

Can Satan Control Us?
Understanding the Extent of Satan's Power
07/17/2019 Wednesday PM

Introduction

- It is very important to understand who our adversary the Devil is, and what he is able to do.
- We must be careful not to attribute to him abilities and honors that belong to God and God alone.
- Tonight we are going to look at 13 limitations that Scripture states that Satan has.

1. Not Opposite Of God

- Though he would like people to think so, he is not the opposite of God.
- God is all-powerful, everywhere present, and all-knowing. Satan is none of these.
- He does not have unlimited power, he cannot be everywhere at once, and he does not know everything.
- He is a created, limited being. He depends upon God for his existence.

2. Approaches As A Subordinate

- When Satan approached God, he did not come as an equal, but rather as a subordinate.
- **Job 1:6** says, "One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them."

3. Cannot Tempt Without God's Permission

- Satan was unable to tempt Jesus without the permission of the Holy Spirit.
- **Matthew 4:1** says, "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil."
- He also could not tempt Job without God's permission like in **Job 1:12**, "The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD."

4. Cannot Influence Nature Without God's Permission

- When it came to influencing nature, Satan was not able to do it without God's permission.
- **Job 1:12, 16, and 19** says, "¹²The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD... ¹⁶While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"... ¹⁹when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

5. Cannot Physically Harm Without God's Permission

- When Satan wanted to physically harm Job, he had to first ask God's permission.
- **Job 2:2-6** says, "²And the LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it." ³Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason." ⁴"Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life. ⁵But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face." ⁶The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life."

6. Kill Without God's Permission

- Satan cannot take a human life without first getting God's permission.
- **Job 2:6** says, "The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.""
- The Bible does say that Satan has the power of death.
- **Hebrews 2:14** says, Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death - that is, the devil"
- However this does not mean that he has the ultimate authority to cause people to die, only God has that authority.

7. Cannot Touch At All Without God's Permission

- Satan cannot even touch a believer without the permission of God. Satan complained to the Lord about this.
- In **Job 1:10** Satan complained, "'Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land.'"
- God has placed a fence around each believer protecting them from Satan.
- **1 John 5:18** says, "We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him."

8. Cannot Force Believers To Do Anything

- Satan has no power unless it be granted him by God. Those who have trusted in Jesus Christ have been freed from the authority of the Devil.
- God said in **Acts 26:18**, “to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”
- Satan, therefore has no authority over the believer.

9. Cannot Read Our Thoughts

- Because he is a created being, Satan cannot read our thoughts. He is not all-knowing like the LORD. It is God alone that knows everything - including our thoughts.
- **Isaiah 40:28**, “Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.”
- **1 Kings 8:39**, “then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with each man according to all he does, since you know his heart (for you alone know the hearts of all men),”
- **Psalms 94:11**, “The LORD knows the thoughts of man; he knows that they are futile.”
- Unlike God, Satan does not have the power to read the mind of man from an “internal” standpoint.

10. Does Not Know The Future

- Only God knows what is going to occur in the future.
- **Isaiah 46:9-10**, “Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. ¹⁰I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.”
- Neither Satan, angels, or demons know what will happen next.

11. Does Not Know What We Dreamed

- Only someone speaking through the power of God can know what people dream.
- **Daniel 2:27-28**, “²⁷Daniel replied, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, ²⁸but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these:”
- Satan has no such power.

12. He Is A Coward

- In spite of all his bluster and rage, he is a coward. The Bible says in **James 4:7**, “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”
- Who should be left running away?

13. Believers Are Victorious

- Scripture says that believers are ultimately victorious.
- **2 Corinthians 2:14**, “But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him.”

Conclusion

- Without God's permission, Satan is not able to do anything. He cannot create or search the human heart. Therefore the conflict between God and Satan is not really a struggle between two great equal and opposing powers with the outcome still in doubt. All power and authority belongs to God and Him alone.
- These limitations are predominantly focused on Satan's limitations when it comes to a believer in Christ.
- There is certainly evidence of demonic possession in the Bible for unbelievers. (**Matthew 9:32-33; 12:22; 17:18; Mark 5:1-20; 7:26-30; Luke 4:33-36; Luke 22:3; Acts 16:16-18.**)
- However, demonic possession was rare in the Bible and is certainly rare today.
- What we mostly see today is demonic oppression when Satan and his demons are working negatively against believers and unbelievers externally.
- The point to take away from this study tonight is that Satan is not some “evil opposite of God.” He is much less than that.
- With that in mind however, he certainly does have an immense amount of reign in our world today and we must be careful to also not underestimate what he can do.
- At the end of the day, if you are a born-again believer, Satan has absolutely no power of you that you do not give him.