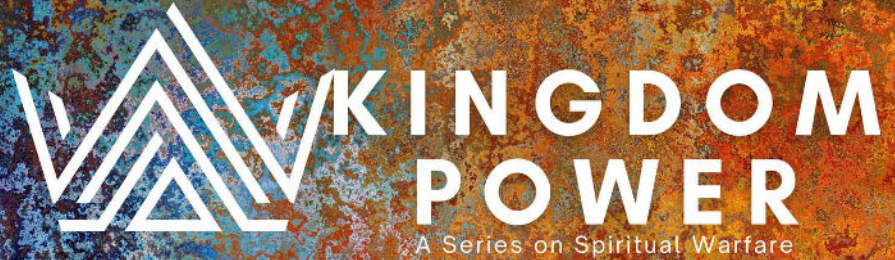




# Midweek Study

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## Knowing Satan's Agenda

### Various Scriptures

**Two extremes in speaking of our adversary:** 1) Overemphasizing the devil, or 2) pretending he does not exist.

**Satan's names reveal his agenda.** Names were important in Bible times for they were character-revealing. This is true of the names ascribed to God, humans, and both good and evil angels. Satan's names are descriptive of his person and work. Here are nine of the many names used of him in Scripture<sup>1</sup>:

### 1. *Satan*

In Hebrew this most often word to describe our enemy means "adversary" and "accuser" (see [1 Chronicles 21:1](#); [Job 1:6-9, 12; 2:1-4, 6-7](#)). 18x in Old Testament and 34x in the New Testament. (see [John 13:27](#), [Acts 5:3](#), [Acts 26:18](#), [Romans 16:20](#)).

### 2. *The Devil*

(Gk. Diabolos) means "to throw" (see [1 Peter 5:8](#)). The devil hurls accusations. He slanders, tears down and defames God and man. 36x in the New Testament.

### 3. *The Serpent*

This word describes his subtlety and beguiling nature. This subtle snake deceived Eve in the Garden (see [Genesis 3:1-6](#), [2 Corinthians 11:3](#), [Revelation 12:9 and 20:2](#)).

### 4. *Beelzebul*

This name perhaps derives from Baal-Zebub, god of the Philistine city of Ekron ([2 Kings 1:2](#)). "Beel-Zebub" means "lord of the flies" and comes from a Hebrew construction meaning "lord of filth." The Pharisees used this name to describe the ruler of the demons or Satan when they tried to explain how Jesus cast out demons ([Matt. 12:24](#); see also [9:34](#); [10:25](#)). To say Jesus was empowered by the demonic was blaspheming the Holy Spirit ([Matt. 12:31](#)).

### 5. *Ruler, Prince*

When Satan fell because of his sin, he instituted a counter-kingdom. He rules the *cosmos*, the world or orderly system of wicked angels and unregenerate humans. This counter-kingdom over which Satan rules is the opposite

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Charles Swindoll and Roy Zuck, *Understanding Christian Theology* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), 577–579.

of and stands in defiance of God's rule. Three times Jesus used this name for Satan, calling him "the ruler of this world" ([John 12:31](#); [14:30](#); [16:11](#)). Also "prince of the power of the air" ([Eph. 2:2](#)) and "ruler of the darkness" ([6:12](#)).

## 6. The god of this World

As "the god of this world," Satan heads up an anti-God philosophy that permeates the thinking of the unsaved. The Greek word translated "world" in [2 Corinthians 4:4](#) (in Satan's title "the god of this world") is not the usual term for world (*cosmos*); it is *aion*, "age." The same word *aion* appears in [Gal. 1:4](#), which refers to "this present evil age."

## 7. The Tempter

Matthew named Satan "the tempter" when Satan confronted Jesus in the wilderness ([Matt. 4:3](#)). Our Lord was led there by the Holy Spirit of God to be "tempted by the devil" ([4:1](#)). This name highlights one of Satan's major activities—tempting others to sin (see also [1 Thess. 3:5](#)).

## 8. The Dragon

*Webster's Dictionary* defines a dragon as "a huge serpent" or "a fabulous animal generally represented as a monstrous winged and scaly serpent or saurian with a crested head and enormous claws." To call Satan a dragon suggests his power and strength and the vast devastation he is capable of causing. John saw Satan as a red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, who with the demons of hell were arrayed against the Lord and His people ([Rev. 12:3–4, 7, 9, 13, 16–17](#)). In addition, as a dragon Satan in the Great Tribulation will empower the Antichrist, and people will worship the dragon ([Rev. 13:1–4](#); see also [16:13](#) and [20:2](#)).

## 9. The Evil One

In calling Satan "the evil one" Jesus and John both depicted him as totally corrupt and carrying on a corrupt and evil work ([John 17:15](#); [1 John 5:18–19](#)). Evil beyond description, Satan personally seeks to influence the whole world toward wickedness, just as he did with Cain ([1 John 3:12](#)). Kenneth Wuest suggests that the last part of [1 John 5:19](#) may be rendered, "the whole world in the Pernicious One is lying." That is, Satan holds in his lap the whole world. But believers, John affirmed, are exempt from this awful grip of Satan ([5:18](#)). This evil one, John wrote, can be overcome by the Word of God ([2:13–14](#)).

### Other names:

- Abaddon (Heb.) / Apollyon (Gk.) = Destroyer ([Revelation 9:11](#))
- Accuser of the brethren ([Revelation 12:10](#))
- Angel of the bottomless pit ([Revelation 9:11](#))
- Enemy ([Matthew 13:39](#))
- Father of all liars (a liar) ([John 8:44](#))
- Lucifer = morning or daystar ([Isaiah 14:12](#))
- Murderer ([John 8:44](#))
- Son of perdition = destruction, ruin, waste, loss ([John 17:12](#))
- Thief ([John 10:10](#))
- Wicked one ([Matthew 13:19, 38](#))

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

"General George Patton of World War II fame was seldom at a loss for words. What he said during a battle in North Africa may be legend, but it typifies the man. Patton's troops and tanks were engaged in a successful counterattack of German forces under General Erwin Rommel. Patton is reported to have shouted in the thick of the battle, 'I read your book, Rommel! I read your book!' And that he did. In Rommel's book *Infantry Attacks*, the famed 'Desert Fox' carefully detailed his military strategy. And Patton, having read it and knowing what to expect, planned his moves accordingly."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://bible.org/illustration/2-corinthians-211>