

# What is Satan Up To Right Now? Mark 1:12-13

What is Satan up to right now? Do you know? We can't see him, hear him, track him—but we do know exactly what he is up to with his vast army, because God's Word has told us!

Paul concludes his mighty epistle to the Ephesians with some sobering words, often unheeded by many believers to their own harm. In Ephesians 6, Paul COMMANDS (by way of the Greek imperative) the constant guardedness and readiness of a combat soldier, for every born-again believer.

Five times in seven verses Paul says "I COMMAND you to do this NOW!" Turn there with me and let God speak through His Apostle Paul—to each of our hearts tonight.

As we stand and read these verses, the question for each of us this evening is clear, "Are you ready for the battle?"

*Ephesians 6:10-18 Finally, my brethren, **be strong** [Pres. Pass. Impv] in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 **Put on** [Aor. Mid. Impv.] the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore **take up** [Aor. Act. Impv.] the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 **Stand** [Aor. Act. Impv.] therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And **take** [Aor. Mid. Impv.] the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—*

What is Satan up to right now? Do you know? We can't see him, hear him, track him—but we do know exactly what he is up to with his vast army, because God's Word has told us!

We saw this morning that God fashioned for Himself His own servants—the angels. In this angelic host of the Lord God in heaven, above the archangels and above the

seraphim and above the cherubim, there was one that God chose to be the crown prince of them all.

His name was Lucifer, the star of the morning, the leader of the host of heaven, the guardian of the throne of God. Into Lucifer's hands was committed all that the Lord God had made and all of the angels that He had created. He was beautiful. He was perfect. And in his beauty, and in his perfection, and in his pride he said that he would be like the Most High God<sup>1</sup>

Where did Satan come from?

The Bible does not explain how Lucifer could fall into sin, as a perfect being in a perfect environment—God's Word just declares that he did.

But Ezekiel gives us the description of what took place in Lucifer's heart (Ezekiel 28:17) when he records "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor." Lucifer became enamored with his beauty instead of God's, his splendor not God's, and that produced in him the sin of pride, which led to his rebellion.

The Old Testament Hebrew prophet Isaiah describes even more clearly how completely pride drove Satan's downfall. Look with me at Isaiah 14:12-15.

*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart,*

- *I WILL ASCEND (**that is self-assertion**) into heaven,*
- *I WILL EXALT (**that is self-promotion**) my throne above the stars of God:*
- *I WILL SIT (**that is self-centeredness**) also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:*
- *I WILL ASCEND (**that is self-exaltation**) above the heights of the clouds;*
- *I WILL BE LIKE (**that is self-deception**) the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.*

*How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."*

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<sup>1</sup> Paraphrased from a sermon by W.A. Criswell.

Beware of any self-assertion, self-promotion, self-centeredness, self-exaltation, and self-deception—for each of these acts leads to pride, pride makes us act independent of God and that is always sin, and sin always has horrible consequences as Lucifer, now Satan's life so clearly testifies.

## God Reveals Satan's Fall

The most glaring portrait of sin is Satan, a creature rebelling against creator. The most glaring portrait of pride is Lucifer, made glorious and powerful by God only to try take the credit for himself.

God also describes Satan's fall in both Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14. By comparing many Scriptures with these two passages we can draw the following observations:

- Satan's extraordinarily high rank led to his proud thoughts recorded in the five "I will's" (Isaiah 14:13-14).
- Satan then fell from his position of being the "anointed cherub who covers" (Ezekiel 28:14a), the highest ranking angelic being, concerned particularly with the glory of God.
- Satan was cast out from being "on the holy mountain of God," and "walked in the midst of the stones of fire" (Ezekiel 28:14b), dwelling in the immediate presence of God.
- Satan fell into sin and God says that "unrighteousness was found in you" (Ezekiel 28:15).
- Satan fell sometime after the sixth day of creation of man in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1:31).
- Satan was also cast from his station among the other holy ones who serve in God's Presence because of his sin (Ezekiel 28:16).
- Satan's downfall was his pride; his heart was lifted up because of his beauty, and his wisdom became corrupt (Ezekiel 28:17).
- It was then that Lucifer became the **Serpent** of old; **Satan**, the adversary; **Apollyon**, the destroyer; the **Devil**, the slanderer; the **Roaring Lion** stalking believers; and the **Accuser** of the saints (I Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:9-11).
- Satan is still allowed to come before God at various times to accuse believers before the Presence of God (Job 1:6; Zechariah 3:1; Rev. 12:10).

## God has Given Satan's Resume

- **Satan is the author of sin.**

He introduced sin into the universe: *Ezekiel 28:15 You [were] perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you. (NKJV)*

He incited Adam and Eve to follow his rebellion against God: *Genesis 3:13 And the LORD God said to the woman, "What [is] this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."* (NKJV)

"Sin was not a creation but an origination. It came into existence by the aid of that which had prior existence, namely, personality and the power of free choice. God created this being not as the devil, but as a holy angel, who originated sin through disobedience and transformed himself into the wicked Devil which he is today"<sup>2</sup>.

- **Satan is the author of suffering.**

The New Testament ties suffering and many cases of sickness and disease directly to the Devil: Acts 10:38 *"how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. (NKJV); Luke 13:16 "So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound -- think of it -- for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" (NKJV)*

"In the final analysis Satan is the ultimate source of all suffering, because he is the ultimate source of all sin, its primal cause. He is also immediately responsible for many individual cases of sickness and disease; of which examples are furnished us in the New Testament"<sup>3</sup>.

- **Satan is the author of temptation.**

*1 Thessalonians 3:5 For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain. (NKJV)*

*Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (NKJV)*

"Satan incites men to sin. He so arranges times and controls events and circumstances as to make the greatest possible appeal to the sinful tendencies of man. He is the tempter"<sup>4</sup>.

- **Satan tries to get people trapped in sin.**

*2 Timothy 2:26 and [that] they may come to their senses [and escape] the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to [do] his will. (NKJV)*

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<sup>2</sup> Emery H. Bancroft, *Elemental Theology: Doctrinal and Conservative*, Hayward, California: J. F. May Press, 1948, p.263.

<sup>3</sup> Emery H. Bancroft, *Elemental Theology: Doctrinal and Conservative*, Hayward, California: J. F. May Press, 1948, p.263.

<sup>4</sup> Emery H. Bancroft, *Elemental Theology: Doctrinal and Conservative*, Hayward, California: J. F. May Press, 1948, p.264.

*1 Timothy 3:7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. (NKJV)*

- **Satan is the author of death.**

*Hebrews 2:14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, (NKJV)*

Jesus has already triumphed over death at the cross as Paul says in *Colossians 2:15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. (NKJV)* but Satan seems to have the right to use the mighty weapon of death, under special permission.

## **God Says Satan is Dangerous**

- **Satan steals God's Word from hearts and minds.**

Mark 4:15 "And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. (NKJV)

- **Satan can invade minds.**

Of the lost in John 13:2 And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's [son,] to betray Him, (NKJV)

Of the disobedient in Acts 5:3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back [part] of the price of the land for yourself? (NKJV).

And of the unguarded in Ephesians 4:27 nor give place to the devil. (NKJV).

"Satan seems to have the power of mental suggestion, which in the individual becomes auto-suggestion, and which unless halted and hindered by the Word and Spirit of God will also in him be expressed by word and action"<sup>5</sup>.

- **Satan (as well as demons) can enter the body of the unsaved.**

John 13:27 Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." (NKJV);

- **Satan blinds unbelieving minds.**

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<sup>5</sup> Emery H. Bancroft, *Elemental Theology: Doctrinal and Conservative*, Hayward, California: J. F. May Press, 1948, p.264.

2 Corinthians 4:4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. (NKJV).

“Unbelief of the truth seems to be the same as a special invitation to Satan to bring in the darkness of error and falsehood. He blinds the minds of unbelieving men to prevent them from receiving the light of the gospel”<sup>6</sup>.

- **Satan empowers wickedness in lost people.**

*2 Corinthians 11:13-15 For such [are] false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore [it is] no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works. (NKJV)*

## **God Says Satan is Powerful**

- **Satan resists the ministry of God’s servants.**

Zechariah 3:1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. (NKJV)

- **Satan seeks to overthrow the faith of God’s servants.**

Luke 22:31 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift [you] as wheat. (NKJV)

- **Satan can buffet believers.**

*2 Corinthians 12:7-9 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (NKJV)*

Satan buffets, resists and hinders God’s servants in every possible way, but God’s grace is sufficient to give them the victory.

- **Satan hinders the ministry plans of God’s greatest servants.**

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<sup>6</sup> Emery H. Bancroft, *Elemental Theology: Doctrinal and Conservative*, Hayward, California: J. F. May Press, 1948, p.264.

*1 Thessalonians 2:18 Therefore we wanted to come to you -- even I, Paul, time and again -- but Satan hindered us. (NKJV)*

- **Satan attacks and can overcome believers at times.**

*2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 The coming of the [lawless one] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (NKJV)*

*Revelation 13:7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. (NKJV)*

- **Satan accuses believers constantly.**

*Revelation 12:9-10 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. (NKJV)*

## **God Says Satan Can Be Resisted**

- ***We must Keep Disciplined***

*Ephesians 4:27 nor give place to the devil. (NKJV)*

*Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (NKJV)*

- ***We must Use our Armor***

*Ephesians 6:11-18 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual [hosts] of wickedness in the heavenly [places.] 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith*

*with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints -- (NKJV)*

- **We must Claim God's Promises**

*Hebrews 2:14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, (NKJV)*

*1 John 3:8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. (NKJV)*

- **We must Resist Satan by Faith**

*James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (KJV);*

*1 Peter 5:9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.*

*1 John 5:18-19 We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. 19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. (NKJV)*

- **We must Keep alert**

*1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

*2 Corinthians 2:11 lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices. (NKJV)*

## **God Says Satan is Defeated**

- **Satan is Forever Cursed**

*Genesis 3:14-15 So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You [are] cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. 15 And*



I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." (NKJV)

- ***Satan is Limited***

Job 1:12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD. (KJV); Job 2:4-7 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. 5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. 6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. 7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. (KJV)

- ***Satan is Conquered***

Colossians 2:15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. (NKJV)

- ***Satan will be Cast out***

Revelation 12:9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (NKJV)

- ***Satan will be Confined***

Revelation 20:1-3 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is [the] Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. (NKJV)

- ***Satan will be Released***

Revelation 20:3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. (NKJV)

- ***Satan will be Cast into the Lake of Fire***

Revelation 20:10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet [are.] And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (NKJV)

The career[8] of Satan since his rebellion has been downward, ever downward. The point of his descent began with the point of his attempted ascent. When he said "I Will Ascend," then he began to descend. When he began to exalt himself God began to abase him. That abasement will continue until he has been stripped of the last vestige of authority and power, and cast in abject impotence as the arch-criminal of the universe into the eternal burnings. D. S. Satan is under a perpetual curse; his conquest was secured at the cross; he is destined to be cast out of the heavenlies, confined to the abyss and finally consigned to the lake of fire.

## **Our Four Sources of Triumphant Power in Christ**

- **The Cross of Christ**

*Colossians 2:15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. (KJV)*

*Hebrews 2:14-15 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (KJV)*

- **The Blood of Christ**

*Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (KJV)*

- **The Name of Christ**

*Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

*2 Corinthians 2:14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.*

- **The Word of Christ**

*Matthew 4:1-11 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. 3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' " 5 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.' " 7 Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.' " 8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.' " 11 Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.*

*Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: (KJV)*