

UNMASKING SATAN'S LIES

By Barry L. Davis

Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the creatures the LORD God had made. "Really?" he asked the woman. "Did God really say you must not eat any of the fruit in the garden?" "Of course we may eat it," the woman told him. "It's only the fruit from the tree at the center of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God says we must not eat it or even touch it, or we will die." "You won't die!" the serpent hissed. "God knows that your eyes will be opened when you eat it. You will become just like God, knowing everything, both good and evil." The woman was convinced. The fruit looked so fresh and delicious, and it would make her so wise! So she ate some of the fruit. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. Then he ate it, too. At that moment, their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they strung fig leaves together around their hips to cover themselves. Toward evening they heard the LORD God walking about in the garden, so they hid themselves among the trees. The LORD God called to Adam, "Where are you?" He replied, "I heard you, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked." "Who told you that you were naked?" the LORD God asked. "Have you eaten the fruit I commanded you not to eat?" "Yes," Adam admitted, "but it was the woman you gave me who brought me the fruit, and I ate it." Then the LORD God asked the woman, "How could you do such a thing?" "The serpent tricked me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."— Genesis 3:1-13 (NLT)

In battle, a soldier seeks to understand his enemy. If you know what your enemy is like, and what he is apt to do, you can develop a battle plan to defeat him. We as Christians are at war with Satan, but we will never be victorious until we understand the enemy and learn to depend upon our Savior. If we are going to overcome we must adopt a spiritual warfare worldview so that we will have the tools necessary to defeat our enemy.

Jesus described Satan this way:

"(Satan) was a murderer from the beginning and has always hated the truth. There is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies." (John 8:44)

Jesus warns us that when Satan lies, it is to be expected because it is completely consistent with his character – in other words, lying comes quite naturally to Satan. And not only is he a liar, he is also a murderer. Christians should understand this fact – the devil wants to bring death to you. He wants to murder your purity, he wants to kill your happiness, he wants to destroy your spiritual life, and he wants nothing more than your death. If you are a Christian, your death takes your influence out of this world. If you are not a Christian, your death delivers you into his evil hands. He will tell any lie, and make up any accusation, in order to kill you.

You need to know your enemy. If you pull the veil of darkness away from Satan's lies, you will see his four spiritual flaws. They are clever lies which sound almost like the

truth. He masquerades as an angel of light, telling lies about God, trying to get people to believe the wrong things and become trapped in his web. There are four major flaws in which he tries to capture you.

Flaw #1: Satan Wants You to Think Negatively About God

If the devil can get you thinking negatively about God, he has arranged for a flaw in your thinking. The first recorded words of Satan, as he crawls his corroding path through history is, "Did God really say...?"

His very first words are an attempt to introduce a negative thought about God. "*Really? ...Did God really say you must not eat any of the fruit in the garden?*". God is not a negative God – He is full of grace, mercy, and love. But Satan wanted Eve to think of God as being severe; he wanted her to believe that God was cruel. There are many people in our world who are going to hell because they think God is cruel and unfair. They want to blame the evil men do on God, and they reject the Lord due to Satan's deceit. The devil wanted Eve to view God as a cosmic killjoy, so straight-laced that He had forbidden any type of enjoyment. Satan still wants people to think that, so he propagates the myth that the fun things in life are illegal, immoral, or fattening. He wants us to believe that every time God sees someone having pleasure, He moves to break it up.

Of course, nothing could be farther from the truth. In Genesis we have the account of a loving God creating a beautiful abode for his created children Adam and Eve. The Lord tells man to freely eat of any tree in the garden, with one exception. God isn't a vengeful deity hurling thunderbolts at mankind to make him squirm. He is good and loving, even sending His own Son to make atonement for us. God didn't give us laws to be mean, but to express His love and concern for us. He wants to protect us. A loving father creates rules to protect his children, not to antagonize them. That's why the Psalmist could write:

*For the LORD God is our light and protector. He gives us grace and glory.
No good thing will the LORD withhold from those who do what is right.
(Psalms 84:11)*

The Christian life is not a life of negativity, but a life of joy and glory. Don't think negatively about God – He loves you and wants what is best for you.

Flaw #2: Satan Wants You to Think Sceptically About God

Satan wants you to doubt God's Word:

"Did God really say you must not eat any of the fruit of the garden?" "Of course we may eat it," the woman told him. It's only the fruit from the tree at the center of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God says we must not eat it or even touch it, or we will die." "You won't die!" the serpent

hissed. (Genesis 3:1b-4).

There is a battle going on today over the Word of God that began in the Garden of Eden – Satan was trying to plant doubt in Eve’s mind, and he is doing the same thing today. Satan wants you to doubt Scripture, for then he has caused you to be skeptical of God's source of revealing Himself. Instead, Satan wants to offer an alternative to the Bible. There are a number of alternatives he throws at us that have been prevalent since Satan first started tempting humankind.

- 1) One alternative is **relativism**, a philosophy that claims truth is always changing. Morality is by majority; if everyone says pornographic movies are good, then they simply become good.
- 2) Another alternative to Scripture is **subjectivism**, which suggests that something may be true for you but not for me.
- 3) Another is **empiricism**, which requires us to measure or test everything for it to be true – if you cannot see God, He must not exist.
- 4) Satan also pushes **existentialism**, which argues that the only truth is that which you can experience. The Bible can only become the Word of God if you get an experience from it.
- 5) Another alternative to the Bible is the philosophy of **rationalism**, which makes a god of logic. This allows a man to decide what he will deem true or untrue; substituting "Thus saith the man" for "Thus saith the Lord."
- 6) Perhaps the most dangerous alternative to Scripture is **pragmatism**, where we forget all about truth and simply search for what works. If the Bible doesn't seem to work, we junk it for something else that does.

All these philosophies have been introduced to cause men and women to be skeptical of God. We have a generation of people who have been told there are no moral absolutes; no fixed standards of right and wrong. And because they have no final authority, they have no compass upon which to make moral decisions. For example, if you ask a Christian, "Is it wrong to steal?" she will say, "Of course it's wrong. God said it's wrong." It's wrong to commit adultery. It's wrong to dishonor your parents. It's wrong to take the Lord's name in vain.

But to a person who has rejected the Bible as the authoritative Word of God, who lives without a baseline of truth, those decisions are much tougher. "Perhaps there are times when it's right to steal," they'll argue, "and there is no such thing as committing adultery."

Satan loves that sort of confusion. He encourages skepticism, because it plays right into his hands.

Flaw #3: Satan Wants You to Think Lightly About God

Satan promised Eve: "You won't die!" He was telling her that, "you don't have to worry about God -- you don't have to fear what He said -- you don't have to stand in awe of the Almighty." Satan is behind the idea that you can get away with sin. He wants you to believe that God won't punish sin. He wants to turn the Ten Commandments into the Ten Suggestions, since a law without penalty is merely advice. The fact is, there is a God, and He will punish sin, whether you choose to believe it or not. Your lack of belief doesn't change the facts. Satan can claim that Eve won't die if she eats the apple, but that doesn't stop God from following through on His promise.

I have watched the New Age religions grow in numbers over the last couple of decades and shake my head at the lies of Satan. New Ageism is just a repackaging of the same old lies, dressed up in modern clothes. They have the lie of **reincarnation**: that you can keep coming back to earth until you get your life right. That's a lie Satan tells to keep people from believing in a personal God to whom we all must give an account.

Another New Age concept is that of **karma**. The idea is that we're all interrelated, plants and animals and humans, and if your karma is good, you'll evolve into something better. If you've got bad karma, you'll probably come back as an earthworm or a tick or something like that. But eventually, according to this philosophy, we'll all be absorbed into some celestial field of happiness.

It sounds wonderfully grand, but there isn't an ounce of truth in any of it. The Bible teaches us that it is appointed unto man once to die, and after that to face judgment (Heb. 9:27). But Satan doesn't want you to believe that. That's why he has worked so hard to develop the idea that judging sin is wrong. Try criticizing wicked behavior publicly and you'll be branded a bigot. It's become un-American to ever judge sin. People think God is too good to punish sin – but they have forgotten that we have a holy God who is too good to fail to punish sin. You take Him lightly at your peril.

Flaw #4: Satan Wants You to Think Suspiciously About God

Look at the suspicion Satan tries to plant in the mind of Eve: *"God knows that your eyes will be opened when you eat it. You will become just like God, knowing everything, both good and evil."* The devil is saying, "Eve, God is holding out on you. He's being unfair. He's trying to cramp your style. Why should God get the monopoly on godhood? Why doesn't He want you to reach your full potential? You can never be all that you can be by going God's way. Wouldn't you rather be in charge?"

He creates a suspicion in her mind about God by suggesting God isn't really good, that He is doing something to keep her from personal fulfillment. It's amazing the tack the devil takes. Eve had heard the Word of Truth from Almighty God, but here she is talked into disobeying by a snake! Satan hints that God's word can't be trusted, that

she should make her own choices, and that she needs to experiment if she is really going to live. That's the same argument that has destroyed our moral base. We have a generation of people experimenting with drugs, sex, and the occult because they were told to reject God and step out on their own. When you think suspiciously of God, you act independently of Him.

Our nation is full of people who refuse to go to church because they don't want some guy in a suit telling them how to live their lives. They want independence and autonomy, and that's what Satan promises them. But Satan is a liar -- He never quite delivers on his promises. He told Eve she would know good and evil, but he didn't tell her what that knowledge would do to her soul.

BUT HERE'S THE GOOD NEWS – GOD WANTS YOU TO OVERCOME SATAN!

You don't have to believe Satan's lies – You can overcome the devil!

"They have defeated (Satan) because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of their testimony. And they were not afraid to die." (Rev. 12:11)

You can overcome Satan by the Cross of Christ. If you put your sins under the shed blood of Jesus Christ, you will be cleansed and no longer under the dominion of Satan. You can overcome Satan by the word of your testimony, telling people what God has done in your life. Tell Satan that you're a Christian, that you know he is lying, and that you no longer have to listen to him because you belong to God. Finally, you can overcome the devil by completely committing your life to the cause of Christ, come what may. Those saints mentioned in Revelation gave up their lives to serve Jesus because they knew Christ had conquered the grave. There is no turning back in the Christian life – either we live completely for Christ, or we fall into the traps Satan has planned in order to defeat us. So what will it be? If you have decided for Christ, let me know by writing to me at: barry.davis@insightbb.com