



"The devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape."
—William Shakespeare

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Behind Enemy Lines (Part Two)

In Part One, we saw that [Satan](#), the covering cherub who rebelled against [God](#) ([Isaiah 14:12-14](#); [Ezekiel 28:12-17](#)), does not want to be revealed for what he is and how he operates. But as God's elect, we must know these things because, living on earth—Satan's prison ([II Peter 2:4](#); [Jude 6](#))—we are behind enemy lines! Every little bit of information about him and his schemes could be useful in resisting him and the sinful traps he sets for us. Beyond the descriptions of his actions, we learn a great deal about him from the names and titles he is given in Scripture.

The title "Satan" occurs 53 times in 47 verses in the Bible. "Satan" is the Greek *Satanas*, which derived from the Hebrew *śātn* meaning "[adversary](#)." It points to him as the opponent of God, of believers, and of all that is right and good. He may appear as "an angel of light" ([II Corinthians 11:14](#)), but his appearance in this guise is only a façade to further aid him in his work as the arch-adversary and opponent of God.

In [I Peter 5:8](#), where he is also described as a roaring lion, Satan is called "your adversary, the devil." Here the word "adversary" is not *satanas*, but *antidikos*, and though similar in meaning, *antidikos* is more explicit. It specifically refers to "an opponent in a lawsuit."

This word was originally used in legal matters, and the particular imagery it evokes is of a court, and more specifically, the making of an accusation. Using this kind of language, we can say that God has indicted Satan for his [sin](#), found him guilty, and sentenced him to the Lake of Fire. Satan, not accepting the verdict, holds out hope of overturning it, calling God unfair, unjust, and unloving. He stands as the defamer of God's character, the accuser of believers, and the adversary of all humanity.

Several Bible writers call this being "the Devil." In the Bible, this title is the Greek word *diabolos*, which means "slanderer, defamer." The underlying sense is that he is constantly working to malign the character of God and His people.

In [Revelation 12:3](#), he is referred to as "a great, fiery red dragon." "Great" describes the magnitude of Satan's power and activity in [the world](#). "Fiery red" emphasizes his fiercely murderous and bloodthirsty character and behavior throughout history. "Dragon" pictures his beastly, ferocious, and intensely cruel nature. This name is especially related to his end-time character, when God removes all restraints and allows him to go his natural way, to become what he naturally is and to destroy as he has always wanted to do.

A few verses later, [Revelation 12:9](#), he is called "that serpent of old," clearly identifying him as the serpent who deceived Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden ([Genesis 3:1](#)). The description draws our attention to his crafty character and his constant activity of temptation and deception. As the verse goes on to say, he "deceives the whole world."

The apostle John calls him "the wicked one" in [I John 5:18-19](#). Here, "wicked" renders into English the Greek *pon?ros*, an adjective that denotes an active, malignant kind of evil. It refers to what is not only ugly and useless, but to what is injurious and destructive. Like a cancer to the human

race, Satan is aggressively engaged in destruction and causing pain, injury, and death.

In [Galatians 1:4](#), Paul writes of the present time as "this present evil age." Because Satan's attitude is influencing the people of this world, this age will never improve. Because the world gets its character from the wicked one's presence and activity, we live in an evil age that grows increasingly worse.

Paul also describes him as "the prince of the power of the air" in [Ephesians 2:2](#). This title is of particular importance because it points to Satan as the head of the demonic hosts (fallen angels) who operate night and day to fill the environment we inhabit with ungodly deceptions, viewpoints, doubts, and temptations.

The word "power" in this verse is singular, referring to the demonic forces as a corporate body that operates under the authority of Satan, their chief or prince. "Air" translates a Greek word that most likely refers to the immediate atmosphere above the earth, which evidently is where demons do their work. In other words, our atmosphere is the vehicle or medium of their evil operations and influence. This not only defines the locality of Satan's operations, but also portrays the prevailing influence or evil atmosphere within which every person in the world moves. We live in an environment of demonic influence controlled by Satan.

Paul continues in [Ephesians 2:2](#), writing that the Devil is "the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience." "Works" is the Greek *energoúntos*, which means "to be active, to be at work, to energize, to be efficient." The word is a present participle, suggesting that Satan is presently and continuously at work producing and promoting his viewpoint to create disobedience in man.

The Bible contains other names that describe his true nature and character, but the one trait that describes him best is "deceiver." As we saw in [Revelation 12:9](#), Satan is one "who deceives the whole world." Both the Hebrew and Greek texts stress this aspect of his character and activity throughout the Bible. He causes people to miss the truth of God by his many methods of deception: 1) lying against the truth; 2) denying the truth; 3) counterfeiting or imitating the truth; and 4) perverting or distorting the truth.

Satan has many traps and tricks that he uses to deceive the unwary and unprepared.

In terms of the Christian fight against the Adversary, the great promise of the Bible is twofold: First, believers are themselves victors through the victory of the Lord [Jesus Christ](#). Our need is to put on the full armor of God ([Ephesians 6:11](#)) and to resist the Devil ([James 4:7](#); [I Peter 5:9](#)) by remaining close to the Lord. Second, Satan is a defeated foe whose days of freedom to create misery, pain, and deception are numbered. [Romans 16:20](#) tells us why: "The God of [peace](#) will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."

- Clyde Finklea

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by David C. Grabbe

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