

# PARANORMAL

## Satan

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### RECALL

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**Icebreaker:**

When you think about Satan what image comes to mind regarding his appearance? Where do you believe this image originated? Why would Satan be depicted in this way?

**Discuss Your Experience:**

Sunday's sermon provided a biblical basis for the existence of Satan. He is not just a personification of evil, but he has a distinguished character and personality. Satan, and a group of angels, rebelled against God and became His adversaries. If an Angel of the Lord was capable of leading a coup against God, how much more susceptible are we to opposing His ways. What can you learn from Satan's example to resist the temptation to turn away from God?

**Introduction:**

In professional sports, teams are constantly involved in advanced scouting of their opponents. They use this information to prepare their teams for what to expect from their opponent during the games. The better they are able to anticipate their opponent's moves the more likely they are to win. This same concept applies to the spiritual side of our faith. If Satan is our enemy we must seek to understand his ways in order to avoid being vulnerable to him. This week's study is designed to dig deeper into how Satan operates so that we can be prepared to do battle against him.

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### REVEAL

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**Pray For Guidance:**

Take a few moments and ask God to help you discern, understand and apply the spiritual truth(s) of this week's lesson. We will be utilizing a number of different scriptures to enlighten us regarding Satan's activities.

**1 Timothy 4:1-2 (HCSB) – Spreading Lies**

1 "Now the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will depart from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons, 2 through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared."

**Matthew 13:18-19 (HCSB) – Hardening Hearts**

18 "You, then, listen to the parable of the sower: 19 When anyone hears the word about the kingdom and doesn't understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the one sown along the path."

**Ephesians 6:12 (HCSB) – Influencing Leaders**

12 "For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens."

Macarthur, John Jr, [God, Satan, And Angels](http://www.gty.org/resources), www.gty.org/resources.

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1 Peter 5:8-9 (HCSB) – Creating Doubt

8 “Be serious! Be alert! Your adversary the Devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. 9 Resist him and be firm in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world.”

Revelation 2:10 (HCSB) – Inciting Persecution

10 “Don’t be afraid of what you are about to suffer. Look, the Devil is about to throw some of you into prison to test you, and you will have affliction for 10 days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

1 Thessalonians 2:18 (HCSB) – Hindering Ministry

18 “So we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us.”

2 Peter 2:1-2 (HCSB) – Supporting Unbelievers

1 “But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, and will bring swift destruction on themselves. 2 Many will follow their unrestrained ways, and the way of truth will be blasphemed because of them.”

James 1:14-15 (HCSB) – Fostering Temptation

14 “But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desires. 15 Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death.”

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## REFLECT

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**Understanding the Context:**

Before diving into the specific passages on Satan’s strategies take a moment to re-familiarize your group with who Satan is from the following passages.

Revelation 12:9 (HCSB) – Fallen Angel

9 “So the great dragon was thrown out—the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the one who deceives the whole world. He was thrown to earth, and his angels with him.”

2 Corinthians 4:4 (HCSB) – Great Deceiver

4 “In their case, the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

Revelation 20:10 (HCSB) – God Reigns

10 “The Devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet are, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

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## RECOGNIZE

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**Know the Truth(s):**

Keeping in mind the context of Satan’s existence, let’s take a look at how his tactics are outlined for us in Scripture. The more familiar we are with his schemes the more likely we will be able to resist his advances.

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- 1) Satan is busy working in the lives on non-believers trying to prevent them from coming to Christ. One of his primary methods, as we see in 1 Timothy 4:1-2, is to spread lies. This strategy focuses less on preventing people from hearing God's Word and more on confusing the facts. However, as we see in the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:18-19), Satan also attempts to steal God's Word away so that it does not register in the receiver's heart. Satan adds to the confusion by influencing our leaders pulling non-believers further astray (Ephesians 6:12).
    - In what ways does Satan distort the truth in our lives?
    - How would you describe the type of heart Satan attempts to shield from the gospel message?
    - What are some current examples of Christian beliefs that are in opposition to social or governmental leadership viewpoints?
  
  - 2) Satan is equally active in the lives of believers. He wants to stand in the way of any further progress of the gospel message. His primary methods include creating doubt about the message of Christ (1 Peter 5:8-9), inciting persecution of the church (Revelation 2:10), hindering our ministries (1 Thessalonians 2:18), supporting unbelievers to gain positions of influence (2 Peter 2:1-2), and tempting us towards a life of sin (James 1:14-15).
    - What circumstances has Satan utilized in your life to fill you with doubt regarding your faith?
    - What methods might Satan use to bring division within the church?
    - Have you ever felt persecution for your beliefs? If yes, briefly share your story.
    - How has Satan worked to hinder you in ministry?
    - What types of lifestyles does Satan use to trap people in sin?

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## RESPOND

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### Take Action:

You've now prayed asking God to **Reveal** Himself and help you understand more about Satan; you've **Reflected** on who Satan is; you've **Recognized** how Satan operates in our world. Now you have the opportunity to **Respond**. To help determine how you can Respond to and combat the ways of Satan, as a group, discuss the following questions.

- 1) Jesus teaches us in the Parable of the Sower that it is not enough to simply hear the Word of God, but we need to internalize it and let it take root. Doing so will protect us from the stumbles created by Satan through doubt, persecution, and sin. What are some practical ways to ensure God's Word produces fruit in our lives?
  - Consider starting a scripture memory challenge. A 52-week plan can be found in the back of your HCSB Study Bible. See if your group would be interested in going through this challenge together!
  
- 2) Satan's efforts to distort the truth can bring division between us. This is the opposite of Christ's message of love. Paul provides us instruction for how to deal with these issues in Ephesians 4:31-32. What relationship in your life has Satan attempted to destroy? What must you do to reconcile the situation?
  
- 3) As Christians we have been commanded to tell others about the good news of Jesus Christ. Without our efforts those held in bondage by Satan will suffer death (Hebrews 2:14-15). If you needed to share the message of Christ with a non-believer how would you do it?
  - If you do not have a plan consider the Bridge Illustration, the Roman Road, or refer to the Plan of Salvation (FAITH) in the front of your HCSB Study Bible.