

## **WHO IS THE DEVIL?**

**Mark 8:37-47**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. People are fascinated with the devil. Just consider all the TV shows and movies that are about the devil or demons. “The Phantom of the Opera” is about Erik Destler who sells his soul to the Devil so that the world would love his music. “The Devil’s Advocate” is about the devil’s son played by Keanu Reeves. In the movie “Constantine” the devil is summoned to earth fight against a rogue demon named Mammon. The popular TV show “Lucifer,” in which the devil decides to live on earth in Los Angeles and assist the LAPD. Then there’s the popular video game “Diablo” in which you go around killing the demons who are led by Diablo, the devil. Countless songs have been written about the devil, such as Charlie Daniel’s “The Devil Went Down to Georgia.”
2. But most people do not actually know anything about the real devil, and the impact he has on our lives and on the world around us. And if you don’t know about the devil, then you can’t defend yourself against him.
3. The Bible teaches that the devil is the supreme enemy of God and mankind. Most theologians agree that he was an angel but was cast out of heaven after leading a third of the angels to rebel against God. He goes by many names: Lucifer, devil, the tempter, Satan, Beelzebul (Lord of the flies); the enemy; prince of demons; Apollyon (destroyer); ruler of this world; the evil one; the god of this world; Belial (worthless); prince of the power of the air; the adversary; the angel of the abyss; the dragon; the ancient serpent; the accuser.
4. Today we’re going to learn four facts about the devil from Jesus himself, and we’ll talk about how we can resist him.

### **II. TEXT: John 8:37-47**

*37 I know you are descendants of Abraham, but you are trying to kill me because my word has no place among you. 38 I speak what I have seen in the presence of the Father; so then, you do what you have heard from your father.”*

- The Jews were descendants of Abraham, but Jesus argued that they were not acting like the true children of Abraham because they were trying to kill Him. Jesus said they were acting like the devil was their father.

*39 “Our father is Abraham,” they replied.*

*“If you were Abraham’s children,” Jesus told them, “you would do what Abraham did. 40 But now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. 41 You’re doing what your father does.”*

- The Jews argued that they are the children of Abraham. They believed that they were going to heaven just because they were the physical descendants of Abraham.

But Jesus told them that Abraham wasn't their father, the devil was. Why? Because they weren't behaving like Abraham; they were behaving like the devil.

- Abraham believed God. **Genesis 15:6** "Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness." The Jews did not believe in Jesus.
- Abraham welcomed God's messengers. In Genesis 18 three angels visited Abraham, and he took them in, served them, and believed their message. The Jews rejected God's messenger – Jesus Christ.

*"We weren't born of sexual immorality," they said. "We have one Father—God."*

*42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, because I came from God and I am here. For I didn't come on my own, but he sent me. 43 Why don't you understand what I say? Because you cannot listen to my word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. 46 Who among you can convict me of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? 47 The one who is from God listens to God's words. This is why you don't listen, because you are not from God."*

- Now the Jews claimed that God was their father. The Old Testament says this in multiple places. They were arguing that they were indeed God's people. But Jesus argued that just because you are a Jew doesn't mean that God is your father. God is only your father if you...
  - Love Jesus (v. 42).
  - Listen and believe God's words (v. 47).
- Just because your parents are Christians doesn't mean you are a Christian. And just because you call yourself a Christian and go to church does not mean you are a Christian. Going to Raising Canes doesn't make you a chicken tender. The true test is your actions. Do your actions prove that you are a child of God? Do you love Jesus and listen to and believe God's word? Don't just assume that you are a Christian because your parents are Christians and you go to church. You must personally accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.
- In this passage we can learn four facts about the devil.

### III. 4 FACTS ABOUT THE DEVIL

#### 1. He is the father of unbelievers.

- i. Four times in this passage Jesus said that their father was the devil.
- ii. **John 8:38** "I speak what I have seen in the presence of the Father; so then, you do what you have heard from your father."
- iii. His character can be seen through them. Just as a child looks and acts like his father, we look and act like our spiritual father. Believers reflect the character of God, and unbelievers reflect the character of Satan.

- iv. Unbelievers are not children of God. They are created by God; they are made in the image of God; they are loved by God; they deserve our love and respect; but they are not God's children. We only become God's children through a relationship with Jesus Christ.
- v. **John 1:12** "But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name"
- vi. The best test of salvation is character. If you are God's child, then you will act like God. If you are the devil's child, then you will act like the devil. The devil believes in Jesus. Does that mean he is a Christian? No. Look at his character. A true Christian obeys and imitates Jesus Christ.
- vii. **1 John 2:3** "This is how we know that we know him: if we keep his commands."
- viii. **1 John 3:8** "The one who commits sin is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning."
- ix. **1 John 3:10** "This is how God's children and the devil's children become obvious. Whoever does not do what is right is not of God, especially the one who does not love his brother or sister."
- x. Nobody is perfect. It's about direction, not perfection. It is about love and desire. Do you love God and desire to please Him with every area of your life? It is about intention. It is about growth. It is about how you feel after you mess up.
- xi. So, who is your father? Are you a child of God or a child of the devil?

**2. He is the leader of unbelievers.**

- i. Unbelievers want to carry out his desires.
- ii. **John 8:44** "You are of your father the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires."
- iii. What does it mean that unbelievers want to carry out the devil's desires?
  - 1. They want to carry out his desires because their hearts are sinful. **Genesis 6:5-6** "5 When the Lord saw that human wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time, 6 the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and he was deeply grieved."
  - 2. They also want to carry out his desires because the devil controls them.
    - a. **1 John 5:19** "We know that we are of God, and the whole world is under the sway of the evil one."
- iv. What can the devil do to unbelievers?
  - 1. He can work through them to hurt others.
    - a. Job. In the book of Job, God allowed the devil to test Job. So, the devil entered into the Sabaeans and caused them to steal job's oxen and donkeys, and then kill his servants (Job 1:13-

- 15). He entered the Chaldeans and caused them to steal Job's camels and kill his servants (Job 1:17).
- b. Judas Iscariot. It was Satan who entered Judas and caused him to betray Jesus (Jn 13:27).
  - c. Seven Sons of Sceva. They were not Christians, but they had heard about the apostles performing exorcisms in the name of Jesus. **Acts 19:16** "Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them, overpowered them all, and prevailed against them, so that they ran out of that house naked and wounded."
  - d. What is the cause of much of the violence in the world? It is the devil entering people and leading them to do horrible things.
2. The devil also causes unbelievers to hurt themselves:
    - a. Mark 5:5 describes a demon possessed man who would cut himself with sharp stones.
    - b. What causes people to cut themselves, to commit suicide, and to inflict harm on themselves? The devil.
  3. The devil can oppress and torment unbelievers.
    - a. Often in the story of Jesus He encountered people who were possessed and controlled by demons. Luke 8:26-29 describes a demon-possessed man who lived in a graveyard; he cried out day and night; and he didn't wear any clothes. If you are an unbeliever then the devil can do this to you.
    - b. In Luke 13 a demon caused a woman to be disabled, bent over, and unable to straighten up for 18 years.
    - c. He caused people to be mute (Mt 9:32), blind (Mt 12:22), deaf (Mk 9:25), epileptic (Mk 9:18), seizures and convulsions (Mk 9:18).
    - d. Mark 9 describes a boy who was possessed by a demon. The demon would throw him onto the ground, foam at the mouth, grind his teeth, become rigid, and roll around on the ground. On multiple occasions the demon would throw the boy into the fire or the water to kill him.
    - e. What is the cause of the suffering in the world today? The devil.
  4. The devil blinds unbelievers from seeing the truth of the gospel:
    - a. **2 Corinthians 4:4** "In their case, the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

- v. If you are an unbeliever, the devil is working in and around and through you to carry out his wicked desires.
- vi. This is why it is so important to become a Christian. When you become a Christian, Jesus delivers you from the power and control of the devil.
- vii. **Colossians 1:13** “13 He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.”

### 3. He is a murderer.

- i. **John 8:44** “... He was a murderer from the beginning.”
- ii. Death came into the world because of the devil.
  1. **Romans 5:12** “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned.”
  2. The devil tempted Adam and Eve to sin, and when they did, they died spiritually and physically, and brought spiritual and physical death to every human being after them.
  3. It was the devil who led Judas to betray Christ to his death.
- iii. The devil can do more harm to Christians most realize. Consider the story of Job. Job was a man of God. But listen to what the devil did to Job. The devil killed all ten of his children, all of his servants but four, and either killed or stole all of his livestock. Gave job painful boils from head to toe; severe itching/irritation; great grief; loss of appetite; agonizing discomfort; insomnia; worm and dust infested flesh; continual oozing of boils; hallucinations; decaying skin; shriveled up; severe halitosis (bad breath); relentless pain; skin turned black; raging fever; dramatic weight loss. It got so back that he wished he had never been born.
- iv. Can the devil do all of this to you? Absolutely. The devil cannot possess the Christian, but he can oppress the Christian.
- v. In the Bible Satan is compared to a roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8), a serpent (Rev 12:9, and a fiery red dragon (Rev 12:2-12).
- vi. The name “Satan” means adversary. He is the adversary and opponent of God’s people.
- vii. The Bible also calls him the destroyer (Rev 9:11).
- viii. He wants to kill Christians. He wants to kill the cause of Christ. He is the source of persecution against the church (1 Pt 5:8-9).
- ix. In fact, the devil is working to oppress you right now. He is trying to harm you right now. **Ephesians 6:11** “Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil.”
- x. But there is some good news. Remember these three things.
  1. The devil can only do what God allows him to do. He is not more powerful than God. In the story of Job, Job had to ask God for permission before he inflicted any harm, and God placed limits on

him. First, God told him that he could do whatever he wanted to Job, but not to touch Job himself. Then God told him that he could do whatever he wanted to job short of taking his life.

2. God will use your suffering for your good (Rm 8:28). God used the martyrdom of Stephen to turn the first Christians into missionaries. God used the suffering of Joseph to elevate him from slave to Prime Minister of Egypt. God used the suffering of Paul to protect him from becoming prideful.
3. There is a way to battle Satan. To fight against him. We are not helpless. Our hands are not tied. **2 Peter 5:8-9** “8 Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. 9 Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world.”

#### **4. He is a liar.**

- i. **John 8:44** “... He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of lies.”
- ii. The name “Devil” means slanderer. He is a liar.
- iii. This is the devil’s greatest threat to believers. He cannot possess you or control you, but he can lie to you and deceive you. And if he deceives you, then he can lead you into sinful and foolish behaviors.
- iv. The devil persuaded Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit by lying to them. He said, “You won’t die. You’ll be like God.”
- v. The text says he is the “father of lies.” He creates the lies that destroy the world – false religions such as Mormonism, the Watchtower, Scientology, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam were all invented by the devil. The destructive ideologies such as socialism, communism, racism, Darwinian evolution, materialism, atheism, critical race theory, etc. were all invented by the devil.
- vi. The Bible calls the devil the “Tempter” because he tempts us to sin (Mt 4:3). He tempts us to sin by lying to us. He says, “It won’t kill you; nobody will know; you won’t regret it; nobody will get hurt; it’s no big deal; God doesn’t care; God won’t even notice.”

#### **IV. RESISTING THE DEVIL**

1. So, let’s talk about how to resist the devil.
2. First, let’s consider our goals in fighting the devil.
  - i. To prevent him from harming us physically. He wants to steal, kill, and destroy, just as he did with Job. We want to limit his destruction.
  - ii. To prevent him from deceiving us. To prevent the devil from leading us into error; into false teaching.

- iii. To prevent the devil from leading us into sin. If God allows the devil to harm us, our goal is to stay faithful to God through the storm; to glorify God in the battle.
  - iv. To prevent him from hindering God's work.
- 3. How can we fight against him? The best place to look is in **Ephesians 6:11-18**

"11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens. 13 For this reason take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. 14 Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest, 15 and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace. 16 In every situation take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit—which is the word of God. 18 Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints."
- 4. We need to put on the full armor of God. God has given us seven pieces spiritual armor.
  - i. Truth: Learn the Scriptures so that the devil cannot deceive you.
  - ii. Righteousness: Pursue righteous living. Do not compromise. Small sins open the door to big sins.
  - iii. Gospel: Actively share the gospel. The devil wants us to get discouraged and distracted from serving God.
  - iv. Faith: Trust in God's word. It is not enough to know God's word; you need to believe that it is true. Believe that God loves you. Believe that sin will hurt you. Believe that the obedient life is the best life.
  - v. Salvation: Make sure you are saved. If you are saved, the devil cannot possess or control you. His first goal is to keep people from turning to Christ.
  - vi. The sword of the Spirit (the word of God): Stay in God's word. We are very forgetful people. Constantly be reading, studying, and listening to God's word. Keep it always before you. Meditate on it day and night (Ps 1:2).
  - vii. Prayer: Pray constantly. Pray for healing. Pray for direction. Pray for wisdom. Pray for victory. Pray for relief. Pray for protection. Pray for deliverance. Jesus said to pray like this: "And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one (Mt 6:13)."

## V. CONCLUSION

1. The story of Job reveals some surprising insights about the devil's abilities. Not only did he possess people and lead them to do violence. Not only did he inflict Job with terribly illnesses. But at one point he caused fire to fall from heaven to destroy all of Job's sheep and hired shepherds. I told you that the devil killed all ten of Job's

children, but I didn't tell you how. The devil caused a powerful wind, possibly a tornado, to destroy the house where they were having a party together. The house collapsed and kill them. So, think about the devil's power. He can cause fire to fall from heaven and destroy; he can even control the weather, like tornadoes, and use it to do harm. Make no mistake. The devil is powerful, and he is after you.

2. But we do not have to be afraid. **1 John 4:4** "... the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." Through Christ, we can be victorious.