

Satan - Alive & Well at Corinth

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Introduction

The two most common names of our spiritual adversary are “the devil” and “Satan.” The Greek word *diabolos*, translated “devil,” is descriptive of one who is slanderous and makes false accusations. The devil falsely accuses God to man (Gen. 3:1-5), and man to God (Rev. 12:9-10). The Greek word *Satanas* identifies our adversary, the Enemy (1 Thess. 2:18; 1 Pet. 5:8). In a very real sense, Satan is the enemy of God and all those who belong to Him.

Genesis 3:1-5 (NASB95) — 1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’” 2 The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’” 4 The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! 5 “For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Revelation 12:9-10 (NASB95) — 9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. 10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.

1 Thessalonians 2:18 (NASB95) — 18 For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet Satan hindered us.

1 Peter 5:8 (NASB95) — 8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

The Corinthian epistles contain multiple references to the devil (1 Cor. 5:5; 7:5; 2 Cor. 2:11; 4:4; 11:3, 14; 12:7). Satan was alive and well at Corinth, threatening the saints in a variety of ways. In this lesson, let us consider Satan’s modus operandi, i.e., his methods of operation.

*1 Corinthians 5:5 (NASB95) — 5 I have decided to deliver such a one to **Satan** for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

*1 Corinthians 7:5 (NASB95) — 5 Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that **Satan** will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

2 Corinthians 2:11 (NASB95) — 11 so that no advantage would be taken of us by **Satan**, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

2 Corinthians 4:4 (NASB95) — 4 in whose case **the god of this world** has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

2 Corinthians 11:3 (NASB95) — 3 But I am afraid that, as **the serpent** deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:14 (NASB95) — 14 No wonder, for even **Satan** disguises himself as an angel of light.

2 Corinthians 12:7 (NASB95) — 7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of **Satan** to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!

Corrupting Marriage

Satan operates through corrupting God's pattern for marriage (1 Cor. 5:1-5; 6:12-20; 7:1-5).

1 Corinthians 5:1-5 (NASB95) — 1 It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. 2 You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst. 3 For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 **I have decided to deliver such a one to **Satan** for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.**

1 Corinthians 6:12-20 (NASB95) — 12 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. 13 Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. 14 Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! 16 Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "The two shall become one flesh." 17 But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. 18 Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

1 Corinthians 7:1-5 (NASB95) — 1 Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband. 3 The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

Corrupting Forgiveness

Satan operates through corrupting God's pattern for forgiveness (2 Cor. 2:1-11; 7:6-13; cf. 1 Cor. 13:4-7).

2 Corinthians 2:1-11 (NASB95) — 1 But I determined this for my own sake, that I would not come to you in sorrow again. 2 For if I cause you sorrow, who then makes me glad but the one whom I made sorrowful? 3 This is the very thing I wrote you, so that when I came, I would not have sorrow from those who ought to make me rejoice; having confidence in you all that my joy would be the joy of you all. 4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you. 5 But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but in some degree—in order not to say too much—to all of you. 6 Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority, 7 so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him. 9 For to this end also I wrote, so that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. 10 But one whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, 11 so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

2 Corinthians 7:6-13 (NASB95) — 6 But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus; 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more. 8 For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it—for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while— 9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. 10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter. 12 So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the offender nor for the sake of the one offended, but that your

earnestness on our behalf might be made known to you in the sight of God. 13 For this reason we have been comforted. And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NASB95) — 4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Corrupting Truth

Satan operates through corrupting God's message of truth, i.e., the gospel (2 Cor. 4:1-6; 11:1-15; cf. 1 Cor. 2:1-5).

*2 Corinthians 4:1-6 (NASB95) — 1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, 2 but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case **the god of this world** has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

*2 Corinthians 11:1-15 (NASB95) — 1 I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me. 2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. 3 **But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.** 4 For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully. 5 For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles. 6 But even if I am unskilled in speech, yet I am not so in knowledge; in fact, in every way we have made this evident to you in all things. 7 Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge? 8 I robbed other churches by taking wages from them to serve you; 9 and when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when the brethren came from Macedonia they fully supplied my need, and in everything I kept myself from being a burden to you, and will continue to do so. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped in the regions of Achaia. 11 Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! 12 But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. 13 **For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of***

Christ. 14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 (NASB95) — 1 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, 4 and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

Conclusion

The tempter's every act, large or small, is intended to harm and hurt, to damage and destroy; on the other hand, God would work through trials and temptations to make us stronger and better (2 Cor. 12:7-10). Accordingly, we must decide whether to cast our lot with the caring God of all grace, or the callous god of this world (1 Pet. 5:6-11).

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (NASB95) — 7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! 8 Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. 9 And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

1 Peter 5:6-11 (NASB95) — 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. 8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. 10 After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. 11 To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.