

SATAN AND HIS DEMONS

Our entry point for discerning the person and activity of Satan will be Colossians 2:15.

Colossians 2:14-15 (CSB)

First, what does it mean that, at the cross, Jesus “**disarmed**” Satan and his rebel angels? The answer is found in verse 14: Satan had no record of debt with which to accuse.

Second, how did Jesus put Satan and his rebels “**to open shame**” (ESV)? The language used describes a parade.

Third, how does God “**triumph over them in [Jesus]**”? Notice the “them” implies plurality. Satan is not acting in isolation but seems to have an organized, mobilized, rebel army, perhaps even a hierarchy. But more centrally, the thrust of Colossians 2:14-15 is that when Jesus looked to be at His weakest, He was actually putting on invincibility.

Satan in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, *satan* is used in the sense of “adversary” when referring to humans (1Kgs. 11:14, 23, 25).

Satan is also portrayed as accusing one of God’s people in the book of Zechariah. In chapter three the prophet receives a vision of “...Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him” (Zech. 3:1).

In addition to accusing members of God’s people, two other passages in the Old Testament reveal a second strategy that is utilized by Satan. In 1 Chronicles 21:1 “Satan rose against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel.”

Satan and Demons in the New Testament

The New Testament teachings regarding Satan and demons are far more developed than in the Old Testament. Satan (also referred to as Beelzebul), is presented as the ruler of the kingdom of darkness, with demonic powers in submission to him (see Matt. 9:34; 12:24; Mark 3:22, and Luke 11:15, where he is referred to as “the prince of demons”; cf. also John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11, where he is referred to as “the prince of this world”). These demonic powers are variously referred to in the New Testament as “demons,” “spirits,” “evil spirits,” “unclean spirits,” and “deceitful spirits.” The New Testament also uses the term “principalities and powers” which clearly refers to personal, spiritual beings who seek to accomplish Satan’s purposes in the world.

The Defeat and Final Judgment of Satan

The New Testament teaches that Satan and his followers have been and will be defeated through four specific events or ministries.

First, they were defeated at the temptation of Jesus (Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13)..

Second, Jesus defeated Satan and his followers when he proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom and led men and women to follow him and to live their lives in submission to God’s reign as they obeyed his teachings.

Third, Satan and his followers were defeated decisively at the cross and the empty tomb. According to Colossians 2:13b-14, God “...forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the certificate of debt that stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.”

Fourth, God’s people possess a living hope and expectation that God’s reign will come in all its fullness at a future time, and that Satan’s dark kingdom will be defeated totally and completely.

In spite of the fact that Satan and his followers have been decisively defeated, for the time being he continues to oppose God's will and his purposes in the world. His primary concern is to keep men and women from responding to the proclamation of the gospel by putting their faith in Christ

Among the schemes that are mentioned in Scriptures, one of the most important is deception.

Often paired with deception is a second scheme, namely temptation, which is not surprising since Satan is referred to as "the tempter" (*ho peirazōn*) in Matthew 4:3 and 1 Thessalonians 3:5.

It is in the church itself that the devil seeks to make his greatest impact. Paul warns believers in Corinth about false apostles and workers, saying that "Satan disguises himself as an angel of light . . . his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11:14–15).

Can believers be demon inhabited (possessed)?

This is a question which many ask. Theologically considered, it is hard to believe that it is possible that a believer can both be a dwelling place for a demon and the temple of the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19 and 2 Cor. 6:16).

In brief: inhabited, no; oppressed, yes.

Can Satan read our minds or know our thoughts?

First, it is important for us to remember that Satan is not omnipresent—he cannot be in more than one place at a time.

Can Satan and/or his demons read our minds? **No.** First Kings 8:39 says that God alone knows every human heart. There is no one else who has that ability.

Satan and his demons have been observing and tempting human beings for thousands of years. Surely, they have learned a few things about us over the years.

Even without the ability to know our thoughts, they can make a well-educated guess as to what we are thinking and then attempt to use that to their advantage.

Concerning Satan, the Bible gives the following information:

- Satan is a personal being, with a mind, emotions, and a will (Job 1; Matthew 4:1–12).
- He is a created being and is not equal to God (Ezekiel 28:15).
- Satan does not rule hell. Hell was created as a punishment for Satan and his demons (Matthew 25:41). Neither does Satan live in hell, as the Bible describes how he can enter heaven and roam the earth (Job 1:6–7).
- The devil can only do what God allows (Job 1:12).
- Satan is not omnipresent. But he does oversee a horde of demons, called “the powers of this dark world and . . . the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12). He uses this network to tempt and deceive people.
- He actively works to nullify the effect of the Word of God in people’s hearts (Matthew 13:3–4, 19), and he blinds the intellect of those who do not believe so they cannot understand the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4).

ESTABLISH CONCLUSIONS –TEN TRUTHS ABOUT A LIAR *

1. Satan is not omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, nor eternal.
2. Satan exercises his otherworldly dominion by way of a hierarchical, geographical, and militaristic strategy.
3. Satan can manipulate matter, weather systems, and bacterial life.
4. Satan can influence and sway legal proceedings and governmental structures.
5. Satan aggressively seeks to trap ^[L]_[SEP]individual Christians.
6. Satan is more skilled at deception than any other created being.
7. Satan is able to kill Christians.
8. Satan is the Lord’s lackey for the Christian’s holiness.
9. Satan will be thrown into hell in the end.
10. Satan is resistible.

***Credit given to Sam Bierig Midwestern Magazine, Issue 38**