

# Understanding Satan

## Lesson 2: Satan's Mission

Now that we understand Satan's origin to the extent God gives us information, we should recognize his limitations in comparison to God. So, what exactly is he trying to accomplish? If you are going to be successful in fighting against Satan, it will be helpful for you to have a proper understanding of his mission. For, just as we do not have to be ignorant of his schemes (2 Corinthians 2:11), we do not have to be ignorant of his mission.

**1) Satan's fate is sealed.** In the first lesson, we considered the fact that Satan has sinned (John 8:44; 1 Timothy 3:6; 1 John 3:8). One of the reasons this is significant is because the Scriptures seem to paint the picture that angels/spiritual beings are ineligible to access the grace and mercy of God (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6; 1 Peter 1:10-12; Hebrews 2:14-18). So, Satan is fighting a losing war. For, the Scriptures present God as having an eternal plan to save people from sin (Ephesians 3:8-11; 1 Peter 1:20-21) – and Satan as being defeated (Genesis 3:14-15). Revelation 12 then connects with this prophecy and demonstrates the victory God provided through Jesus Christ in vivid imagery of a spiritual battle. The various pieces we see throughout this chapter are the dragon and ancient serpent (Satan, vv. 3, 9), the woman (representative of God's people, vv. 1, 5, 17 – the faithful remnant of Israel and then the church), and the Child (Jesus, vv. 4-5). Through the physical lineage of Israel, Jesus came into this world and destroyed the works of the devil (ultimately through His death, burial, and resurrection, vv. 3-5, 9-11; Hebrews 2:14-18; 1 John 3:8). Many passages demonstrate the victory God has provided over Satan for those who believe and obey Him (Romans 8:37-39; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, 50-58; Ephesians 6:10-18; Colossians 1:13-14, 18-20; 1 John 5:1-4; Revelation 2:9-11). Satan is now headed for an eternity of suffering in the fires of Hell (Revelation 20:10; Matthew 25:41)!

**2) Satan is waging a spiritual war.** Satan has been defeated – and he is not happy about how things have turned out for him (Revelation 12:3-4, 12, 13-17)! As Satan cannot be victorious over God, he is focused today on the destruction of the zenith of God's creation on this earth – men and women, who are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27)! We see his attacks from the beginning of human history (Genesis 3:1-6) and continuing ever since (Romans 5:12). Today, Satan continues to want others to be destroyed spiritually and to influence those who are created in the Maker's image to rebel against His authority and live under his own rule (Acts 26:18; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:13; 2 Timothy 2:26). This spiritual war between good and evil (light and darkness; flesh and spirit) is depicted in various New Testament passages (Galatians 5:16-17, 24; 1 Peter 2:11; Ephesians 6:10-18). God allows this war to be fought, perhaps, because this allows God to be glorified in an even greater way. For example, just as God used the wicked Pharaoh to glorify Himself (Exodus 9:15-16; Romans 9:17), God is glorified when people choose Him over Satan (Ephesians 1:3-12; Romans 5:12-21).

**3) Satan's goal.** Consider three basic things Satan is trying to accomplish. First, he is trying to deceive. This is what we see him doing with Eve in Genesis 3:1-6 – manipulating her to disregard what God has said and to believe that something harmful is actually pleasant and useful! He continues to do the same today (John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 4:4). Second, he is trying to destroy. As Satan is successful in deceiving, the result is spiritual destruction (as sin separates people from God, Romans 1:18; 6:23). He is even pictured as a roaring lion prowling around this earth looking for anyone he can devour (1 Peter 5:8). Third, he is trying to deploy. Satan is not just content with deceiving some so they are destroyed. Rather, he

is pictured as reigning over his own kingdom and now working in those who are disobedient (Ephesians 2:1-2; Colossians 1:13) to deceive, destroy, and deploy others (Matthew 16:21-23).

**4) Those in Satan's sights.** Satan would like to turn every person in this world away from God. And, Satan accomplishes this (Romans 3:9-18, 23). He has many traps set for people throughout this world (1 Timothy 6:9; 2 Timothy 2:26). As his influences result in every person sinning against God, he then works to fight against the gospel that God uses to make the way of salvation known (Matthew 13:4, 19, 24-26, 37-39; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4). Then, Satan is not content to just have most people in this world worshiping him. Instead, he is also trying influence those who have been rescued from his traps so they will return to him (Matthew 13:5-8, 20-23; 2 Peter 2:20-22; Hebrews 10:26-39). Sometimes these attacks against Jesus's church come internally (Acts 20:28-31) and other times externally (Revelation 2:9-11).

Satan knows his fate is sealed and he is furiously trying to bring spiritual destruction to as many as possible before this day comes. Recognizing this mission of Satan should create both a great awareness of what Satan is doing as well as a desire to better understand how he is trying to accomplish it. For, now that we better understand what he is trying to do and why he is trying to do it, we can better equip ourselves and others against him.

## Discipleship Questions

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

**Teaching:** What did you learn from this lesson?

**Rebuking:** What are some ways this lesson challenges you to live differently?

**Correcting:** How does this lesson help you make positive changes for Christ?

**Training & Equipping:** How can you apply this lesson to be trained and equipped in God's service?