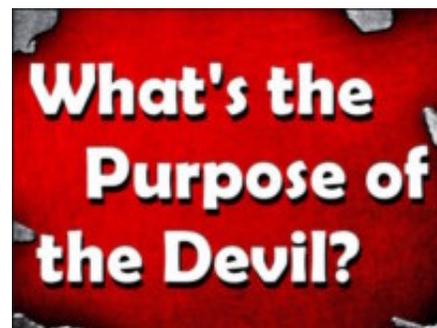


# Church of God

## Sunday School

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE DEVIL?



#### DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** God gives a choice between good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17; Deuteronomy 30:19; Jeremiah 21:8).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** God is pleased when people make the right choices (Genesis 6:9; Job 2:3; Acts 13:22).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** The devil works to tempt, accuse, and deceive (Genesis 3:4-5; Revelation 12:10; 2 Corinthians 11:14).
- ❑ **Thursday:** The devil is described as a "roaring lion" and a "fowler" (1 Peter 5:8; Psalm 91:1-3).
- ❑ **Friday:** The devil deceives people through false or vain religion (James 1:26; Matthew 7:21-23).
- ❑ **Saturday:** Jesus is the perfect example of how to resist the devil (Matthew 4:1-10).

**MEMORY VERSE:** "... I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."  
—Deuteronomy 30:19

#### The Devil Was Created to Provide a Choice

Why would God create the devil? It seems like life would be much easier without him. When God created people, He put within them something different from all other creatures (including the angels)—God made people creatures of choice. We can choose to do what is right or we can choose to do what is wrong. God did not want robots serving Him. He wanted people to choose good and serve Him out of love, not because they had no other choice.

The first example of this choice is found in Genesis 2:16-17. God planted a garden with many trees. Adam was told he could eat of every tree in the garden except for "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Adam had a choice: he could obey or disobey God's command. Without this tree and God's commandment, Adam would not have had a choice. Throughout the Bible, you can read of God presenting a choice between good and evil (Deuteronomy 30:19; Jeremiah 21:8). You can also read that God pleaded with His people to "choose life." It greatly pleases God when He finds people who choose to walk with Him and serve Him (Genesis 6:9; Job 2:3; Acts 13:22).



#### The Devil Is a Tempter

If Adam and Eve (and the rest of the human race) were given the ability to reason and make a choice, there must be more than one choice. The first choice is God; He is good, and He has always existed (Psalm 90:2). The second choice is the devil. The first time we read of the devil in the Bible is in the Garden of Eden. God had given Adam and Eve a commandment concerning the tree of knowledge of good and evil. To test their obedience, the devil spoke through a serpent, tempting Eve to disobey God's commandment.

Whenever you are tempted to do something that is wrong, remember that it is the devil who is trying to persuade you to sin, not God (James 1:13). The devil is doing exactly what God created him to do. Although God will not tempt you, He knows that temptations can make you a stronger and wiser Christian. With God's help, you can recognize and learn to avoid certain temptations. Each time God helps you to "Resist the devil" (James 4:7), it brings encouragement for future temptations.

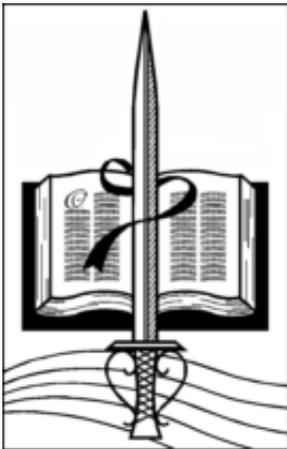
### The Devil Is an Accuser

The devil is very good at quickly changing his methods of operating. He often works as an "accuser of the brethren [Christians]" (Revelation 12:10), trying to discourage the Christian. First, he might put a thought of temptation into your mind. Then, he will accuse you for having that thought. The Reformer Martin Luther had some good advice about this. He said, "I cannot stop the birds flying over my head, but I can stop them from building their nests in my hair." Temptations in your thoughts will come, but do not let the accuser tell you they are sin. Temptation only becomes sin when you give in to it.

### The Devil Is a Deceiver

Which do you think is more deceptive—a roaring lion or a hidden trap, placed under leaves and branches? The Bible compares the devil to both the roaring lion and a fowler (one who sets traps). When the devil sees that one way does not cause people to sin, he will change his approach. One of his most successful methods has been to transform himself into an "angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:13-14). When the devil does this, he is pretending to be the true "light of the world [Jesus]" (John 8:12). No doubt, with this false appearance, he has deceived millions of people into thinking they were doing what is right, while actually they are following the devil. Jesus spoke of just such people in Matthew 7:21-23.

How does the devil deceive so many people? Most people realize that sins like murder and stealing are wrong. So, the devil tempts them with less obvious (secretive) sins like gossiping, telling "white lies" or half-truths, and being envious or bitter. However, Psalm 90:8 tells us that all "secret sins" are seen by God. The devil realizes the great opportunity of working through religion to deceive people. James 1:27 speaks of "Pure religion." Therefore, there must be religion that is not pure. You might hear it referred to as *false religion*. The devil deceives through false religion. He convinces people they can get to Heaven in ways other than what God has said in the Bible.



### How to Resist the Devil

When God created men and women with the power of choice, He also created a law of sowing and reaping from which no one can escape (Galatians 6:7). Choices have consequences—this is why God wants everyone to choose the good! It is not His will that anyone should "perish" (2 Peter 3:9).

Jesus has given us the best example for resisting any temptation or accusation the devil brings to us. Jesus was tempted by the devil in the wilderness in Matthew, Chapter 4. Look at Jesus' answer to everything the devil said: "It is written" (verses 4, 7, 10). What was Jesus talking about? The Word! He used the Word of God to overcome all the devil's temptations. That is what you should do as well. Read your Bible every day, for you do not know when or where the devil will be working to try to deceive you. Hide God's Word in your heart. It is your weapon ("sword"; Ephesians 6:17).

Just as military leaders realize the importance of understanding their enemies when fighting literal battles and wars, so through Bible reading, the Christian can be victorious over the devil by learning his tactics and methods. The Christian's armor (Ephesians 6:11-18) provides all the protection needed against the attacks of the devil.

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### SCRIPTURE CONTEXT

It is important to understand what is meant when words such as "devil" and "Satan" are used in the Bible. "Devil" means *accuser*, and "Satan" means *adversary*. Sometimes these words were used in the Bible to describe the actions of people. For example, Jesus called Peter *Satan* in Matthew 16:23, and He called Judas a *devil* in John 6:70-71.

Many false doctrines have started from misunderstanding the Scripture context.

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1. What makes people different from all of the rest of God's creation? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Why does God want people to have a choice between good and evil? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. How can temptations work for your good? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. How does the devil work to accuse the Christian? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. How does the devil work as a fowler? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Which do you think is more deceptive—a roaring lion or the snare of the fowler? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. How does the devil work as an angel of light? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. How did Jesus resist the devil? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is the "sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17)? \_\_\_\_\_

10. How can you use the Bible to resist the devil? \_\_\_\_\_

11. What provides the Christian with full protection against the devil? \_\_\_\_\_

12. What does the word "Satan" mean? \_\_\_\_\_

13. What does the word "devil" mean? \_\_\_\_\_



What were the consequences  
of each man's or woman's sin?

Use the Scripture reference to find the answer.

# CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES

Adam & Eve ate the forbidden fruit (Genesis, Chapter 3): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Moses struck the rock and failed to give God the glory (Numbers, Chapter 20): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Achan stole a garment, gold, and silver (Joshua, Chapter 7): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Uzza reached his hand out to steady the Ark of the Covenant (1 Chronicles, Chapter 13):

\_\_\_\_\_

Ananias and Sapphira lied (Acts, Chapter 5): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*"Be not deceived;  
God is not mocked:  
for whatsoever a man soweth,  
that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).*

