

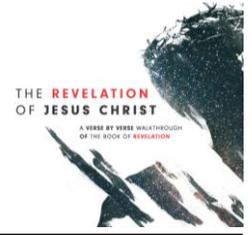
Title: Revelation, Part 20: Who Really is Satan?

Speaker: Charles Stone

Passage: Rev. 12.1-17

Big Idea: We can stand strong against Satan with 4 “I will” choices.

Memory verse of the month: Rev 11: 15b The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.



Today there’s a lot of interest in the paranormal, the spirit world, the occult. It is very popular.

A lot of TV shows and movies are themed around the supernatural. I don’t actually watch these, but I did a quick google search of shows about the supernatural on TV, Netflix, or Amazon.

- Lucifer, A Discover of Witches, Stranger things, Evil, Legacies, American Horror Story, Charmed, and Warrior Nun as well as a number of movies.

Personally, I stick with the more redeeming shows like Mountain Men and Young Sheldon. Redeeming in value. Yea!

So, we live in a world that shows great interest in the other world, the spirit world. Is that good? Is that bad?

And with all this interest, how does this jibe with people’s true beliefs? Is this interest based on belief in the supernatural or just movie and TV preferences? This Gallup poll show some interesting stats.

I want to present these as a quiz.

This percentage of Canadians believe in...

|         |      |     |      |
|---------|------|-----|------|
| God:    | 71%, | 81% | 91%  |
| Heaven: | 58%  | 71% | 89%  |
| Angels: | 46%  | 56% | 66%. |
| Hell:   | 42%  | 55% | 64%  |
| Satan:  | 37%  | 48% | 59%  |

(Answers: God = 71%; Heaven = 58%; Angels = 56%; Hell = 42%; Satan = 37%)

You can see that more people believe in what we’d say are the good elements of the spirit world, God, heaven, and angels, but not so much in the bad elements of the spirit world, hell and the devil. I was especially surprised to see that only 37% of Canadians believe in a literal devil.

The bible, however, unequivocally says satan is real and we need to understand how he works to keep from being defeated by him.

We’re continuing our study today in the book of Revelation and the passage today describes for us a bit about satan. I’m going to touch on this chapter and then go to some other scriptures to give us a more complete understanding of who satan is and how he operates so we can defeat his interference in our lives.

So here’s today’s big idea.

Big Idea: We can stand strong against Satan with 4 “I will” choices.

This bible project animation I’ve used several times gives a very good initial overview of Chapter 12.

Video 0-2.22 <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/revelation-12-22/>

That was a great overview of the chapter. I'm going to touch on a few high points.

## Rev 12

In the first six verses of chapter 12. John sees what he calls signs. The first is a pregnant woman and the next is a red dragon who wants to kill the woman's child.

When this baby boy is born he is swept up into heaven.

The pregnant woman and her child represent the Church and Jesus himself respectively. Then this takes place.

<sup>7</sup> And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. <sup>8</sup> But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven.

So, the dragon loses the battle. We next find who this dragon is.

<sup>9</sup> The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

The dragon is figurative for satan. I'm not saying that satan is figurative. He is very real. He is cast out of heaven and onto earth where he and his fallen angels wage war against God's children, believers in Jesus. The new arena for this battle is earth.

Yet, Jesus defeated the dragon through his death and resurrection. Yet through the ages many believers are persecuted and die for their faith.

<sup>11</sup> They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

Until the end times, this battle rages on, yet we do not need to give in to daily defeat.

<sup>17</sup> Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Since satan can't direct his fury directly against God and Jesus is in heaven he directs it against believers in Jesus, God's children, on earth. The greatest way to hurt a parent is how?.. hurt their children.

So, we are in this spiritual battle on earth between satan and evil and God and good. They are not equals at all. Jesus has defeated satan through his death and resurrection with the final defeat, the final mop up activities, coming in the end times.

In the meantime, we must know how our enemy operates so we know best how to defeat him.

**Big idea: We can stand strong against Satan with 4 "I will" choices.**

We see these in the OT book of Isaiah.

When we think of the devil what image comes into your mind? The image that often comes to mind is this guy a harmless cute little guy with a red suit, pitchfork, horns, black moustache and a tail who whispers in your ear, eat more chocolate, its' ok to run the stop sign (no police are around), no big deal telling a little white lie.

Well, the devil is not a cute red suited funny guy. He is the antithesis of everything good, he hates you, he hates your family, and he hates God



Here's what he wants to do in your life:

- Defeat, discourage and condemn you
- Fray your relationships
- Fill your mind with self-defeating, condemning, and anxious thoughts
- Tempt you to sin, do things that are wrong, distasteful, wicked, and destructive
- Fill you with fear, worry, anxiety, jealousy, rage
- Capitalize on your weaknesses
- Capitalize on your strengths so that you become proud and self-centered rather than God-centered
- Keep those far from Christ in their condition of lostness.
- Confuse and immobilize you from doing God's will. Etc etc etc....

He's not a cute red suited little guy. So, since he is real and bent on resisting us and making our lives miserable, how can we defeat his ploys?

Think of it this way. In times of war spies get sent behind enemy lines to find out the enemy's plans so that the good guys, by discovering their enemies plans, can design counter measures when the enemy attacks. Likewise, we need to get behind enemy lines, so to speak, to prepare our counter-measures against his attacks.

Scripture progressively tells us about satan. No passage tells us everything.

- Satan was first seem embodied as a serpent in the garden of Eden. Then in the book of
- Job and in other places in the OT. In the
- NT Jesus is tempted by satan and later in the
- NT we find more direct teaching.
- And of course see him in Revelation.

Two Old Testament passages, Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 explicitly deal with two kings of ancient cities, Tyre and Babylon and many scholars see insights about satan through those passages.

Ezekiel 28 recalls a time before creation. God created the angels and one was given great stature, next to the Trinity. He was holy and blameless, full of wisdom and beauty. His name was Lucifer. In one of Billy Graham's books, he used Isaiah 14 to explain what he calls the five I Wills of satan that led to a cosmic battle that Revelation spoke about.

*Isaiah 14:12 How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star (translated as Lucifer in the KJV), son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! <sup>13</sup> You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. <sup>14</sup> I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."*

These "I wills" reflect what was in the heart of this angel called Lucifer.

1. ***I will ascend to heaven:***  
He was discontent being subject to God.
2. ***I will raise my throne above the stars of God:***  
He had an unholy ambition to be God.
3. ***I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly:***  
He thirsted for God's power.
4. ***I will ascend above the tops of the clouds.***  
He was jealous for God's glory.
5. ***I will make myself like the Most High.***  
He desired to be worshipped.

Putting all that together, Lucifer wanted to rise above his purpose for being created which was to serve and worship God.

Our purpose is to serve and worship God, yet sin convolutes that purpose:

- We often don't want to serve God.
- We'd rather serve our own ends.
- We want to be in charge.
- And the essence of sin is to rise above our purpose for being created and do life our own way which is rebellion against God.

God would have nothing of this from Lucifer. A cosmic mutiny took place, God kicked him out of heaven and 1/3 of the angels with the same heart were kicked out as well. The bible calls these fallen angels demons.

So Satan is the head of this vast organization of these spirit beings, demons. God judged and sentenced Satan to death row. He was defeated when Jesus rose from the dead. The final penalty will be exacted in the final judgment that we learn from Revelation.

In the meantime, he is causing as much havoc as possible trying to make our lives miserable and cause evil and destruction the world and our lives.

**Satan's goal is to...**

- oppose everything God is for.
- destroy all that is good and holy.
- slander all that is good and slander everything about God.

**Attributes of Satan:**

- He is not omnipotent, omnipresent, or omniscient.
- He is fueled by this unrelenting hatred of God and all that is good.
- He hates to lose something (unbelievers coming to Christ). He wants to keep those without Christ in the dark. He blinds the eyes of unbelievers.

**Additional attributes of demons:**

- They are not superstitions or spirits of the dead, but fallen angels well organized with the same goal as Satan and directed by him.
- They are bodiless, invisible spirits with personality. We know them by the pain they cause. They influence our minds primarily by tempting us to sin.

Let's look at the first example in the bible of Satan's first temptation: the creation story of Adam and Eve.

God made Adam and Eve and placed them in this perfect garden. Things were great. God told them to enjoy everything with one prohibition. Don't eat from this particular tree he called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because if they did they would die.

*Genesis 3.1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made.*

Adam and Eve were just enjoying perfection in the Garden and then boom, temptation. The enemy often does that. He will throw a temptation at you seemingly out of nowhere.

Satan clothed himself as a snake. This should have raised their suspicion. Adam, who was right there all along, had named all the creatures and there was no indication any of them could talk. Here is one talking. He should have suspected something was up to have a creature talk. Satan tempts us the same way. He deceives us when we should suspect something is up.

**Satan tempts us to...**

## 1. Doubt God at his word.

### Satan tempts us to...

#### 1. Doubt God at his word

*He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"*

Eve... hmmm

*He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"*

Did God really say that, is he really on your side? He will try to plant doubt in God and his word...

- *God is a restrictive God.*
- *God is really against fun.*
- *He doesn't want you to have a good time.*
- *He's not really concerned for what is best for you.*

## 2. Distort God's word.

### Satan tempts us to...

#### 2. Distort God's word

*"... you must not eat from any tree in the garden?"*

*"...you must not eat from any tree in the garden?"*

He added 'any,' meaning that with all that good stuff, did God say you can't eat from any of it. In reality he only said don't eat from one of those fruit trees. This distortion was enough to get Eve off track. Satan wants us to distort his word, His will, and His character, and ultimately to distrust Him.

*God's all about rules. God is a god of prohibition.*

You see, satan is smart. He approached Eve from the angle of what was prohibited. We have in us something innate that desires the prohibited. It's the lure of the forbidden. When you see a sign like this, what do you feel like doing? ...touching it! We've seen our grandkids when we say don't touch it to do this (reach to touch it). It's innate in us to want to break the rules.



<sup>2</sup> *The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup> but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"*

Eve is off track, and she even distorts God's word when she says, 'you must not touch it.' He never said don't touch it. Just don't eat it.

She's beginning to waver.<sup>4</sup> *"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman.*

## 3. Deny God's word.

### Satan tempts us to...

#### 3. Deny God's word

God did say they would die if they ate it, meaning that the eventual effects of sin leads to physical and spiritual death. Satan is denying God that said it. He's implying, *you are the master of your own destiny, not god.*

## 4. Accuse God of unworthy motives.

### Satan tempts us to...

#### 4. Accuse God of unworthy motives

<sup>5</sup> *"God knows that your eyes will be opened when you eat it. You will become just like God, knowing everything, both good and evil."*

<sup>5</sup> *"God knows that your eyes will be opened when you eat it. You will become just like God, knowing everything, both good and evil."*

*He's just keeping you from your full potential. God's just*

- *holding you back. He's a*
- *restrictive God, a*
- *killjoy.*
- *Do you really think He's for you?*

This was an outright lie and that's what satan does. He presents to us lies he wants us to believe for he is called the father of lies.

She was enticed to believe this illusive hope of being like God, being the master of her own fate, experiencing the elusive thing God was keeping to himself. A longing for this arose in her heart.

*<sup>6</sup> When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom,*

## 5. Rationalize

- That looks good.
- If something looks good, it must taste good.
- So, it must be good.
- Therefore, it must be good for me.

What God said was taboo, bad, would bring death, was wrong... she rationalized to the degree that now this tree would bring the opposite...something good, something she longed for, something that would benefit her.

We can rationalize and do the craziest things that don't make sense.

Rationalizing leads to irrationality. The one thing that God said no to, has now become the bestest thing.

*she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.*

They experienced a loss of innocence. Forever the human race was cursed because of their sin. But thankfully Jesus came to be a curse on the cross for us so that we might have forgiveness and a restored relationship with God

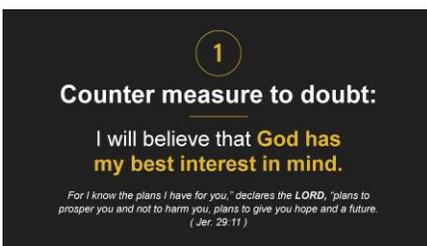
Satan tempts us through...

1. Doubt
2. Distortion
3. Denial
4. Accusation
5. Rationalization

Let's go back to the big idea and see some counter-measures we can use against satan.

## Big Idea: 4 "I will" choices help us stand strong against satan.

### 1. Counter measure to doubt:



**1**

**Counter measure to doubt:**

I will believe that **God has my best interest in mind.**

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jer. 29:11)

*I will believe that God has my best interest in mind.*

God's nature and bent and inclination is for our benefit, our good, our blessing. You who are parents, you love your kids and you want the best for them. We want the best for them which means that sometimes we don't give them what they want. My son Josh at age 5 wanted a car. He didn't get a car. God loves you and has your best interest in mind.

*Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

The word prosper is the word shalom (wholeness, completeness)

## 2. Counter measure to distortion

2  
Counter measure to distortion:  
I will spend time in God's word.

*I will spend time in God's Word*

I mean that you personally engage in reading and listening to God's Word taught so you that you know when you are tempted to distorting it. I went into depth two weeks ago.

## 3. Counter measure to denial

3  
Counter measure to denial:  
I will position my heart to say, "Yes, Lord."

*I will position my heart to say, "Yes, Lord."*

Sherryl taught me an attitude that has really helped me. It is, yes Lord, before I know what he wants. It is an attitude, a disposition to say yes to God before I know what he asks of me or directs me to do.

## 4. Counter measure to accusation: See number 1

4  
Counter measure to accusation:  
See number 1

## 5. Counter measure to rationalization:

5  
Counter measure to rationalization:  
I will consider the consequences of sin.

*I will consider the consequences of sin.*

If I gave in, what would happen? personal feelings of guilt, relationships hurt, hurt my body, harm my reputation, most importantly I would put a wedge between me and God.

Satan disguises sin to make it look enticing (angel of light). If sin didn't look pleasing and didn't initially feel so good, we wouldn't do it.

When you feel tempted, think about the consequences if you gave in...to you, your family, your friends, and to how it would make Jesus look if you give in to temptation.

# The 4 "I wills..."

1. I will believe that God has my **best interest in mind.**
2. I will spend **time in God's Word.**
3. I will position my heart to say, "**Yes, Lord.**"
4. I will consider the **consequences of sin.**

Here are a few extras, practical add-ons to how we can support these counter measures.

Practical steps that help us deal with the devil.

### **1. Don't attribute every problem to a demon.**

This can happen when we get preoccupied with satan and attribute every bad thing in our lives to satan. A guy gets lung cancer and blames satan for it. He is a chain smoker and that's why he got cancer. Don't be paranoid yet don't be ignorant.

### **2. Don't dabble in the occult.**

When God promised the Israelites their land, he said don't take on the practices of the pagan cultures. That was a command to them, but for a Christian the expectations are no less.

*Deuteronomy 18:10 .... And do not let your people practice fortune-telling or sorcery, or allow them to interpret omens, or engage in witchcraft, <sup>11</sup> or cast spells, or function as mediums or psychics, or call forth the spirits of the dead. <sup>12</sup> Anyone who does these things is an object of horror and disgust to the LORD. NLT*

If you are dabbling with the occult even though it may seem innocent (ouiji boards, horoscope, occultic video games), you are playing with fire. I encourage you to get rid of occult objects, books, and games in your home.

If you are into porn, that is a huge way the enemy will dull your spiritual sensitivity and gain entry into your life. Get help. There are good websites online that provide help. Get an accountability partner.

*Ephesians 4:27 ... do not give the devil a foothold.*

### **3. Do practice the "I wills."**

1. *I will* believe that God has my best interest in mind.
2. *I will* spend time in God's Word.
3. *I will* position my heart to say, "Yes, Lord."
4. *I will* consider the consequences of sin.

### **4. Do place Christian images in your home**

I don't mean treat them as objects that God inhabits or things we worship. But Christian symbols, and pictures and scriptures on your walls will mark your home as a place that visibly says God is welcome here. The enemy is not.

What would be your take-away today?

This week's project:

Pick one of these that resonated the most and share with those you have lunch with why.

1. Don't see a demon behind every problem.
2. Don't dabble in the occult.
3. Do practice the "I wills."
4. Do place Christian images in your home