

Reflections on Our Adversary

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Day 1

- † The name “Satan” [שָׂטָן] means “adversary” in Hebrew. The Bible says he is real, with power on the Earth, control of the fallen angels, and sway over mankind. Read Revelation 12.9; Matthew 4.3; 10.25; 13.19; 2 Corinthians 4.4; 11.14; Ephesians 2.2; 2 John 1.7; 1 Peter 5.8. What do all these labels indicate to you about our adversary?
- † Read John 12.31; 14.30; 16.11. Three times Jesus referred to Satan as the “ruler of this world.” We know Jesus is the anointed Davidic king and judge who will come back to conquer and rule [Psalms 2; 110], but what do the words of Jesus indicate about how influential Satan will be until Jesus returns?
- † Pray that you can understand our adversary and stand firm in faith and obedience despite his attacks.

Day 2

- † In Ezekiel 28, God directs the prophet to speak to the human ruler of the state of Tyre, but theologians believe that 28.12-17 are directed at Satan, who was behind the wickedness of this ruler. In v.2, Ezekiel is to speak to the “prince,” while in v.12, he is to speak to the “king.” Read Ezekiel 28.12-17. If this is about Satan, what does it reveal about him?
- † Read Job 1.6-7 and Luke 22.31-32. What do these passages suggest about Satan’s access to God?
- † In Isaiah 14, the prophet speaks about the king of Babylon. But parts of this chapter seem to speak about Satan, the wicked influencer of this king. Read Isaiah 14.12-15. If this is about Satan, what does it reveal about him?
- † Pray that no matter what evil Satan and his demonic helpers inflict upon the world, that you would stay true to the path of righteousness and would be able to help others do the same. Praise Christ for his coming victory over evil when he returns to conquer, judge, and rule as king.

Day 3

- † Read 2 Corinthians 4.4; Ephesians 2.1-2. What is Satan’s plan of attack against non-believers? How could we counter this attack for our friends and family who are not believers?
- † Read Job 1.9-12. Satan would bring many attacks against Job, including terrible physical illness, mental and emotional trauma, and tragic family death. Can you see how this might distract someone from God’s work? Job got caught up in wondering about the justice of the universe; can you see how this might distract someone? How can we prepare for hardship so as to counter this attack successfully?
- † Read Luke 10.38-42. Do you see from this passage how Satan might be more subtle than he was with Job, yet still distract us from God’s work? God’s priorities include for us to spend time with him and with his people, to reflect his image and represent him, to share the gospel with non-believers and teach and serve in the church. How well does your life reflect these priorities? Can you see that rationalizing a different set of priorities is to be deceived?
- † Pray about whether you have been distracted by hardship from depending on God and doing his will. Pray about whether you have been distracted by doing good things which have kept you from doing better things. Repent if necessary, and ask God for help to prevent distraction and to stay focused on his path for you, on his priorities.

Day 4

- † Read 1 Peter 2.11; Romans 13.14. Scripture makes clear that even after we come to Christ, we are still vulnerable to lusts of all types, including sexual lust, materialism and lust for money, lust for power or influence or popularity, and more. What is more important to you, following your impulses and desires or following God’s direction in the Bible? Does your life reflect this?
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- † When we willfully choose to sin, we are using faulty reasoning to go against God, thinking that we have license to sin, that we deserve something, that the end justifies the means, or that we cannot control our natural urges. Can you see that we must be deceived to follow these lines of thinking? How can we prepare to fight off the attack of temptation?
 - † Read 1 Chronicles 21.1; John 13.2. What does this tell you about Satan's ability to put thoughts in our heads? How can we prepare to fend off this attack of "accusation"?
 - † Commit right now to do anything God commands you to do, particularly in Scripture. Pray that God will help you stand strong against lust and experience the victory Christ has won for you in this area. Pray that God will help you discern his voice from those of other people and our evil adversaries.
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Day 5

- † Satan distorted God's words in the garden of Eden [Genesis 3.1-6] and when trying to tempt Jesus [Matthew 4.6]. This is a major thrust of his attack. Thus we see churches that say they are Christian but teach Christ was not divine and did not accomplish anything on the cross, the scriptures cannot be trusted as inerrant, and other bizarre things. We also see churches that get this much right, but then teach that we should seek prosperity for ourselves instead of sacrificing for the gospel, that we can control God by naming and claiming our blessings instead of depending on God and crying out for mercy, that we must live by legalism to remain righteous instead of obeying because of the change God has graciously worked in us; and other churches that teach human wisdom which supposedly is supported by a few verses, instead of teaching what God has revealed. How can you protect yourself from such deception? How can you help protect others?
 - † So Satan might promote a church so long as it does not have the right gospel or so long as it would seriously derail the believers in it. He also might promote good actions if they would lead you to start being proud, exalting yourself, or thinking selfishly or self-righteously. Maybe you serve at every church function, but then you start judging those who don't and thinking you are more righteous because you do. Satan also wants to encourage you to rely on yourself instead of God. How can you protect yourself from these deceptions and temptations?
 - † Read Matthew 8.16; 10.1; 25.41; 1 Timothy 4.1. What do these verses tell you about Satan's helpers?
 - † Pray that you can stay humble, dependent on God, and non-judgmental. Pray that you can learn the Bible well, so as to discern good teaching from false teaching, and be able to explain the difference to others.
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Day 6

- † Read 1 Peter 5.6-10; James 4.7. What are we to do when Satan attacks, to make him flee? We must resist anger and other negative emotions, lustful temptation, distraction from our purposes, accusation [taking every thought captive!], and evil in the world. What must we do with regard to God in this process?
- † Read Ephesians 6.10-18. Write a list of the pieces of the armor of God [for example, write "Truth (belt)"], including persistent prayer. Now think about how each piece could help you resist temptation, dispel deceptions, or prepare you for hardships; think how they could help you stand firm against evil and stand strong for Christ. Can this armor help you if you don't put it on? How do you put it on? Do you need to consciously put it on every morning?
- † Read 2 Corinthians 11.12-15. How can we prepare ourselves to see through the disguises of evil? Read 1 Corinthians 11.28. What must we do to search out signs of self-reliance, self-justification, independence from God?
- † Pray that you can resist Satan's attacks and all fleshly impulses. Pray that you will do better at arming yourself each day with the revelation of God and faith, and that you will walk each day being led by the Spirit. Prayerfully examine yourself, and ask God to show you any areas that need work.