

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

Systematic Theology Series

ANGELOLOGY

The Doctrine of Angels, Demons, and the Spiritual Realm

UNIT 4: THE FALL OF SATAN

Lesson 10

The Names and Character of Satan

Know Your Enemy — What Scripture Reveals About the Devil

Key Texts: Job 1:6–12; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 11:14; John 8:44; Revelation 12:9–10; Ephesians 2:1–2

“Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith.”

1 Peter 5:8–9, NASB 1995

Dr. Joshua Nichols

Pastor, Theologian, Author

faithfultotheword.com

Introduction

Lesson 9 established the foundational facts about Satan: that he is a creature of the highest order who fell through the primal sin of pride, that his fall was witnessed by the eternal Son, and that his defeat has already been accomplished at the cross of Christ even as his final judgment awaits the appointed time. With that foundation in place, we turn in this lesson to the names and titles Scripture assigns to Satan, the biblical vocabulary by which the adversary's identity, character, and activity are revealed to the church that must resist him. The study of Satan's names is not an exercise in demonological curiosity; it is a practical study in the pastoral theology of spiritual discernment. The church that knows its adversary by his biblical names knows what to expect from him, how he operates, and where his attacks are most likely to come.

The biblical vocabulary for Satan is remarkably rich and precise. His names and titles fall into two broad categories: those that describe his fundamental orientation (adversary, accuser, enemy) and those that describe his characteristic methods (tempter, deceiver, father of lies). Together, they build a portrait of a being who is consistently, relentlessly, and comprehensively hostile to God and to everything that belongs to God, who attacks from every direction, with every available weapon, adapting his strategy to every human weakness and every cultural moment. He is never neutral, never passive, never satisfied with partial victory. The one who was created for the worship of God has directed every faculty of his magnificent fallen nature toward the perversion and destruction of that worship.

This lesson is organized around ten biblical names and titles, each examined in its scriptural context, each carrying specific theological content about what Satan is and what he does. The lesson concludes with the critical theological qualification that must govern the entire study: whatever the power and malice and intelligence of the adversary that these names reveal, he remains a creature who operates only within the bounds that the sovereign God permits. He is not God's equal, not God's opposite, not God's rival in any ultimate sense. Every name that describes his terrifying power simultaneously stands under the name that is above every name, the name of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee will bow.

A note on methodology: the names of Satan are given in Scripture not to produce a comprehensive systematic demonology but to equip the people of God for the spiritual conflict in which they are engaged. They are pastoral data, not merely doctrinal propositions. Each name carries an implied instruction: know that he accuses you, and bring your case before the one Advocate who answers every accusation with the blood of the Lamb; know that he deceives, and arm yourself with the Word of God which is the sword of the Spirit; know that he is a roaring lion, and be sober and alert; know that he disguises himself as an angel of light, and test every spirit against the Scriptures. The names of the enemy are, properly received, instruments of the spiritual vigilance that the New Testament consistently commends.

I. Satan, The Adversary: His Primary Identity and Role

The Hebrew Name That Defines the Fundamental Orientation of the Enemy

The name “Satan” derives from the Hebrew noun *satan*, which means adversary, opponent, or one who stands against. The same root appears as a common noun in the Old Testament to describe human opponents or legal accusers (Numbers 22:22, 32; 1 Samuel 29:4; 2 Samuel 19:22), but in the specific passages where the word is used with the definite article, the adversary, it refers to the supernatural personal adversary of God and His people. The earliest and most extended description of Satan in this role is the prologue to Job, where the adversary (Hebrew: *ha-satan*, the accuser-adversary) presents himself before the divine throne and challenges Job’s righteousness with the cynical claim that Job’s faith is purely mercenary: “Does Job fear God for nothing?” (Job 1:9, NASB 1995).

The portrait of Satan in Job 1–2 is theologically precise and instructive in multiple respects. First, he appears before the divine throne as a member of the heavenly assembly, not as an autonomous power operating outside God’s governance but as a creature who must present himself before the God whose permission he requires before he can touch Job at all. Second, his method is accusation and challenge, he does not attack Job directly but attacks the integrity of Job’s faith, suggesting that the relationship between Job and God is transactional rather than genuine. Third, his challenge is answered not by a defense of Job’s righteousness but by the sovereign God’s confidence in the faith He Himself has produced in Job. The adversary challenges; God vindicates; Job is the battlefield on which the vindication is accomplished.

The same adversarial role is depicted in Zechariah 3:1–5, where Satan stands at the right hand of the high priest Joshua “to accuse him” before the angel of the Lord. The Lord’s rebuke of Satan in that passage, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan!” (Zechariah 3:2, NASB 1995), and His declaration that Joshua is “a brand plucked from the fire” models the divine response to every satanic accusation against the redeemed: the adversary accuses, and the Lord rebukes the accusation on the basis of His own saving choice. The name “Satan” thus defines not merely an identity but a posture: the adversary stands against God and God’s people with unrelenting, comprehensive, personal opposition. His is not a temporary or casual hostility; it is the defining orientation of his entire fallen being.

II. The Devil, The Slanderer: His Characteristic Method of Attack

How the Adversary Operates Through Accusation in Both Directions

The Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *satan* is *diabolos*, from which the English “devil” derives. The word means slanderer or accuser, one who throws accusations through (*dia*) a relationship, disrupting and destroying it. The *diabolos* operates in both directions simultaneously: he slanders God to human beings, and he accuses human beings before God. Both activities are documented in Scripture, and both serve the same ultimate end: the destruction of the relationship between the Creator and the creature.

The slander of God to humanity is most vividly displayed in Genesis 3:1–5. The serpent does not merely tempt Eve with the prospect of eating the forbidden fruit; he first plants a seed of suspicion about God’s character: “Has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’” (3:1, NASB 1995), slightly misrepresenting the divine command to suggest its severity. And then: “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” (3:5, NASB 1995), the direct accusation that God is withholding something good from the creature, that His prohibition is motivated by jealousy or self-interest rather than love. This is the essence of the devil’s slander against God: the suggestion that God cannot be fully trusted, that His commands are not benevolent, that His governance is not for the creature’s ultimate good. Every temptation contains some version of this slander at its root.

The accusation of humanity before God is documented in Revelation 12:10, where the great dragon is identified as “the accuser of our brethren” who “accuses them before our God day and night.” The continuous, incessant quality of the accusation, “day and night”, suggests not an occasional legal proceeding but a relentless prosecutorial assault on the standing of God’s people before the divine throne. The accusations are not necessarily fabricated; they may be entirely accurate descriptions of the believer’s sins and failures. What makes them satanic is not their falsity but their intent: the adversary does not accuse in order to produce repentance and restoration but in order to condemn, to separate the believer from the God whose grace alone is the basis of his standing. The answer to the accusation is not the denial of the sin but the blood of the Lamb: “And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony” (Revelation 12:11, NASB 1995).

“They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony.” Revelation 12:11, NASB 1995

III. The Tempter and the Deceiver: His Twin Methods of Attack

How the Enemy Lures Into Sin and Blinds to Truth

A. The Tempter

The title “the tempter” (Greek: ho peirazōn) appears explicitly in Matthew 4:3 and 1 Thessalonians 3:5, though the activity it describes pervades the entire biblical narrative from Genesis 3 onward. The tempter’s characteristic activity is to lure human beings into sin by presenting sin as advantageous, pleasurable, or reasonable. He does not typically compel; he entices. He does not force; he persuades. His temptations are calibrated to the specific weaknesses, desires, and vulnerabilities of the particular person he is targeting, which is why the temptations of Christ in Matthew 4:1–11 are precisely the temptations that would be most acutely felt by the One who was genuinely hungry, genuinely carrying the full weight of His messianic mission, and genuinely possessed of the power to accomplish that mission by the shortcut the tempter was proposing.

The theology of Jesus’ temptation is instructive for the doctrine of the tempter’s method. Satan tempted Jesus at three points: the use of divine power for personal need (turning stones to bread), the

demonstration of divine protection through self-exposure to danger (throwing Himself from the temple), and the acquisition of messianic dominion through worship of the adversary. Each temptation was a genuine offer of something real, bread, protection, dominion, through a means that would have bypassed obedience to the Father. This is the tempter's constant method: not the offer of something intrinsically evil but the offer of something genuine through a path that subverts the divine order. Every temptation is, in some form, the offer of a real good through an illegitimate means, which is why the resistance to temptation always requires not the denial of the good being offered but the refusal of the means by which it is offered.

Jesus' response to each temptation is equally instructive: He answers with Scripture, specifically with the Deuteronomic texts that describe Israel's vocation of dependence on God in the wilderness. The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17), is the instrument by which the temptation of the tempter is resisted, not by the assertion of superior willpower or emotional determination but by the objective, authoritative word of the God whose character and will the tempter is seeking to undermine. This is why the temptation narratives function not merely as a record of Christ's victory but as a model of Christian resistance: the same Word that armed the Son in the wilderness arms His people in their own encounters with the tempter.

B. *The Deceiver*

The title of deceiver (Greek: *planos*, wanderer, misleader) is applied to Satan in Revelation 12:9, which identifies him as "the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world." The scope of the deception, "the whole world", is as staggering as it is precise: the deception of Satan is not a local or occasional phenomenon but the comprehensive spiritual condition of the fallen world that has not received the gospel of Christ. Paul makes this explicit in 2 Corinthians 11:3, where he warns the Corinthian church: "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" (NASB 1995). The deception of Satan is not merely the deception of the unbelieving world; it is a genuine danger to the people of God, who are capable of having their minds led astray from the simplicity of the gospel through the craftiness that characterized Satan's approach to Eve.

The nature of the deception is always the same at its root: the substitution of a false object for the true one. Satan substituted himself for God in Eve's estimation of who could be trusted; he substitutes false gospels for the true one in the experience of the church; he substitutes the appearances of the world for the reality of God's kingdom in the imagination of the believer who has not learned to see with the eyes of faith. The antidote to deception is not greater cleverness but greater fidelity to the Word of God, the truth that the deceiver cannot ultimately overthrow because it is not human wisdom but divine revelation.

IV. The Prince of This World and the Prince of the Power of the Air

The Scope and Limits of Satan's Authority Over the Fallen World System

A. *The Prince of This World*

Three times in the Gospel of John, Jesus refers to Satan as “the ruler of this world” (Greek: *ho archōn tou kosmou toutou*, the prince, ruler, or chief of this world). In John 12:31, He declares: “Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.” In John 14:30, He says: “I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.” And in John 16:11: “concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.” The title acknowledges what Paul makes explicit in 2 Corinthians 4:4, that Satan exercises a real, operative authority over the fallen world system, the *kosmos* that is organized around its own wisdom and its own values in opposition to God and His kingdom.

The authority of Satan as the prince of this world is, however, precisely and carefully qualified by every passage in which Jesus uses the title. In John 12:31, the title is immediately paired with the announcement of the ruler’s judgment and expulsion. In John 14:30, the assertion that the ruler is coming is paired with the equally definitive assertion that he “has nothing in Me”, that the prince of this world has no foothold, no leverage, no claim in the person of the Son. In John 16:11, the present authority of the ruler is explicitly characterized as a judgment already rendered. The title is never used without its qualifier; the rulership is never asserted without its defeat. Satan rules the fallen world system, but he rules it as a condemned ruler whose sentence has been pronounced, whose expulsion has been determined, and whose claim over the Son of God is precisely zero.

B. *The Prince of the Power of the Air*

In Ephesians 2:1–2, Paul describes the pre-conversion condition of his readers as having followed “the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.” The designation “prince of the power of the air” (Greek: *ton archonta tēs exousias tou aeris*) is among the most discussed and most debated of Satan’s biblical titles. The “air” in the Pauline world was associated with the realm between earth and the divine heavens, the intermediate zone in which, in the cosmology of the time, spiritual powers were thought to operate. Paul uses this cultural idiom to make a theological point: Satan is the ruler of the spiritual realm that operates through “the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience”, the demonic influence that animates and directs the disobedience of those who are not in Christ.

The most theologically important feature of this title is the phrase that immediately precedes the description of Satan’s authority: “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1, NASB 1995). The condition of those who follow the prince of the power of the air is not primarily one of moral failure or social dysfunction; it is one of spiritual death. The satanic authority described in Ephesians 2:2 is not an external compulsion imposed on otherwise spiritually neutral creatures; it is the natural authority that the prince of the fallen order exercises over those who are spiritually dead and therefore have no resources to resist him. The gospel, accordingly, is not primarily a moral improvement program; it is the announcement of a transfer of authority, from the dominion of darkness to the kingdom of God’s beloved Son (Colossians 1:13).

“Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.” John 12:31, NASB 1995

V. The God of This Age: Satan’s Blinding Power Over the Unbelieving Mind

The Most Sobering of All Satan’s Titles and Its Implications for Evangelism

Second Corinthians 4:4 contains one of the most theologically alarming statements in the entire New Testament: “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” (NASB 1995). The title “god of this world” (Greek: *ho theos tou aiōnos toutou*) is the strongest of all Satan’s titles and the one that most directly risks confusion with the sovereign God of Scripture. Paul uses it not to suggest that Satan is genuinely divine or genuinely sovereign but to describe the functional authority he exercises over the minds and perceptions of the unbelieving world: he operates as the effective divine authority in their experience, governing their epistemic access to reality in a way that prevents them from receiving the light of the gospel.

The specific activity described, blinding the minds of the unbelieving, is theologically crucial for the doctrine of evangelism and conversion. It means that the unbeliever’s failure to receive the gospel is not merely a matter of intellectual disagreement or moral resistance, though both are real; it is also a matter of satanic blinding that has suppressed the capacity to perceive the light of the gospel. This is why the proclamation of the gospel must always be accompanied by prayer, prayer for the removal of the blindness that only God can remove, for the divine light that overcomes the satanic darkness: “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 4:6, NASB 1995). The evangelistic task is not merely persuasion; it is proclamation and prayer, trusting that the God who commanded light to shine from darkness is the God who overcomes the blinding of the god of this age.

The title “god of this age” also carries a temporal qualification that is as significant as the title itself: “of this age” (*tou aiōnos toutou*). Satan’s functional divine authority is age-specific; it belongs to the present age, the fallen age that is passing away in the face of the age to come that the gospel announces. The god of this age is the ruler of a domain that is already in the process of judgment and dissolution. Paul’s description of the Christian’s calling to “not be conformed to this world” but to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2, NASB 1995) is, at its deepest level, a call to live according to the age that is coming rather than the age that is passing, to refuse the authority of the god of this age over one’s mind and perception, and to submit instead to the transforming authority of the God of the age to come.

VI. A Murderer and Father of Lies: The Character Jesus Ascribes

The Lord's Own Assessment of the Essential Character of the Adversary

The most direct and theologically concentrated characterization of Satan in the entire New Testament comes from the lips of Jesus Himself in John 8:44: “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (NASB 1995). Jesus is not offering an academic analysis of Satan’s character; He is making a devastating diagnostic statement about the spiritual parentage of the religious leaders who are rejecting Him. But in doing so He reveals the most fundamental truths about the adversary’s essential character.

The phrase “a murderer from the beginning” (Greek: anthrōpoktonos ap’ archēs) encompasses both the murder of Abel through the agency of Cain (1 John 3:12) and the introduction of death into human existence through the deception of Eve in the garden. The serpent who promised that eating the forbidden fruit would not bring death (Genesis 3:4) was, in fact, introducing humanity to death in its most comprehensive sense: spiritual death, relational death (the rupture of the God-human relationship), and ultimately physical death. Satan’s murderous character is not a peripheral feature of his fallen nature; it is its most fundamental expression. He who was created for the worship and service of the God who is Life has become, through his own rebellion, the embodiment and instrument of death.

The phrase “father of lies” (Greek: patēr autou) is equally profound. The word “father” in its Semitic idiom designates the origin, the archetype, the one whose nature is reproduced in what proceeds from him. Satan is the father of lies in the sense that lying originates in him, that he is the primordial liar from whom all lying derives its character and its intent. When he speaks a lie, and Jesus’ characterization implies that every satanic word is a lie in some fundamental sense, he “speaks from his own nature.” This is the most chilling phrase in the entire passage: for the holy angels, righteousness is their nature; for Satan, falsehood is his. He does not merely choose to lie as a strategy; he lies because he is, at the deepest level of his fallen being, the contradiction of the truth.

VII. The Roaring Lion and the Angel of Light: Two Modes of Attack

The Adversary Is Both Ferocious and Subtle, He Attacks by Intimidation and by Imitation

A. The Roaring Lion: The Attack of Intimidation

First Peter 5:8–9 provides the New Testament’s most vivid image of the adversary in his mode of aggressive attack: “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 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” (NASB 1995). The image of the roaring lion communicates several specific theological truths about the adversary’s method of aggressive attack. The lion does not merely threaten; it communicates the reality of its power through the roar, producing the fear and paralysis that makes the attack easier. Satan’s “roar” in the Christian’s experience is the experience of intense spiritual pressure, suffering, persecution, and spiritual attack that is designed to produce the fear and paralysis that prevents effective resistance.

The command to “resist him, firm in your faith” is precisely calibrated to the lion image. The appropriate response to a roaring lion is not to pretend it is not there, not to negotiate with it, not to run, but to stand firm, to resist. And the basis of the resistance is “your faith”, not your emotional courage, not your personal spiritual maturity, not your track record of successful spiritual warfare, but the objective, external, Christologically grounded faith that the adversary is a defeated enemy whose roar exceeds his current power to consume those who stand in Christ. The lion roars; but the Lion of the tribe of Judah has overcome (Revelation 5:5), and the one who stands in Him stands in a victory the roaring cannot undo.

The communal dimension of Peter’s instruction is also significant: “the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world” (1 Peter 5:9, NASB 1995). The adversary is not targeting you specifically; he is prowling through the entire global community of the church, attacking wherever he finds the faith most vulnerable. This communal awareness, the knowledge that your suffering is shared by brothers and sisters across the world, is part of the resistance: the isolated believer who imagines that his spiritual suffering is unique is more vulnerable than the believer who knows himself to be part of a global community of resistance.

B. *The Angel of Light: The Attack of Imitation*

Second Corinthians 11:14–15 reveals the second and in some respects more dangerous mode of satanic attack: disguise and imitation. “No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds” (NASB 1995). The context is Paul’s warning about false apostles who are infiltrating the Corinthian church with a “different gospel” and a “different Jesus”, and his identification of these false apostles as servants of Satan who disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, just as their master disguises himself as an angel of light.

The most dangerous adversarial attack is not the attack that comes in recognizably evil form, the obvious temptation, the blatant lie, the clearly wicked offer. These are relationally easy to identify and resist, at least in principle. The most dangerous attack is the one that comes in the form of light, of truth, of righteousness, of spirituality, the one that appropriates the vocabulary and the appearance of the gospel while substituting a different content. This is precisely what the false apostles in Corinth were doing: using apostolic language, apostolic authority claims, and apostolic appearances to introduce a theology that was fundamentally incompatible with the gospel of Christ. The test for the angel-of-light deception is not aesthetic, does it look good?, but doctrinal: does it conform to the apostolic gospel? “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!” (Galatians 1:8, NASB 1995).

“No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.” 2 Corinthians 11:14, NASB 1995

VIII. The Critical Qualification: A Creature, Not a Counter-God

The Most Important Truth About Satan Is What He Is Not

The most important theological word to be spoken about Satan, after all his names and titles have been surveyed, is the word that limits every one of them: he is a creature. Every name that describes his power simultaneously stands under the sovereignty of the God who created him, permitted his fall, and has already determined the time and manner of his end. He is “the adversary”, but the God he opposes is the God who laughs at the nations and holds the kings of the earth in derision (Psalm 2:4). He is “the ruler of this world”, but the world he rules is the world whose ruler has been cast out (John 12:31). He is “the god of this age”, but this age is passing away (1 John 2:17), and the God of the age to come is the God who has already determined its end.

The theological tradition has a precise term for the error of treating Satan as God’s equal and opposite: dualism. The dualistic worldview, in which good and evil, God and Satan, are genuinely co-equal and co-eternal forces whose outcome is genuinely uncertain, is a perennial temptation of religious thought, and it can infect Christian theology and Christian practice in subtle ways. The congregation that lives as though the outcome of the spiritual conflict is uncertain, that prays as though God might not be powerful enough to overcome the adversary, that treats demonic resistance as a genuine obstacle to the advancement of God’s purposes rather than as a permitted difficulty within those purposes, has functionally adopted a dualistic theology even while formally confessing the sovereignty of God. The antidote is not a casual dismissal of the adversary’s real power and malice but a theologically rigorous insistence on his creaturely status: he is terrible, he is real, he is active, and he operates only within the bounds that the sovereign God permits, toward ends that the sovereign God has determined, for a duration that the sovereign God has set.

Luther’s image captures this truth with characteristic vividness: Satan is “God’s devil.” The adversary’s rebellion does not free him from the sovereign governance of the God he opposes; it makes him, in the inscrutable providence of that sovereignty, an unwilling instrument of purposes he cannot see and would not choose. The cross is the supreme demonstration of this truth: the adversary who orchestrated the crucifixion of the Son of God accomplished, through his own malice and the willing obedience of the Son, precisely the redemption that his every effort was designed to prevent. The scheme became the instrument of its own defeat. The darkness that extinguished the Light became the occasion for the Light’s most glorious revelation. “He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord scoffs at them” (Psalm 2:4, NASB 1995). The laughter is not cruel; it is the laughter of a sovereignty so comprehensive that even the adversary’s most calculated rebellion serves the divine purposes. This is the God in whom the believer stands when he resists the roaring lion and sees through the disguise of the angel of light.

“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 4:6, NASB 1995

Theological Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
Satan (Ha-Satan)	Hebrew: satan (adversary, opponent, one who stands against). Used as a proper name for the supernatural personal adversary of God and His people, particularly with the definite article (ha-satan, the adversary) in the Old Testament. The name defines Satan's fundamental orientation: relentless, personal, comprehensive opposition to God and everything that belongs to God. Notable occurrences: Job 1–2 (the adversary before the divine throne), Zechariah 3:1 (accusing the high priest Joshua). The Greek equivalent is diabolos (the Devil), and the name "Satan" appears as a loanword in the Greek New Testament as well.
Diabolos	Greek: slanderer, accuser (from dia, through + ballein, to throw, one who throws accusations through a relationship). The primary New Testament name for Satan, translated "Devil" in English. The diabolos operates in two directions: he slanders God to human beings (Genesis 3:1–5: implying God withholds good) and accuses human beings before God (Revelation 12:10: accusing them day and night). The answer to his accusation is not the denial of the sin but the blood of the Lamb: "they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony" (Revelation 12:11).
The Tempter (Ho Peirazōn)	Greek: the one who tests or tempts, from peirazo (to test, to tempt). Title applied to Satan in Matthew 4:3 and 1 Thessalonians 3:5. The tempter's characteristic activity is the enticement of human beings into sin by presenting sin as advantageous, pleasurable, or reasonable. Jesus' temptation in Matthew 4:1–11 models both the tempter's method (offering real goods through illegitimate means) and the believer's resistance (the Word of God as the sword of the Spirit). The tempter's temptations are always calibrated to specific vulnerabilities, which is why vigilance and self-knowledge are prerequisites for effective resistance.
The Deceiver (Planos)	Greek: wanderer, misleader, one who leads astray. Title applied to Satan in Revelation 12:9 ("who deceives the whole world") and in 2 Corinthians 11:3 (Paul's warning that the church's minds may be led astray from devotion to Christ as Eve was deceived by the serpent). The deceiver's fundamental method is the substitution of a false object for the true one: false gods for the true God, false gospels for the true gospel, false appearances for the true reality of God's kingdom. The antidote to deception is not intellectual sophistication but fidelity to the Word of God.

Term	Definition
Ruler of This World (Archōn Tou Kosmou)	Greek: the ruler or prince of this world (kosmos). Title used by Jesus three times in John's Gospel (12:31; 14:30; 16:11) to designate Satan's real but defeated authority over the fallen world system. The title is consistently paired with its qualification: the ruler is judged (16:11), will be cast out (12:31), and has nothing in Christ (14:30). The authority is real but temporary, operative but condemned, and limited in scope to those who belong to the fallen age that is passing away.
Prince of the Power of the Air (Archōn Tēs Exousias Tou Aeros)	Greek: the ruler of the authority of the air. Title used in Ephesians 2:2 to describe Satan as the supernatural authority behind the "spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience." The "air" in ancient cosmology designated the intermediate spiritual realm between earth and the divine heavens. Paul uses this cultural idiom to describe Satan's authority over the spiritual forces that animate disobedience in those who are not in Christ. The context (Ephesians 2:1–2) places this authority in the framework of spiritual death: those who follow this prince are those who are "dead in trespasses and sins."
God of This Age (Ho Theos Tou Aiōnos Toutou)	Greek: the god of this age. Title used in 2 Corinthians 4:4 to describe Satan's functional authority over the minds of the unbelieving, specifically his activity of blinding the minds of the unbelieving to prevent them from seeing the light of the gospel. The designation "god" is functional rather than ontological: Satan is not genuinely divine but operates as the effective authority over the epistemic lives of the unbelieving. The temporal qualifier "of this age" is essential: his authority is age-specific, belonging to the present fallen age that is already in the process of passing away.
Father of Lies (Patēr Autou)	Title applied to Satan in John 8:44: "he is a liar and the father of lies." In Semitic idiom, "father" designates the origin, the archetype, the one whose nature is reproduced in what proceeds from him. Satan is the father of lies in the sense that lying originates in him and that every lie participates in the falsehood that is now, in his fallen state, his fundamental nature. The phrase "whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature" is the most sobering element of Jesus' characterization: for the holy angels, righteousness is natural; for Satan, falsehood is.
Dualism	The philosophical and theological worldview in which two co-equal, co-eternal, and co-powerful forces, good and evil, light and darkness, God and Satan, are locked in a conflict whose outcome is genuinely uncertain. Christian theology consistently rejects dualism as incompatible with the biblical doctrine of God's comprehensive sovereignty: Satan is a creature, not a counter-god; his power is real but derivative; his defeat is certain because it has already been

Term	Definition
	accomplished at the cross. The dualistic temptation infects Christian practice when the adversary is treated as a genuine rival to God's purposes rather than a permitted difficulty within them.
Angel of Light	The disguise in which Satan presents himself to achieve his most dangerous attacks (2 Corinthians 11:14). The most effective satanic strategy is not open assault but mimicry, the appropriation of the vocabulary, appearance, and authority claims of the genuine while substituting a fundamentally different content. Paul identifies the false apostles in Corinth as "servants" of Satan who "disguise themselves as servants of righteousness" (2 Corinthians 11:15). The test for the angel-of-light deception is doctrinal, not aesthetic: conformity to the apostolic gospel (Galatians 1:8) rather than the spiritual impressiveness of the appearance.

Practical Application

A. For the Mind: What Must We Believe?

We must believe that the names and titles of Scripture for Satan are not ancient mythological vocabulary that has accumulated around a historical memory but precise theological designations that describe a real personal being whose activity in the world is genuinely and pervasively threatening. The adversary accuses, the devil slanders, the tempter lures, the deceiver blinds, the murderer kills, the liar deceives, the roaring lion prowls, the angel of light infiltrates. These are not metaphors for natural evil or psychological darkness, they are descriptions of the actual character and activity of a personal spiritual being whose comprehensive hostility to God and to God's people has not diminished since the garden and will not diminish until the lake of fire.

We must also believe, with equal theological clarity, that every one of these terrifying names and activities stands under the name that is above every name, and that the creaturely status of the adversary is the most practically significant fact about him for the Christian life. The adversary is real and terrible; he is also a creature on a leash. The leash is held by the God in whom we are complete (Colossians 2:10), who has already disarmed every ruler and authority and made a public display of them (Colossians 2:15), and who has promised that the God of peace will soon crush Satan under our feet (Romans 16:20). Both truths are necessary: the one prevents complacency; the other prevents fear.

B. For the Heart: What Must We Feel and Desire?

Let the study of Satan's names produce the specific combination of sober vigilance and settled confidence that the New Testament consistently commends. Sober vigilance: the adversary is real, his methods are varied and sophisticated, his attacks come from every direction, and the believer who imagines that spiritual conflict is not real is already at a disadvantage. Settled confidence: the accuser's every accusation is answered by the blood of the Lamb; the tempter's every temptation is met by the Word of God that Christ wielded in the wilderness; the deceiver's every disguise is exposed by the apostolic gospel; the roaring lion's every assault is resisted by faith in the One who has already overcome. These are not abstract reassurances; they are the practical resources of the spiritual life, and they are available to every believer who has received and is standing in the gospel of Christ.

Desire the specific form of discernment that the study of Satan's methods is designed to produce. The apostolic instruction is unambiguous: "we are not ignorant of his schemes" (2 Corinthians 2:11, NASB 1995). The knowledge of the enemy's character, methods, and limitations is not morbid preoccupation; it is the pastoral preparation for a conflict that is as real as the gossiping tongue, the wandering eye, the proud heart, and the resistant will. Every manifestation of sin in the believer's life has the adversary's fingerprints on it, not because the believer has no responsibility for his own sin but because the tempter, the accuser, the deceiver, and the murderer are always present as the spiritual powers that exploit and amplify what the flesh is already inclined toward. Know your enemy; resist him; stand firm in the faith.

C. *For the Hands: What Must We Do?*

- **For each of the ten names and titles studied in this lesson, identify the specific spiritual practice or discipline that constitutes the direct response.** The adversary (satan), pray for the intercessory rebuke of the Lord (Jude 9). The devil (diabolos), bring every accusation before the Advocate who answers with the blood of the Lamb (1 John 2:1). The tempter, arm yourself with the Word of God (Matthew 4:4–10; Ephesians 6:17). The deceiver, test everything against the apostolic gospel (Galatians 1:8; 1 John 4:1). The prince of this world, live according to the kingdom that has already displaced his (Colossians 1:13). The god of this age, pray for the divine light that overcomes the blinding (2 Corinthians 4:6). The murderer, receive the life that is yours in Christ (John 10:10). The father of lies, abide in the truth that is in Jesus (John 8:32). The roaring lion, resist, firm in faith, in solidarity with the global church (1 Peter 5:9). The angel of light, evaluate every spiritual claim by the standard of the apostolic gospel.
- **Read the account of Job 1–2 as a sustained meditation on the adversary’s character and the sovereign God’s governance of him.** Note every specific limit that God places on the adversary’s activity: he must present himself before the divine throne; he must receive divine permission before he can touch Job; the permission is bounded with precise limits. Identify what Job’s experience teaches about the relationship between genuine suffering, satanic agency, and divine sovereignty. And consider: what would Job’s theological understanding of his own suffering have been, given that he had no access to the scene in the divine throne room that the reader sees? What does this gap between the heavenly perspective and the earthly experience imply about the theological resources available to the suffering believer?
- **Develop a brief teaching or homily for your congregation on 2 Corinthians 11:14 and the danger of the angel-of-light deception.** Identify two or three specific contemporary examples of teaching, spiritual experiences, or ministry practices that present themselves in the vocabulary of the gospel but are fundamentally incompatible with it. Apply the Galatians 1:8 criterion explicitly: whatever its appearance, spiritual impressiveness, or cultural credibility, any teaching that contradicts the apostolic gospel is anathema. The goal is not to produce cynical suspicion of everything that appears spiritual but to equip the congregation with the doctrinal standard by which genuine spirituality is distinguished from its most dangerous imitations.
- **Memorize and pray Revelation 12:10–11 for any believer you know who is under intense spiritual accusation.** The experience of persistent, intense, apparently unanswerable spiritual accusation, the sense that one’s sin is too great, one’s failure too comprehensive, one’s standing before God too precarious to sustain confidence in the gospel, is one of the most common and most spiritually devastating forms of satanic attack. The answer is not better arguments or greater introspective efforts; it is the blood of the Lamb and the word of testimony. Pray Revelation 12:11 as an intercessory declaration over those who are under accusation: “They overcome him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony.”
- **Read John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* with deliberate attention to its angelology and demonology.** Bunyan’s allegorical masterpiece is the most sustained and pastorally rich engagement with the names and methods of the adversary in the entire Protestant literary

tradition. Apollyon (the destroyer), Vanity Fair, Doubting Castle, the Slough of Despond, and Giant Despair are not merely entertaining narrative devices; they are Bunyan's vivid embodiment of the specific satanic tactics this lesson has described. Reading *Pilgrim's Progress* alongside this lesson will deepen the doctrine by grounding it in the imaginative register of the Christian's actual experience of the conflict Bunyan so memorably depicts.

Study and Discussion Questions

Opening Question

- Before working through the discussion questions, identify which of the ten names and titles of Satan studied in this lesson is most personally relevant to you right now, not the most theologically interesting but the most practically significant in the specific circumstances of your current spiritual life. What makes that particular name or title most pressing for you in this season? And what specific response does the lesson's treatment of that name call for from you personally?

Observation Questions (What Do the Texts Say?)

- Read Job 1:6–12 and 2:1–7 carefully. Identify every specific limit that God places on the adversary's activity in each passage. What must the adversary do before he can touch Job? What specific boundaries does God set in each case? What does the phrase "Only do not put forth your hand on him" (1:12) and "Spare his life" (2:6) establish about the relationship between satanic activity and divine sovereignty? How does the structure of the divine permission model the truth that the adversary is a creature on a leash?
- Read Revelation 12:7–12. Identify the sequence of events: the war in heaven, the expulsion of the adversary, the voice from heaven. What does the accuser's characterization in verse 10 ("the accuser of our brethren who accuses them before our God day and night") reveal about the continuous, relentless quality of the satanic accusation? What is the stated basis of the believers' victory over the accuser (v. 11)? And what is the adversary's emotional state in verse 12, and why? What does this state reveal about his self-awareness of his own situation?
- Read John 8:42–44 in its full context (the controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees). What is Jesus' precise argument about the Pharisees' relationship to the devil? What specific activities does Jesus attribute to the devil, and in what temporal framework ("from the beginning") does he place them? What is the specific meaning of "speaks from his own nature" in verse 44? And how does Jesus' characterization of the devil as the father of lies illuminate the relationship between the Pharisees' rejection of Jesus and their spiritual parentage?
- Read 2 Corinthians 11:1–15 in full. What is the specific situation Paul is addressing? Who are the "super-apostles" (v. 5)? What is the content of the "different gospel" and "different Jesus" they are proclaiming (v. 4)? How does Paul's identification of these false apostles as servants of Satan who disguise themselves as servants of righteousness (vv. 13–15) depend on the prior description of Satan as one who disguises himself as an angel of light (v. 14)? And what is the test by which the angel-of-light deception is exposed?
- Read 1 Peter 5:6–11 as a unit. What is the immediate context of the lion image (v. 8), what has Peter been saying in verses 6–7? How does the command to "humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God" (v. 6) prepare for the command to resist the devil (v. 9)? What is the basis

of the resistance (v. 9a)? What communal awareness does Peter appeal to (v. 9b)? And what is the promised outcome of faithful resistance (vv. 10–11)?

Interpretation Questions (What Does It Mean?)

- The lesson argues that the adversary’s slander operates in two directions simultaneously: he slanders God to human beings (Genesis 3:5) and accuses human beings before God (Revelation 12:10). How do these two directions of satanic activity relate to each other? Is the same basic strategy at work in both cases? And what does the dual-direction slander reveal about what the adversary is ultimately trying to destroy in his attack on the God-human relationship?
- The lesson describes the tempter’s method as the offer of a real good through an illegitimate means, illustrated by the temptation of Jesus in Matthew 4. Evaluate this claim. Are all temptations genuinely the offer of something real and good through an illegitimate path? Or are there temptations that offer something intrinsically evil? And does the distinction between the good offered and the illegitimate means through which it is offered change the way a Christian should think about and respond to specific temptations?
- The lesson argues that the designation “god of this age” in 2 Corinthians 4:4 is functional rather than ontological, that Satan operates as the effective authority over the minds of the unbelieving without being genuinely divine. How does this distinction between functional and ontological authority help avoid the dualistic error while still taking seriously the real scope of Satan’s blinding activity? And what are the implications of the satanic blinding described in 2 Corinthians 4:4 for the theology and practice of evangelism?
- The lesson describes the angel-of-light deception as “in some respects more dangerous” than the roaring lion attack. Do you agree? What makes the deception that comes in the form of light, truth, and righteousness more dangerous than obvious and recognizable evil? And what does this danger imply about the role of theological precision, doctrinal formation, and apostolic gospel fidelity in the spiritual protection of the congregation?
- The lesson closes with Luther’s image of Satan as “God’s devil” and the cross as the supreme demonstration of how the adversary’s most calculated rebellion served the divine purposes. Evaluate this claim. Is it theologically coherent to say that the adversary’s malice served the redemptive purposes of God without making God the author of the malice? What specific theological distinctions, between permission and causation, between secondary and primary causation, between the proximate and ultimate purposes of an event, are necessary to maintain this claim without attributing evil to God?

Application Questions (What Does It Demand of Us?)

- The lesson argues that the knowledge of the adversary’s names and methods is pastoral data, not merely doctrinal propositions, and that each name carries an implied instruction. Select two of the ten names studied in this lesson and describe, as concretely as possible, how the knowledge of each name changes your actual response to the specific forms of satanic attack each name describes. Not in abstract terms, but in the specific circumstances of your current spiritual life.

- The adversary's accusation of God's people before the divine throne is answered by the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 12:11). Have you experienced the kind of intense, apparently unanswerable spiritual accusation this passage describes? What form did it take? And what specifically constitutes the answer of the blood of the Lamb to that accusation in your own experience, how does the objective, historical, finished work of Christ at the cross function as the practical response to the experiential reality of satanic accusation?
- The lesson warns against the functional dualism that treats the outcome of the spiritual conflict as genuinely uncertain, that prays as though God might not be powerful enough to overcome the adversary. Is there any dimension of your own prayer practice that reflects this functional dualism, even while you formally confess the sovereignty of God? What specific reorientation of your prayer posture, in terms of expectation, confidence, and the theological framework within which petitions are made, would bring your prayer practice into alignment with the creaturely status and proleptic defeat of the adversary?
- The lesson identifies the angel-of-light deception as particularly dangerous in the context of ministry and church leadership, because the false apostles in Corinth were using apostolic language, authority claims, and spiritual impressiveness to introduce a fundamentally incompatible gospel. Identify one specific form of the angel-of-light deception that is currently present in the broader Christian culture you inhabit. What is the specific content it is substituting for the apostolic gospel? And what specific teaching, from this lesson or from the broader series, equips your congregation to identify and resist that specific form of the deception?
- This lesson completes Unit 4 of the Angelology series. Looking back over Lessons 9 and 10 together, the fall of Satan and the names and character of Satan, what is the single most practically significant truth about the adversary that these two lessons have established for you? And how has the cumulative teaching of Units 4 so far changed the way you will engage the subject of spiritual warfare in Units 5 through 7?

Prayer Focus

Open this lesson's prayer time with a reading of Revelation 12:7–12, the great passage that places the reality of Satan's accusation in its cosmic context and provides the apostolic declaration of the basis on which the accusation is overcome: "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death" (Revelation 12:11, NASB 1995). Allow this passage to set the register for everything that follows: the adversary is real; his accusation is relentless; his expulsion is accomplished; the blood of the Lamb is the answer to everything he brings. This is the theological foundation of every prayer that follows.

Begin with thanksgiving for the blood of the Lamb, the specific, particular, once-for-all answer to the specific, particular, relentless accusation of the adversary. Thank God for the cross not as a general expression of divine love but as the precise, targeted, legally sufficient answer to every accusation that can be brought against those who belong to Christ. Thank Him that the adversary who accuses day and night has been answered once and for all by a sacrifice whose efficacy is eternal. Thank Him that the believer's standing before the divine throne is not the product of the believer's righteousness but of the Lamb's righteousness imputed and applied, a righteousness that the accuser's every accusation cannot diminish, because it is not the believer's own.

Pray for discernment, the specific spiritual capacity to distinguish between the genuine and the counterfeit, the true gospel and its most credible imitations, the genuine spiritual work of the Holy Spirit and the deceptions of the adversary who disguises himself as an angel of light. Pray specifically for the pastors and teachers who bear the responsibility of protecting their congregations from the doctrinal deceptions that are the adversary's most dangerous form of attack. Pray for theological clarity, exegetical rigor, and the courage to name and oppose false teaching even when it comes dressed in the vocabulary of the gospel and supported by the authority of impressive spiritual credentials. The Galatians 1:8 standard is not a comfortable one to apply; pray for the pastoral spine to apply it.

Pray for the members of your congregation who are most vulnerable to each of the ten modes of satanic attack studied in this lesson. The one under accusation: pray that the blood of the Lamb would be more real to them than the voice of the accuser. The one being tempted: pray that the Word of God would be their weapon and their refuge. The one being deceived: pray that the Spirit of truth would expose the deception and lead them back to the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ (2 Corinthians 11:3). The one intimidated by the roaring lion: pray for the settled confidence of those who know that the Lion of Judah has already overcome. And pray for those whom the god of this age has blinded to the gospel, those in your community, your family, your sphere of ministry who have not yet received the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. Pray for the divine command that brings light out of darkness to do its work in their specific, named, beloved lives.

Close with a declaration of the critical qualification that this lesson has emphasized: the adversary is a creature, and the God who holds his leash is the God in whom you are complete. Speak it as a confession

of faith rather than a mere theological proposition. The adversary accuses, but the God of peace will crush him under our feet shortly (Romans 16:20). The adversary deceives, but the Spirit of truth will guide us into all the truth (John 16:13). The adversary prowls, but the one who is in us is greater than the one who is in the world (1 John 4:4). The adversary is the god of this age, but this age is passing away, and the One whose kingdom is not of this world has already overcome it (John 16:33). In all these things, we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us (Romans 8:37). That is not a hope; it is a present reality. Receive it, pray it, stand in it.

“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.”

Romans 16:20, NASB 1995

Key Texts: Job 1:6–12; 2:1–7; Genesis 3:1–5; Zechariah 3:1–5; Matthew 4:1–11; John 8:42–44; 12:31; 1 Peter 5:6–11; Revelation 12:7–12; Ephesians 2:1–2; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 11:1–15; Romans 16:20; Colossians 2:15

Soli Deo Gloria
To God Alone Be the Glory

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

Dr. Joshua Nichols

josh@faithfultotheword.com | faithfultotheword.com