



In a recent Barna study, a mere one fifth of self-identified Christians believe that Satan is living and impactful. However, the Bible is clear that Satan is not only a real, living being, but he is also hard at work in our world seeking to wreak havoc and oppose God and those who follow God. In this study, we unpack the “ministry” of Satan so that we avoid falling prey to the strategies of the Enemy.

1. **1 John 3:1–8** – *“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him [Jesus]. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”*
2. **1 John 3:1** – *“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.”*
  - a. Shared author
    - i. The John who wrote the Gospel of John also wrote the book of 1 John a few decades later.
  - b. “Children of God”
    - i. Not everyone is a child of God—only those who believe in Jesus.
      1. **John 1:12** – *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.”*
    - ii. When we repent and trust in Christ, we gain millions of spiritual brothers and sisters.
  - c. The world’s response
    - i. The world “does not know” Believers.
    - ii. Christians should experience a degree of discomfort with the corrupt world around us.

1. **Philippians 3:20** – *“But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.”* (NIV)
  2. We should not isolate ourselves from the people of the world, for they need to hear the Gospel, but we also should not be “fitting in” with a godless culture.
  3. **DISCUSS**: What are some ways we can take a firm, loving stand against the culture?
3. **1 John 3:2** – *“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He [Jesus] is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”*
- a. Jesus’ second coming
    - i. Jesus will be revealed at His return.
    - ii. Believers will either meet the Lord in death or meet the Lord in the air at the rapture (**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**).
    - iii. When we meet Jesus, we will be like Him.
      1. Believers will inherit an incorruptible body (**1 Corinthians 15:53**).
      2. We can learn something about what this incorruptible body will be like from Jesus’ resurrected body.
        - a. When Jesus rose from the dead, He resolved Thomas’ doubts when He told him to feel the prints on His hands and at His side. Our glorified bodies will be tangible.
        - b. When Jesus appeared to His disciples, He could not be stopped by walls and locked doors. Our glorified bodies will not be bound to physical limitations.
        - c. Jesus’ body was renewed. Our glorified bodies will not be subject to decay anymore.
        - d. Jesus ate the fish that His disciples caught. Our glorified bodies will be able to digest food.
      3. Christians will get new bodies upon Jesus’ return.
  - b. The Believer’s hope
    - i. **1 John 3:3** – *“And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”*
      1. We live with the hope, or expectation, of Christ’s second coming and becoming like Jesus.
      2. As Christians, we should let Biblical realities motivate us to live like Jesus.
      3. **DISCUSS**: What Biblical reality has shaped the way you live?
4. **1 John 3:6-8a** – *“Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices*

*righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning.”*

a. Perpetual sin

- i. The verb “sins” in the Greek is in the linear present, speaking of a habitual lifestyle of sin.
  1. A pattern of sin and following Christ are diametrically opposed.
- ii. Christians are not sinless, but we ought to allow the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to have a purifying effect on our lives.
  1. We should be sinning less as we surrender to the Lord and abide in Him.
  2. **DISCUSS:** How has God taught you to surrender to His leading?

5. **1 John 3:8b** – *“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”*

a. The reality of Satan

- i. According to a Barna study, only one-fifth, or 20 percent, of self-identified Christians believe that Satan is living or impactful.
  1. 80 percent of these Christians believe that Satan is not behind anything in the entertainment industries, governments, and tragedies.
  2. Many Believers think Satan is a symbol of evil rather than a real being.
- ii. Satan is happy to let Christians believe he is not living or impactful, as this lie leaves people more vulnerable to his schemes.
  1. **1 Peter 5:8** – *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”*
  2. **DISCUSS:** How do you walk with vigilance? What does that mean practically?

b. Names of Satan

- i. “Satan” comes from the Hebrew word for “adversary.”
- ii. “Devil” comes from the Greek word for “slanderer” or “accuser.”
- iii. “Lucifer” comes from the Latin word for “light-bearer” or “shining one.”
  1. Satan was created as an angel of light.

c. Satan’s fall

- i. **Ezekiel 28:14** calls Satan a “guardian cherub” who became arrogant in his beauty and status, so he tried to put himself above God’s throne and was cast out (NIV).
  1. **Luke 10:18** – Jesus said, *“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”*

2. Satan can still have access to God at God's allowance, but Satan's role has been stripped from him.

d. Satan's role

- i. The Bible tells us that Satan is prince of the powers of the air, the ruler of this world, and the god of this age.
  1. Satan awaits an eternity in the lake of fire, but for now he has power in this world.
  2. Satan does all he can to divert man's worship away from God and onto himself.
  3. We do not live for this world, but for the world to come.
  4. **DISCUSS:** What are some ways your life is oriented to serve Jesus and His kingdom rather than this world?
- ii. Satan's ministry
  1. "Ministry" means "to serve," and the devil does serve someone—himself.
  2. Satan's ministry is to hinder, tempt, accuse, lie, confuse, deceive, rob, and destroy.

6. The ministry of Satan

a. Satan hinders.

- i. **1 Thessalonians 2:18** – *"Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us."*
- ii. Satan attempts to hinder God's work in Believers.
  1. There is enough flesh in us to tempt us away from the Lord; not every hindrance comes from the Enemy.
  2. **DISCUSS:** Do you allow Satan or the flesh to hinder the work of God in your life, or do you persist in following the Lord? How do you identify what hinders your walk with God?

b. Satan tempts.

- i. **1 Thessalonians 3:5** – *"For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter [Satan] had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain."*
  1. We all have different weaknesses and different things that trigger our flesh.
  2. Satan does his best to put our weaknesses before us, disguising evil with a pretty lie.
- ii. Temptation is not sin, but giving into temptation is sin.
- iii. **DISCUSS:** What do you do when you are tempted?

c. Satan accuses.

- i. **Revelation 12:10** – *"Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, 'Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power*

*of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.”*

1. Satan knows our past and uses that as his tool of accusation.
2. However, Jesus intercedes for His people (**Hebrews 7:25**).
3. **Luke 22:31-32** – *“And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.’”*
4. Satan wants Believers enslaved in their guilt and shame even after they repent.
5. **1 John 1:9** – *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*
6. **DISCUSS:** How do you differentiate between conviction and condemnation? How have you learned that God is greater than your heart and able to forgive the repentant?

d. Satan lies.

- i. When speaking to the hypocritical religious leaders of that day, Jesus compared them to the Devil.
  1. **John 8:44** – *“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. 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.”*
- ii. Satan lies, tempting people into sin.
  1. Satan lies to us, telling us that God is not good, or that sin is okay.
    - a. Sin is pleasing only for a time, and in the end leads to destruction.
    - b. We must wash our minds with God’s Word to fight the Enemy’s lies with the truth.
  2. **DISCUSS:** How do you keep from believing the Enemy’s lies? What is one lie you once believed that the Lord has freed you from?

e. Satan confuses.

- i. **2 Corinthians 4:4a** – *“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”* (NIV)
  1. The Greek word for blinded is **typhloō**, meaning “to screen, blur, mask, or make unclear.”
  2. Satan wants to cloud our judgment so that we do not make decisions that honor the Lord.

- a. Gender confusion is not remedied by displaying that confusion outwardly.
  - b. **Isaiah 5:20** – *“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”*
- 3. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, can bring clarity and peace to a lost and confused world.
  - a. **1 Corinthians 14:33a** – *“For God is not the author of confusion but of peace.”*
  - b. **DISCUSS**: When have you given your confusion to God, allowing Him to bring clarity to you? How did you see Him work in you?
- f. Satan deceives.
  - i. **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.”* (NASB 1995)
    - 1. The simplicity of following the Lord is to turn from sin and trust in Jesus.
  - ii. Believers need to be discerning people.
    - 1. Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.
    - 2. The False Prophet will set up an image and breathe life into it (**Revelation 13:12–15**).
      - a. The word for “image” in the Greek is **eikōn**—this is where we get our English word “icon.”
      - b. The word for “life” in the Greek is **pneuma**, elsewhere translated as “spirit.”
      - c. Satan likes to operate behind powerful people and government propaganda.
- 3. World Economic Forum Contributor Yuval Harari said that A.I. could create a religious book that would be accepted around the world.
  - a. Harari said, “Throughout history, religions dreamt about having a book written by a superhuman intelligence, by a non-human entity.”
  - b. We already have God’s revelation, written by the superhuman intelligence of our Creator.
  - c. **2 Timothy 3:16** – *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”*

4. The Bible says that those who reject God will fall into a “*strong delusion*” (**2 Thessalonians 2:11**) and believe “*doctrines of demons*” (**1 Timothy 4:1**).
- a. We can spot the counterfeit when we know the truth found in God’s Word.
  - b. **DISCUSS:** How has God helped you spot a counterfeit? How did God help you counter the lie?
- g. Satan robs and destroys.
  - i. **John 10:10** – Jesus said, “*The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*”
    1. Satan robs people of joy and peace.
  - ii. **James 1:15b** – “*Sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*”
  - iii. **1 John 3:5, 8b** – “*And you know that He [Jesus] was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. . . . For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*”
    1. Jesus is able to defeat the ministry of Satan.
    2. **1 John 4:4b** – “*Greater is he [God] that is in you, than he that is in the world [Satan].*” (KJV)
    3. Believers cannot be demon possessed but can be demon oppressed.
    4. **DISCUSS:** How does knowing that the power of God resides in you, and that we are fighting from a place of victory, help you to resist temptation and strengthen yourself in the Lord?

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James (NKJV)