



## The Opponent

**Revelation 12:10-12** *10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.*

- North Americans seldom believe in a literal devil anymore. Researcher George Barna found that only 40% of Americans believe that Satan is a living being. It is little better in the church, where 69% of Catholics and 65% of Protestants believe the notion of Satan is only symbolic of evil.
- If Satan is not an actual person, then we have little use at all for the Bible, for God's Word centers around an ongoing conflict between God and Lucifer.
- Mankind became involved in this conflict in the Garden of Eden when he became the unwitting pawn of the devil's revenge on God. Satan had a choice to serve God and refused; he is jealous of mankind's choice – and our chance to repent – and wants to insure that we refuse also!
- The conflict recklessly rampages through man's history. Satan was successful in leading Adam and Eve into sin, but God intervened in a redemptive act and spoke this promise:

**Genesis 3:15** *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

From that very moment, Satan began working feverishly on his plans to launch a preemptive strike against God by aborting the line through which the man-child was to come. He wanted to stop the people of God at all costs!

- He filled Cain with enough hatred to murder his righteous brother Abel. God raised up Seth.
- He led mankind into enough wickedness that God destroyed the world in a flood. God raised up Noah.
- He deceived men with false religions that worshipped the gods of nature. God raised up Abraham.
- He caused Pharaoh to issue a death warrant for all Hebrew baby boys. God thwarted his plan through Pharaoh's own daughter ... and the opportune tears of a baby named Moses.
- He tempted Israel into lustful orgies before a golden calf. God raised up the sons of Levi.
- He bribed the prophet Balaam to curse the nation of Israel. God took control of Balaam's tongue.
- He frightened the spies with the giants of the land of Canaan. God raised up Joshua and Caleb.
- He tried to starve out the nation through the raids of the Midianites. God raised up Gideon.
- He bound the strongman Samson with cords of lust that he could not break, and handed him over to the Philistines to rot in a prison. God gave Samson his greatest victory when he repented in his lowest moment.
- He polluted the priesthood of Israel through the wickedness of Eli's sons. God raised up Samuel.
- He snared King Saul with the sin of pride. God raised up a man after his own heart named David.
- He caused Queen Athaliah to kill of the royal seed. God used Jehoiada the priest to hide little Joash.

- He helped Haman hatch his plot of genocide against the Jews. God raised up Queen Esther.

GOD ALWAYS USES A HUMAN BEING TO DEFEAT THE DEVIL. IN FACT, THAT'S WHAT THE INCARNATION WAS ABOUT – GOD IN FLESH, DEFEATING SATAN (AS A SPIRIT-FILLED MAN)

There are no recorded cases of demon possession in the Old Testament, but you will find it is rampant in the New Testament. This is because the war that is being waged between God and the devil is a spiritual conflict for men's souls. Israel had a physical covenant; we have a spiritual one. We enter into its spiritual blessings, but also into its spiritual battles! That warfare moved from heaven to earth at the incarnation, and we are still fighting ground warfare even today!

Satan is a master of falsehood, and has deceived many by his lies:

- He has a synagogue (Revelation 2:9)
- He can have a seat in a church from which to work (Revelation 2:13)
- He has power, signs and wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9)
- He deceives the whole world (Revelation 12:9, 18:3)
- He uses sinners to prophesy, cast out devils, do wonderful works (Matthew 7:22-23)
- He works miracles (Revelation 16:14)
- He has his own doctrines (1 Timothy 4:1)
- He uses false prophets, false Christs, evil men and seducers (Matthew 24:11, 2 Timothy 3:13)
- He disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14)

Satan has many tactics that he uses on the church to try to defeat us:

- He accuses (Revelation 12:10)
- He condemns (1 Timothy 3:6)
- He devours (1 Peter 5:8)
- He imprisons (Revelation 2:10)
- He ensnares (2 Timothy 2:26)
- He takes advantage (2 Corinthians 2:11)
- He steals the Word away (Mark 4:15)

Satan is indeed a powerful and vicious opponent, but he labors under one crippling fact – his dreaded sentence of eternal imprisonment without the possibility of parole! He works under this terrifying reality every moment of his existence, and he knows that HIS TIME IS SHORT!

The devil knows beyond any shadow of doubt that his time is short prophetically. That is beyond question according to the prophecies of the Word of God. Satan is feverishly working on his large scale plots to deceive mankind (immorality, false religions, ecumenicalism, humanism).

But the devil also knows that HIS TIME IS SHORT with you as an individual. He wants to enter the ring as your OPPONENT, because he knows that YOUR DESTINY can destroy his kingdom!

**Luke 22:31 (KJV)** And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

**Luke 22:31 (AMP)** Simon, Simon (Peter), listen! Satan has asked excessively that [all of] you be given up to him [out of the power and keeping of God], that he might sift [all of] you like grain,

**Luke 22:31 (CEV)** *Jesus said, "Simon, listen to me! Satan has demanded the right to test each one of you, as a farmer does when he separates wheat from the husks."*

- When you make a fresh commitment to God, you become a threat to his kingdom (the devil probably still has nightmares about the Apostle Paul!).
- But the devil knows that there is a period of "proving time" between when the prayer is prayed and when it is answered – THAT'S HIS "SHORT TIME" TO WORK!
- He knows there is only a brief period before we're out of his clutches and walking in victory for good – and that's when "all hell breaks loose." He will not let you rise to a higher level in your relationship with God without a serious battle!
- When he sees you on the brink of victory, HE KNOWS HIS TIME IS SHORT!
- Tragically, many believers give up the fight in this time, believing the lies of Satan.

The devil knows that HIS TIME IS SHORT with sinners who want to be saved!

- If you're living in sin, the Bible calls you a child of the devil himself (John 8:44).
- But there is a "sin-sickness" that strikes the children of the devil, becoming more critical the deeper in sin they fall. It reaches its peak when sin suddenly loses its pleasure, becoming boring and unfulfilling (that's why sin has to keep pulling you deeper and deeper).

When you feel that emptiness, and you have an urge to try an experience with God, Satan goes into a panic! The one thing he fears most is that you will open the door to God!

**Revelation 22:17** *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

The phrase "let him" is not an altar call, but a Divine command (the same as "let there be light") – if you WANT to serve God, the devil is COMMANDED to LET you come to God!

But Satan always tries one more last-ditch attempt to turn you around. He will throw every alluring temptation, every lust and lie in his arsenal at you. But the instant you move toward Jesus, Satan is helpless to stop you!

**Luke 9:42 (NKJV)** *And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed him. Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father.*