

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ENEMY

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INTRODUCTION

Lucifer rebelled against God and fell because of it (Is 14:12). We know that angels were created before the earth (Job 38:1-4). In Job 38 we see that angels sang God's praises with the creation of the earth. In the book of Genesis chapter 3 we see that satan was already fallen.

TITLES OR NAMES OF SATAN *(not a complete list)*

Satan, or the Devil, is known by a number of names or titles in Scripture. All of these names point to his evil character, for example;

- The devil (slanderer) (term is only used in NT, Matt 4:1)
- Accuser of the brethren (Rev 12:10)
- The evil one (Mat 13:19)
- Enemy of humanity (Matt 13:39)
- Father of lies (John 8:44)
- God of this age (2 Cor 4:4)
- Adversary (opposition to everything holy - 1 Pet 5:8)
- Appears as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14)
- Dragon (Rev 12:9)
- The Prince of this world (John 12:31)
- The prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2)
- Head of the world rulers of darkness (Eph 6:12)
- Deceiver of the world (Rev 12:9)

OUR BATTLE IS SPIRITUAL

Ephesians 6:12

For our struggle is not against human opponents, but against rulers, authorities, cosmic powers in the darkness around us, and evil spiritual forces in the heavenly realm.

One of the greatest weapons the devil, fallen angels and demons have is to make you believe that they don't exist. Just because you don't see evil with your natural eyes does not mean it is not there.

1 Peter 5:8-9

Be clear-minded and alert ("keep awake", "watchful"). Your opponent, the devil, is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour (bring "down"). Resist him and be firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.

SATAN'S INTENTIONS ARE ONLY EVIL

Jesus says that;

John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal, slaughter (kill), and destroy. I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

The enemy knows when and where to attack you. One of the greatest battlegrounds of Satan is your mind. Let's consider some of the strategies that Satan uses against us.

STRATEGIES OF THE ENEMY

1. Deception

Satan is an imposter, pretending to be what he is not. Satan's character is deceitful, devious and cunning as in a variety of guises he seeks to influence people for his own ends. He deceives individuals (1Ti 2:14) for e.g. Eve was deceived by Satan the serpent. See also Da 8:25; 2Ti 3:13; Rev 12:9; Rev 20:3,10. He misuses Scripture (Mt 4:6 pp Lk 4:10) and often quote Scripture out of context, e.g. God loves you—and draws an interpretation from that truth that is false.

2. Lies

He wants to turn your mind against God because when we believe Satan's lies, our loyalty to God is compromised. Satan will often lie about God's character, nature and ability.

John 8:44, BBE

You are the children of your father the Evil One and it is your pleasure to do his desires. From the first he was a taker of life; and he did not go in the true way because there is no true thing in him. When he says what is false, it is natural to him, for he is false and the father of what is false.

Jesus said of Satan, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Satan is a clever liar because his lies sound so much like the truth. He wants to change your thought processes in order to deceive you and destroy you. He is not only the father of lies, but he lies about the biggest subject—God.

If Satan can get you thinking wrong about God—if he can deceive you into thinking God is something He isn't—he has you in everything else. He becomes the master of your life when you allow his deceptions to infiltrate your thoughts.

3. Temptation

Luke 4:1-2

Then Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where he was being tempted by the devil for 40 days. During that time he ate nothing at all, and when they were over he became hungry.

Tempted means: (Gr: pi-rad'-zo) to "test", "piercing" "to try whether a thing can be done".

The devil wants you to exchange eternal reward for temporal pleasures. One of his main goals is to cause you to lose sight of the bigger picture, focusing on the here

and now. In Luke 4 we read about Jesus' temptation in the desert. Jesus resisted temptation, but Judas surrendered to it.

2 Cor 11:3

"I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ."

4. He pretends to represent light and righteousness

In 2 Corinthians 11:13–15, Paul says that some people are posing as apostles who are not. He explains like this: "Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So, it is not strange if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness." Jesus says they will be like wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15). Acts 20:30 says they will not spare the flock, but will draw people away to destruction. It is vital that we know God's Word in order to stand against the lies of the enemy.

5. Control

The enemy does not want you to be free and to enjoy your journey with Jesus. He often uses fear to control us. He often lies to us about our new identity in Christ.

John 8:36

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

CONCLUSION

Satan blinds the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the truth. So, he not only speaks what is false. He hides what is true. He keeps us from seeing the truth of the Gospel.

2 Corinthians 4:4

"The god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ".

We combat Satan and darkness by submitting to God.

James 4:7

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you"
Read also Ephesians 6:13-17.

Questions for Life Groups

- Why do we sometimes struggle to identify satan's schemes and plans?
- What do you think is the greatest weapon to use against evil? Explain your answer.
- What can we practically do to submit ourselves to God in a greater way?