

C. S. Lewis spoke of the two most common errors people tend to make about Satan: "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors, and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight."

Following the naturalism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, liberal and neo-orthodox Christianity rejected Satan's literal existence as primitive superstition. They reinterpreted the biblical accounts of demon-possession in accordance with then-current psychological theories. While evangelicals never went this far because of their high view of scripture, they were sometimes guilty of mere mental assent without maintaining an effective theology of spiritual warfare.

Pentecostals and charismatics, on the other hand, have always emphasized the importance of spiritual warfare. They, however, have often fallen into the opposite error against which Lewis warned. Deeds of the flesh become demons to be exorcised. For example, on the topic of sanctification, some Christian authors emphasize freedom from demonic influence rather than ongoing choices to walk in the Spirit. For some, fear of Satan's plots and powers overshadows Christ's victory over him (e.g. satanic ritual abuse), and superstitious remedies become more popular than solid biblical response (e.g., spiritual mapping; exorcism rituals). Over the last twenty years, our culture has also become much more open to occultic spirituality, so this error is now at least as prevalent as the first one.

This is the first of three lessons on Satanology: the biblical study of Satan, demons and spiritual warfare. Tonight we will consider the "career" of Satan (origin, fall, and destiny) and his overt tactics. The next two weeks will be devoted to his covert tactics.

Scripture and Satan's Existence

The biblical testimony for the literal existence of Satan and demons is extensive. The biblical worldview is seriously incomplete without this material. We stand to suffer greatly if we do not understand the reality of Satan and his efforts to attack us (1 Peter 5:8,9; Eph. 6:12). It is very dangerous to be in the midst of a war and not realize it.

The Old Testament: Mentions Satan and demons less frequently than the New Testament, but its testimony is clear and consistent. See Gen. 3:1 (see also Rev. 12:9 "the serpent of old"); Lev. 17:7; Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:37; 1 Chron. 21:1; Job 1,2; Zech. 3:1,2 (Vision of Joshua being accused by Satan)..

(Gen. 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'?"

(Lev. 17:7) "And they shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they play the harlot. This shall be a permanent statute to them throughout their generations."

(Deu. 32:17) "They sacrificed to demons who were not God, To gods whom they have not known, New gods who came lately, Whom your fathers did not dread.

(Zech. 3:1-2) Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.² And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

Jesus Christ: Speaks more about Satan and demons than any other biblical character. See for example Lk. 4:2-13 (and parallels); Mk. 5:2-19 (and other exorcisms); Jn. 8:44. .

(John 8:44) "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because 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.

- The gospel authors are careful to differentiate demonic activity and other sicknesses

(Luke 4:40-41f) And while the sun was setting, all who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on every one of them, He was healing them.⁽⁴¹⁾ And demons also were coming out of many,...

(Matt. 4:24) And the news about Him went out into all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, taken with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.

(Norval Geldenhuys) "It is noteworthy that it is distinguished (especially in the gospel of the physician, Luke) from cases of ordinary sickness, insanity, leprosy, blindness, lameness, deafness, and other natural defects and diseases (cf., Matt. 4:23,24; 8:16; 10:8; Mark 6:13; Luke 4:40; 7:21,22). . . .Neither is it only a kind of physical disease, although spiritual and physical disease often accompany it (e.g. Matt 12:22, 17:15; Mark 9:18). (Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary of the Gospel of Luke*, [Grand Rapids, Mi.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ, Co., 1998], p. 174.)

The rest of the New Testament: also contain numerous references. Every New Testament author refers to Satan and spiritual warfare (see Eph. 1:21; Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14; 1 Pet. 5:8-10; 1 Jn. 3:8; Jude 1:9).

(Eph. 1:21) ...far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

(Col. 2:15) When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

(Heb. 2:14) Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil;

(1 John 3:8) ...the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

Origin and Fall of Satan: Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14

It is evident that the Bible does not provide detailed biographical information about Satan. Yet what it does provide gives us insight into his character. This is the logical beginning for understanding and combating his strategies today.

Ezekiel 28:1-19

Note to instructors: Use this as an opportunity to teach hermeneutical principles. We need to have good reasons for selecting any interpretation that breaks from the surrounding context. This is a passage that we believe, in part, is about Satan. The first ten verses are parallel to verses 11-19, but there are significant differences between them. We conclude that the first ten verses refer to an earthly leader under God's judgment, while 11-19 refers to Satan and his judgment.

The language of verses 1-10 gives us the clues that we're not talking about Satan.

In verse 2, the passage tells us we are talking about a "leader" of Tyre, in verse 12, we are talking about a "king of Tyre". The distinction will be apparent in a moment.

Secondly, the description of the "leader" in verses 1-10 clearly describe the life of a human being (words in **bold font**).

(Ezekiel 28:1-10) The word of the LORD came again to me saying, {2} "Son of man, say to the **leader of Tyre**, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Because your heart is lifted up And you have said, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods, In the heart of the seas'; Yet **you are a man and not God**, Although you make your heart like the heart of God—

{3} Behold, you are wiser than Daniel; There is no secret that is a match for you. {4} "By your wisdom and understanding **You have acquired riches** for yourself, And have acquired gold and silver for your treasuries. {5} "By your great wisdom, **by your trade** You have increased your riches, And your heart is lifted up because of your riches—

{6} Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, 'Because you have made your heart Like the heart of God, {7} Therefore, behold, **I will bring strangers upon you, The most ruthless of the nations**. And they will draw their swords Against the beauty of your wisdom And defile your splendor. {8} 'They will bring you down to the pit, And **you will die the death** of those who are slain In the heart of the seas. {9} 'Will you still say, "I am a god," In the presence of your slayer, Although **you are a man** and not God, In the hands of those who wound you? {10} '**You will die the death of the uncircumcised By the hand of strangers**, For I have spoken!' declares the Lord GOD!'"

In the second part of the passage, the language leads us to conclude the author is describing a different person than he did in the first half.

(Ezek. 28:11-19) Again the word of the LORD came to me saying, {12} "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. {19} "All who know you among the peoples Are appalled at you; You have become terrified, And you will be no more.""

Reasons for verses 11-19 referring to Satan:

1. There appears to be a meaningful difference between the use of "leader" of Tyre (*nagid*) in v.2 and "king" of Tyre (*melekh*) in v. 12.

- The Tyrians called Melqart the "king of the city" (i.e. Baal-Melqart was Tyre's primary god, *The New Bible Dictionary*, pg. 109; *The New Bible Commentary*, pg. 678).
- The Bible regards Satan as the spirit behind all idol worship (Lev.17:7, Deut.32:17, 1Cor.10:19-20)

(1 Cor. 10:19-20) What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? (20) No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons.

- Also, Daniel 10:13,20 identifies malevolent spirits with particular nations.

These alone are not sufficient reasons for believing the last 8 verses deal with Satan but, taken with the other evidence, they do seem to support the idea that the latter half of this chapter is addressing the spirit behind Tyre's idolatry rather than the human leader of the city.

2. The description of the "king" is not human. God would never have said the following things about the human king of Tyre, since the Canaanites were very immoral and corrupt.

- **He was perfect in wisdom and beauty** (vs 12).
- **He was in Eden** (seemingly a different Eden than Gen 2 - the word itself just means paradise), **the garden of God** (vs 13).
- **He was on the mountain of God**, in the midst of the stones of fire (v. 14). If this is describing Eden of the verse before, nothing like this is mentioned in Gen 2. Note in vs. 16 that Satan is cast away from the presence of God.
- **He was "the anointed cherub that covers"** (vs 14). Cherubim are angelic beings (Gen 3:24; Ezek 1,10; Is 37:16; Ex 25:20). "Anointed" denotes authority. So does "covers."
- **He was morally blameless** (vs 15).

Reasons against verses 11-19 referring to Satan:

1. The description in verse 13 seems to be of a physical being.

2. His destruction (vs 18) also sounds physical and permanent, whereas angels do not have earthly bodies and Satan is elsewhere described as being perpetually alive in Hell after the final judgment (Rev. 20:10).

3. Note the substantial parallelism between the first ten verses and the last eight. In both cases the individual is described as the leader of Tyre, wise, wealthy, participating in "trade," and destroyed by God.

RESPONSE: Biblical authors often refer to spiritual beings using physical terminology (e.g.: Daniel 10, Ezekiel 1; commander of the Army of the Lord in Joshua 5:13-15), and in fact angels sometimes take on human form (Hebrews 13:2). As mentioned above, there is precedence in the bible for identifying a human leader with a spiritual being.

This passage is consistent with other biblical teaching on Satan:

1. Satan was created by God (vs 15). He is a creature who is inferior to God, so there is no dualism (Col. 1:16).

2. He is the highest created being (vs 14), superior to other angels (Jude 9) and humans in intellect, authority, etc.

3. He was originally perfect (vs 12,15a) as the creature of a perfect God, so God did not make him evil.

4. He became evil by exercising his free choice to rebel against God (vs 16) because of his pride.

This would explain Paul's warning that elder's not be "conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil" (1 Tim. 3:6). Elders often receive praise, and they must be careful to give that praise on to God rather than keeping it for themselves.

Isaiah 14:12-21 — Many interpret this passage as also referring to Satan. Let's look at the reasons and draw conclusions below.

Reasons For Satan

Vs 12: "fallen from heaven"

Vs 12: "star of the dawn" = Lucifer = Satan

Vs 13,14: aspiration to equality w/ God
"clouds" & "recesses of the north"

Vs 16,17,21: has global dominion ("earth;" "world")

Reasons Against Satan

could be figurative language (taunt; see vs 13)

The Hebrew word is "*helel*", the Greek, "*heosphoros*" — nei translated "Lucifer". Lucifer is the Latin word for Venus — th wasn't found in the Bible until translated into the Latin (at the late 4th century or early 5th AD) (see KJV).

It is circular reasoning to state this word is referring to Satar else in the Bible is this word used as a noun!

This can easily refer to mythological gods.

common for kings to claim this (Ezek 28:2)

refers to the dwelling place of the Canaanite gods

Neither "earth" (*erets*) nor "world" (*tebel*) are necessarily glc translated "country" in vs 20).

The context is a human king with a human kingdom (vs 3,4, can show compelling reasons why we should break context, assume that vs 12-21 is about a human king (i.e. of Babylor Assyria. We know that Assyrian kings referred to themselves Babylon

He is described as a man:

He dies & is buried (vs 11,19,20). "Sheol" means "the grave

He is called a man (vs 16).

He has descendants (vs 20b,21).

Conclusion:

- **There is insufficient basis for saying that this passage is about Satan.**
- **We could say that the attitude of the king being described is satanic in principle and ultimate origin (Gen 3:5).**

Additional biographical information about Satan:

1. He evidently persuaded one-third of the angels to join him in his rebellion against God (Rev. 12:4,9).

2. He then led the first humans into his rebellion (Gen. 3), after which their dominion over the earth was forfeited to him (this will be an important point to recall in future weeks).

3. He seeks, through a variety of tactics, **to prevent people from being reconciled to God** (Matt. 13:49; 2 Cor. 4:4), and **to neutralize believers** from being effective for Christ (Eph. 6:11).

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

(2 Timothy 2:24-26) And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, 25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, 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.

4. We don't know his proper name. Satan, Beelzebub, and Devil are all descriptive titles.

5. He was substantially defeated at the cross (Col. 2:15) and will be completely vanquished at the return of Christ. His doom is sure (Mt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

Introduction to Spiritual Warfare

(Eph. 6:12) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

The Bible emphasizes three key attitudes in the area of spiritual warfare:

1) Alertness:

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

Be a supernaturalist. Assume Satan is at work: anticipate where he is working; pray for discernment; check with fellow-workers, etc.

2) Militance:

(Rev 12:11*) And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death.

Satan loves to intimidate us so that we flee from our spiritual responsibilities.

Satan would agree with Sun Tzu who wrote the Art of War: "Supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting." (as quoted in Bevin Alexander's, "How Great Generals Win", p. 31).

That's what he wants to do to us. We must determine to endure suffering and keep going no matter what the cost is. This is key to spiritual warfare.

3) Confidence:

(1 John 4:4*) You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

(Eph. 6:10-18)** Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. (11) Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. (12) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (13) Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may 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, (15) and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; (16) in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. (17) And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (18) With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints . . .

Stand on the authority of God's Word and Christ's victory over Satan. This prevents us from becoming paranoid about Satan

Question: Which of the above attitudes do you tend to lack?

Covert Tactics:

While the gospels and Acts narrate overt attack and deliverance, the epistles focus on covert tactics and response, and we see people taken out of their walk more from these tactics than

overt. We should not conclude from this that overt attack no longer happens, but that covert attack is more normal and should be our area of focus.

- **Guerilla Warfare:** He is often able to move in, do his damage, and leave before we even realize he was here!

(2 Cor. 2:11) . . . in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

- In saying this to the Corinthians, **Paul implies that he had instructed the Corinthian believers in Satan's covert tactics** (e.g., division). Can you say "I am not ignorant of schemes?" Can you help younger Christians and fellow workers in this area?
- **Satan is a pragmatist! He will keep going to your weak area(s) until you take it away from him!** For example, until you resist in the area of the *kosmos* (seduction), you probably won't experience many of his other covert tactics.

The goal of the next two weeks is to familiarize you with the main covert tactics discussed in the Bible. We want you to get the BIG PICTURE and think about how you see these operating in your life and in others.

Deception

Definition: distortion of biblical truth to neutralize active, zealous Christians

Avenues:

- **False religions and philosophies:** We see this used most actively against non-Christians. Satan presents "spiritual" alternatives to lure people away from Christ.
(Col. 2:8) See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.
- **Heresy and false teachers:** More for new Christians who don't have access to teaching (***New Testament letters; Russia, China, and elsewhere today***)
(2 Cor. 11:13-15) For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. (14) And 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 shall be according to their deeds.
- **Cultural conformity: *Selfism in Christian counseling; prosperity teaching; Postmodern hermeneutics ("it is impossible to know what the author intended"), moral relativism.***
(2 Tim. 4:2-4) Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. (3) For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; (4) and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.
- **Doctrinal imbalance:** Tongues, and experience getting center-stage over truth and love; ritual over ministry
(Heb. 13:9) Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were thus occupied were not benefited.

Countermeasures:

1. Learn the whole counsel of God.

This **guards you against imbalance** as well as heresy. This is why we emphasize personal study; expository teaching; inductive study. We also should emphasize what the Bible emphasizes.

(Acts 20:20,27). . . how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house . . . (27) For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.

2. Develop the ability to think critically from a biblical perspective.

You can be biblically knowledgeable and still be deceived if you don't develop this. Especially when interacting with "Christian" material, clarify the presuppositions and compare them to the Bible (**"Christian" counseling which accepts inner child; self-esteem**).

(Heb. 5:14) But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

3. Stand firm in the grace of Christ.

As long as we approach God and others on that basis, we create a situation that Satan cannot defeat. He is always trying to move us onto the ground of works. Grace is the message that attracts the non-Christian, and motivates the believer to love.

This helps us make decisions based on God's word rather than the opinions of others (including Christians who may be judging us). We are able to think clearly about finding God's will because we're not short-circuited by concern about others' opinions.

(Acts 20:32) And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

(2 Tim. 2:1) You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

4. Be open to corrective input from other Christians.

If even apostles needed correction from time to time (Gal. 2; Acts 15), how much more do we! Some are more gifted in discernment; others are more mature—so take advantage of their contribution. Elders have a special responsibility to discern doctrinal error and protect the church through exposing it (Titus 1:9 >> "power religion" and "counterfeit spirituality"). But because any group can engage in "group-think," we should also look for this from outside our own group (**conferences; books; bringing other workers in**).

(Prov. 27:17) Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

Watch for the "pendulum swing."

When Christians realize they have been imbalanced in one area, they commonly overreact to the other extreme. "It is always easier to go to the consistent extreme than to remain at the point of tension." (**Spiritual experience; ministry vs. sanctification; home involvement vs. church life**)! Strengthen the complementary truth—don't denigrate the original truth (1 Cor. 12:21-25).

Doubt

Definition: seeks to erode a Christian's confidence in God

Avenues:

External: secular "authorities" (**college professors:** "You can't be a biblical Christian and have intellectual credibility"); religious "authorities" (**clergy; seminary profs:** "You can't take the Bible that seriously.")

Internal, existential doubts: ("What if this whole thing is just something we're making up?").

Some are more temperamentally inclined to this. It often accompanies periods of trial (**ministry failure; early buzz wearing off; dark night of the soul; tragedy**).

Note: James 1:6 uses this word to mean one who is "double-minded" (vs 8) which is later defined as a Christian who has compromised his commitment to Christ by loving the world (Jas. 4:8). In other words, "doubter" here means one who is in volitional unbelief.

Countermeasures: It is not a sin to have doubts; it is what you do with doubts when they emerge that matters.

1. Share your doubts with God and other Christians!

This diffuses the accusation that no other Christians wrestle with doubt. They can also often provide answers to your doubts.

2. Study the biblical passages where God's people express their doubts.

Job, Lamentations, many psalms, etc. are very helpful. The fact that others (including biblical authors!) have had similar doubts is encouraging. The fact that

they eventually resolved their doubts is also encouraging and sometimes instructive.

3. Check your personal walk.

Lack of spiritual feeding and ministry will rob us of subjective personal assurance and make us more vulnerable to doubt. Willful rejection of God's moral discipline may also make us vulnerable to doubt.

4. Expose yourself to answers regarding theological/philosophical doubts.

You're not the first one to ever have this kind of doubt! One of the main values of apologetics is to strengthen Christians against doubt. Many suffer needlessly from doubt because they are too lazy to do this work.

We run the risk of suppressing our own doubts with self-soothing behavior.

Good reading: Guinness. *Doubt*. Yancey. *Disappointment with God*. Schaeffer. *True Spirituality*.

5. Monitor your thought-life and take doubtful thoughts captive to Christ (2 Cor. 10:3-5*).

Learn to doubt your doubts! Satan will accuse God to us (e.g., that he will abandon you), and unless we respond aggressively by rejecting such thoughts on the basis of scripture, they will tend to grow into serious doubts.

Consider: "Doubt is to faith what fear is to courage."

Memory Verses

Ezek. 28:11-19** - Satan's origins

2 Cor. 10:3-5* - A crucial part of spiritual warfare is being able to critique Satan's lies (cultural ideologies and your own thought-life) in light of scriptural truth.

Eph. 6:10-18** - Our real battle is against the schemes of Satan. Our primary armor and weapons are our position in Christ, the Word and prayer.