

Know Your Enemy

I. Intro

- A. Many of you are familiar with the opening stories of the Bible. The creation of all that exists → nothing exists apart from God
- B. The proclamation over creation that everything that was made was GOOD, and mankind was VERY GOOD
- C. The breathtaking reality that God made man from DUST and then breathed the Spirit of Life within him, making man a unique creation → living in both worlds
 - 1. Being of the earth, but having this eternal soul, this connection with God
- D. God placed Adam and Eve in a Garden to work and to keep it. He was with them, present with them, they were naked and unafraid. No shame, No sin.
- E. But then Satan enters the scene. Why did he do it? Why did he tempt Adam and Eve?
 - 1. We get hints from the Word of God in Isa 14, Ezekiel 28, and Rev 12...
 - 2. Perhaps Satan saw the special place of privilege that God gave to man and woman, created as they were in His image tho of dust.
 - 3. Perhaps Satan even had a sense of the glorious destiny we would have in Christ.
 - 4. Regardless, in his hatred and bitterness, Satan struck back at God by seeking to destroy His children.
 - 5. He saw in Adam and Eve a potential exploitation to mistrust God's love
 - 6. If he could cause them to doubt that, then he could capture their hearts and affections and become a father to them.
- F. By twisting God's words, questioning God's motives, making empty promises and presenting evil as good, Satan captured Adam and Eve, and they submitted to his rule.
- G. The effect of this decision was immediate. When God came into the garden to be with his children, they hid.
- H. God cried out to Adam, "Where are you" and Adam tells him, 'I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid'" (Genesis 3:9–10).
 - 1. Adam and Eve went from resting in the Father's love to living in fear
 - 2. They went from no shame to shame
 - 3. They went from peace to discord
- I. Afraid, self-focused, riddled with shame, broken in relationships vertically and horizontally, Adam & Eve start to act like the Father of Lies instead of their Heavenly Father
 - 1. They accuse each other...
 - 2. They attack each other...
 - 3. They twist words...
 - 4. They believed the enemy's lie and it shows
- J. The Father of Lies comes only to steal, kill, and destroy → that is what he did
 - 1. He stole their hearts from the Lord, lying about God's character and words

2. He gained a foothold in the world, and he continues his influence through a host of evil spirits that seek to misrepresent God, deceive & afflict today
- K. Today we are going to talk about Satan... and it is difficult to distance our cultural understanding from our biblical understanding
- L. As soon as I mention: Satan, the Devil, Diablo → images flood your mind
 1. Baphomet statue → goat head
 2. Red guy with horns and spiky tail
- M. We have to be honest and acknowledge that for most of us, our understanding of Satan is more based on pop culture and movies than on the Bible
- N. A road with two ditches
 1. Ditch #1: Dismissing Satan and spiritual warfare → sensationalism
 - a) "Greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn't exist..."
 2. Ditch #2: Obsession, giving too much credit and power to the enemy → acting as if every struggle, every difficulty is his fault
 - a) Drop your phone in the toilet? The devil did it
- O. Another threat remains: flippancy || Story → Creationfest
 1. *Jude 8–10, [8] Yet in like manner these [false teachers] also, relying on their dreams [instead of the word], defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. [9] But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." [10] But these people blaspheme [speak flippantly to or about] all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. → WOAHH*
- P. Three Real threats: Dismissal, Obsession, Flippancy;
- Q. *Ephesians 6:10–12, [10] Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*
 1. Who is the devil? What are his schemes? Where does he work? What is our hope?

II. Who is the devil?

- A. Satan is not an eternal evil but a created being who rebelled & fell from holiness.
- B. He is not equal to God in power; he belongs to the created order of spiritual beings → *Col 1:16, "By Jesus all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him."* → Including the devil.
- C. Revelation describes him as a dragon whose tail swept down a third of the stars from heaven (Rev 12:4), later identified as Satan, leading 1/3 angels in war
- D. Initially, Satan and all demons were good, as God created all things good (Gen 1:31); Augustine: "the devil was not a devil by nature, but by choice..."
- E. Satan is a fallen archangel—an intelligent, supernatural being.

1. He is powerful but not omnipotent; Knowledgeable but not omniscient; Expansive in reach, but not omnipresent
- F. Satan is not self-existent or infinite and operates within limitations set by the Creator God, which confidently ensures his ultimate defeat

III. What is his character?

- A. The various names and titles of Satan reveal his character and role.
- B. Satan, means “adversary” or “one who resists”. This is a proper name for the chief evil being opposing God.
- C. Devil, means “slanderer” or “divider,” emphasizing his role as a deceptive slanderer intent on dividing (people from God, one another, creation).
- D. He is “the ancient serpent” and a great dragon, evoking memories of Eden
- E. Jesus calls him “the evil one” (Matt 13:19)
- F. He is the “father of lies” (John 8:44) b/c this whole thing began with a lie
- G. He is the “tempter” who tested Jesus in the wilderness (Matt 4:3)
- H. He is called “Beelzebul” or “Beelzebub” (meaning “lord of filth/fly”), referring to him as the prince or ruler of demons (Matt 12:24)
- I. Jesus three times calls Satan “the prince of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) → since Adam gave Satan the keys to the kingdom
- J. Paul calls him “the **god** of this age” (2 Cor 4:4) and “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph 2:2), underscoring his influence over fallen humanity
- K. Jesus succinctly described the devil’s nature: *“He was a murderer from the beginning... not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him... he is a liar and the father of lies”* (John 8:44).

IV. So, what’s he like?

- A. **Proud:** Pride is the hallmark of Satan’s character. His conceit led to his downfall.
- B. **False:** Satan’s intellect is perverted toward deceit. He is cunning (the serpent in Eden is described as “crafty,” Gen 3:1) and is called *“the deceiver of the whole world”* (Rev 12:9). **Lying is his “native language”.**
- C. **Murderous:** Jesus calls him a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44), his temptation brought death into the world (Rom 5:12).
- D. **Intelligent:** Paul warns believers of the “devil’s schemes” and not to be outwitted by him (2 Cor 2:11). He has “*designs*” or “*devices*” – a malicious intelligence
- E. **However,** Satan’s wisdom is corrupted by his own arrogance & pride, and he does not understand God’s plan fully – had he understood, *“he would not have crucified the Lord of glory”* (implied in 1 Cor 2:8).

V. What are his schemes? Be on Guard!

- A. **He lies:** From the start, Satan is the great deceiver. Disguised as a serpent, he deceived Eve with cunning lies (Gen 3:1-5; 2 Cor 11:3). All false doctrine and idolatries ultimately trace back to demonic deception (1 Tim 4:1). Thus, Satan’s primary work is to promote falsehood in place of God’s truth.
 1. He will lie to you that he has more power than he does
 2. He will lie to you that he has less power than he does
 3. He will lie to you and sow discord, sow hopelessness, sow doubt, sow self-defeat, sow deception, sow worry, etc

4. C.f. Jesus' temptation in wilderness
- B. **He tempts:** Satan is explicitly called "the tempter" (Matt 4:3, 1 Thess 3:5). He entices people to sin, as seen in Eden and in Jesus' wilderness temptation.
 1. He preys on human weaknesses b/c he is a master at understanding humans. He's had a lot of practice, and you're not unique
 - a) Power... approval... pleasure... control... we are all the same
 2. He tempts believers toward sexual sin if they lack self-control in marriage, or toward pride when in positions of leadership (1 Tim 3:6).
 3. Not every temptation is from a demon or the devil, we are also tempted our own flesh and the world, but since the curse goes back to the original Tempter, in some way all temptation is demonic, even corrupted flesh
- C. **He accuses:** This is the true meaning of his Hebrew name, Satan functions as the accuser of God's people.
 1. In Job, "the Satan" accuses Job of impure motives, suggesting he serves God only for gain (Job 1:9-11).
 2. In the New Testament, Satan is explicitly called "*the accuser of our brethren*" who accuses them day and night before God.
 - a) Picture Satan as a corrupt prosecutor
 3. The cross nullifies Satan's accusations.
 4. Martin Luther, who often felt accused by the devil, counseled Christians to reply: "*Yes, I deserve death and hell. What of it? I know One who suffered and made satisfaction on my behalf – Jesus Christ!*".
 5. The Accuser's charges cannot stand against the atoning work of Christ
- D. **He opposes:** Satan actively opposes God's work and seeks to hinder those doing it. Jesus explained that when the gospel word is sown like seed, "the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown" in hard hearts (Matt 13:19).
 1. Paul likewise says the devil "*has blinded*" unbelievers to keep them from seeing gospel truth (2 Cor 4:4).
 2. The thorns and anxieties of life, choking fruit, are part of his plan
 3. In the end times, he will deceive the nations to gather against King Jesus, and in his arrogance probably thinks he has a chance to win...
 4. Paul attributed certain obstacles to Satan: "*we wanted to come to you... but Satan hindered us*" (1 Thess 2:18).
 5. Even within the church, Satan can sow discord through unresolved anger, division, gossip, unforgiveness, whispers, assumption, and resentment
 - a) Think about that the next time you gossip. You might be a tool in Satan's palm
- E. **He afflicts:** Satan also operates as an agent of affliction and suffering.
 1. Jesus often looked out on the people and said they were helpless and afflicted
 2. Jesus noted of a crippled woman that Satan had bound her with infirmity for 18 years until Jesus loosed her (Luke 13:16).
 3. Paul was harassed with a "thorn in the flesh," described as a messenger of Satan to torment him (2 Cor 12:7).

4. Satan cannot possess believers in Christ b/c they are indwelt by the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit
5. But the NT talks about being afflicted or oppressed (lit: demonized)
6. Not every affliction is demonic. Some, I believe, always are. We will get to this topic in time.
7. The enemy and his minions lie, tempt, divide, slander, accuse, oppose, and afflict... consider those thoughts that come into your head towards your brothers and sisters in Christ
 - a) Are they the voice of the Father?
 - b) Or do they lie... tempt... divide... slander... oppose God's work... accuse... destroy...

F. These are his schemes... in the unseen realm → we do not grapple with flesh and blood

VI. Where does he work? [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

- A. "The Rulers" → "first-rank" demonic powers.
 1. These are high-ranking spirit beings who operate under Satan's command (e.g. Prince of Persia in Dan 10:13), exercising authority over nations or regions. As "rulers," they organize and direct lower demons
- B. "The Authorities" → Powers with delegated authority or "rights."
 1. These spirits wield a measure of authority within their domain—over human systems (political, religious, cultural) and people
- C. "The Cosmic Powers over This Present Darkness" → Literally "world-rulers,"
 1. These refer to principal spirit powers that preside over the fallen world system—its philosophies, values, religions, and ideologies—keeping people in spiritual darkness (2 Cor 4:4; 1 John 5:19). → "isms"
 - a) Have you ever considered that some of the ideologies (and these fall on every side of the aisle) peddled in society are, in fact, demonic? Bent on destroying the truth of God, the things of God, the goodness of God?
 2. Cosmic meaning everywhere, pervasive, global, unseen
- D. "The Spiritual Forces of Evil in the Heavenly Places" → they live in the unseen
- E. **Key Takeaway: When Paul warns that our struggle is "not against flesh and blood but against..." he ain't kidding.**
 1. Paul is describing a multi-tiered spiritual army: top-level demonic princes down through localized strongmen, all the way to the everyday, unseen forces that shape world-systems and ruin individual lives.

VII. That's who he is. That's how he works. Are you overwhelmed? Don't be.

- A. *[10] Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God*
- B. *Colossians 2:15 → "[Jesus] disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in the cross."*

C. *1 John 3:8 → “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.”*

1. The cross is the decisive defeat of every satanic power
 2. Disarmed. They got nerf guns, y’all. Lies.
 3. Our armor—truth, righteousness, faith—flows from Christ’s victory
- D. We are called to (1) recognize these realms, (2) stand in Christ’s authority, (3) “put on the whole armor of God” to resist them, and (4) pray earnestly with alertness while preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ
- E. How Do We Stand? (vv.13–18) → We’ve been thru this, but again
1. Belt of Truth → know and speak God’s Word
 2. Breastplate of Righteousness → we are clothed in Christ’s righteousness
 3. Shoes of the Gospel of Peace → ready to share reconciliation
 4. Shield of Faith → trust God’s promises and not the enemy’s lies
 5. Helmet of Salvation → protects your mind with assurance of salvation
 6. Sword of the Spirit (Word of God) → cuts lies to smithereens
 7. Prayer in the Spirit → constant dependence and intercession

F. The enemy is real, but so is the Victor.

G. The enemy is strong, but Jesus is stronger.

H. *Ephesians 1:19 I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power 20 that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms. 21 Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or dominion... 22 God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. 23 And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.*

1. Jesus is seated in the heavenlies above every power
 2. Jesus is greater than every power
 3. Jesus has authority over every power
 4. The church is his body
 5. You are seated in the heavenlies above every power
 6. You are victorious over every power
 7. You have authority over every power in Christ
 8. Wield your authority. Take up your freedom.
 9. Not flippantly, but with reverence for the Savior
 10. You’re fighting a battle we’ve already won in Jesus
- I. In the coming weeks, we are going to push more into the tactics of the enemy, and how we resist him and stand firm, but we had to lay this foundation first
- J. *Romans 16:20 - The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*