

Satan's Lies and Tricks in the Last Days



SABBATH—MAY 26

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Revelation 2:13, 24; 2 Corinthians 11:13–15; Psalm 146:4; Revelation 13:1–17.

MEMORY VERSE: “The dragon was thrown down to earth from heaven. This animal is the old snake. He is also called [named] the Devil or Satan. He is the one who has fooled [tricked] the whole world [all the people on the earth]. He was thrown down to earth and his angels were thrown down with him” (Revelation 12:9, NLV).



History shows us that, from Eden until now, Satan always uses tricks and lies (Revelation 20:8) to get what he wants.

SATAN worked hard to trick the angels in heaven before God threw him out. “For a time, Lucifer hid his true plans under a ‘mask’ of love and respect for God. Lucifer pretended to honor God. But he was really trying to cause the angels to feel unhappy with God’s laws.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great [big] Controversy [war between God and Satan]*, page 495; adapted.

In Eden, Satan pretended to be a beautiful snake. He used this beautiful snake to trick Eve. History shows us that, from Eden until now, Satan always uses tricks and lies (Revelation 20:8) to get what he wants.

Satan is smarter, more powerful, and sneakier than any human. That is why we need to stick close to Jesus and hold onto His truth. “ ‘But all of you who stayed with the LORD your God are alive today’ ” (Deuteronomy 4:4, ERV). This rule is true for us today, too.

This week we will look at some of the devil’s most powerful lies and tricks. We will learn what we can do to protect ourselves against them.

SATAN'S BIGGEST PLAN (Revelation 12:3, 7–9, 12, 17)

In our first lesson, we talked about the big war between God and Satan. Sadly, this war has gone beyond heaven to our earth.

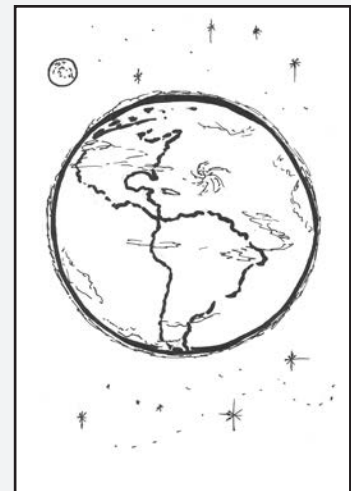
The problem is that many people do not believe in this big war. Why? Because they do not believe in Satan. Sadly, this group of people includes some Christians, too. What do they think about Bible verses that talk about Satan, or the devil? These people say that the devil is just a word picture the Bible uses to explain evil and suffering. But these people do not really believe the Bible means the devil is real. For many people, the idea of a powerful and evil angel who wants to destroy humans is only a made-up story, the same as Darth Vader from the movie *Star Wars* is made up.

Read these verses from Revelation: Revelation 2:13, 24; Revelation 12:3, 7–9, 12, 17; Revelation 13:2; and Revelation 20:2, 7, 10. What do these verses teach us about how real Satan is? What do these verses teach us about Satan's part in what will happen in the last days?

The book of Revelation shows us just how much power Satan will have over people on the earth in the last days. Satan will lead these people away from God's plan to save them. Satan also will lead these people to attack everyone who stays loyal to Jesus.

Satan has many evil "plans" (2 Corinthians 2:11, ERV). The word "plans" comes from *noemata*, which is the Greek word for "mind." Maybe Satan's most powerful "plan" is to trick people into believing that he is not real. Would you really waste your time trying to protect yourself against an enemy you did not believe was real? Of course not. But it is surprising how many Christians do not believe the devil is real. The only way these Christians can think this way is to take the Bible verses about the devil and say that those verses really mean something else instead. But the Bible is clear. The devil is real. The fact that so many Christians would ignore this truth is a powerful warning to us: we must understand the truths the Bible really teaches.

Revelation talks about Satan's evil plans in the last days. But what wonderful hope can we find in Revelation 12:11? Where does our power against the devil come from?



The big war between God and Satan has gone beyond heaven to our earth.

SATAN’S TWO BIGGEST LIES (2 Corinthians 11:13–15)

Read the verses below. What do these verses tell us about Satan’s power to trick us?

2 Corinthians 11:13–15 _____

2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10 _____

Revelation 12:9 _____

Revelation 20:10 _____

We learned that Jesus told His followers to watch out for false leaders and messengers. These false messengers would “ ‘fool [trick] many people’ ” (Matthew 24:5, ERV).

False leaders and messengers are not Satan’s only tricks in the last days. Satan also has many other tricks he uses to fool as many people as he can. As Christians, we need to know what his tricks are. How do we do that? We do that by knowing Bible truth and obeying it.

Ellen G. White explains two of the devil’s biggest lies: “Satan will use two big and powerful lies to trick people in the last days. What are these lies? They are the false teachings that (1) the soul does not die and (2) that Sunday is holy. People who believe that the soul does not die often believe in another lie that is even more dangerous. This lie is the belief that the spirits of dead people can communicate with living people. The second lie about Sunday being holy leads people to honor the power of the Roman Catholic Church. There is a big difference that separates Bible religion from the false belief that the spirits of dead people can talk with living people. But Protestant Christians in the United States will be the first to reach across this big separation to accept the false teaching about spirits. Protestants will also join with the power of the Roman Catholic Church. Together, [1] Protestants, [2] the Roman Catholic Church, and [3] people who believe the dead talk to us will use their power to get the government of the United States to do what they want. Then this country will do exactly what Rome did in the past. The United States will take away freedom from people to worship the way they want.”—*The Great [big] Controversy [war between God and Satan]*, page 588; adapted.



How can we learn what Satan’s tricks are? We must know Bible truth and follow it.

SATAN'S FIRST LIE: THE SOUL DOES NOT DIE (Psalm 115:17)

Read Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10; Psalm 115:17; Psalm 146:4; 1 Corinthians 15:16–18; and Daniel 12:2. What do these verses teach us about what happens when we die? What protection can these verses give us against Satan's lie that the soul goes on living after the body dies?

In the past 30 or 40 years, magazines, radio shows, and TV shows have spent a lot of time on stories about people who “died” but then came back to life. What happened when these people “died”? Their hearts stopped pumping. These people stopped breathing. But later, they woke up from the dead. In many of these stories, the people who “died” told about amazing experiences they had of being alive after they “died.” Some of the people who “died” said they floated in the air above their dead bodies. They could look down from above and see their bodies below them. Other people said that they floated out of their bodies and then met a wonderful person who was filled with light and warmth. This magical person talked about kindness and love. Other people who “died” said they met and talked with dead relatives.

Many people started having this same experience. Because so many people began to have it, the experience was given a scientific name: Near Death Experience (NDE). Many Christians use NDEs as proof that the soul goes on living after the body dies. These Christians say that NDEs are proof that the soul goes off to another place, where it continues to live, think, and feel.

But NDEs are one of Satan's two biggest lies in the last days. People who believe that the soul goes on living after the body dies are in deep danger from being tricked by other lies that come from believing we can talk with dead spirits. One other dangerous lie is the idea that we do not need Jesus. In fact, many people who have NDEs say that the spirits and dead relatives that they met gave them comforting words about love and peace. But these spirits and dead relatives never said anything about being saved by Jesus. It is strange that these dead spirits and relatives said *nothing* about Bible teachings, right?

As Christians, why must we trust Bible truths, even when our experiences seem to go against those truths?



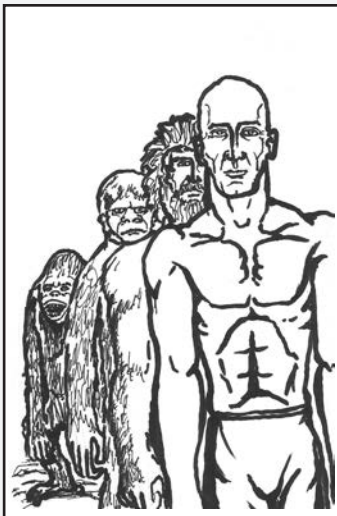
Some people believe that the soul goes on living after the body dies. The people who believe this lie are in deep danger from being tricked by other lies that come from believing we can talk to dead spirits.

THE SABBATH AND SATAN'S LIE ABOUT HOW LIFE ON EARTH STARTED (Genesis 1–2:3)

Satan has had a lot of success in tricking the people on this earth. Satan has caused a lot of people to believe in the lie that the soul goes on living after the body dies. Satan has had even more success in changing the Bible Sabbath to Sunday.

But the devil came with another trick in these last days. This sneaky trick weakens people's belief in the seventh-day Sabbath even more. What is this trick? It is the false idea about how life started.

Read Genesis 1–2:3. What do these verses teach us about how the Lord made our earth? How long did it take the Lord to make everything on our planet?



Evolution is an attack on the Sabbath. The Bible says God made the earth in six days. But evolution says the earth took 4.5 billion years to make.

These verses in Genesis 1–2:3 show us two important truths about how our earth was made. First, God planned everything before He did it. Nothing happened by chance. The Bible leaves no room at all for chance to be a part of how life started on this earth.

Second, the Bible shows us very clearly that God made each animal separate from every other animal. The Bible does not teach at all the false idea that all life on earth came from one single cell.

The Bible makes these two truths very clear: (1) life did not happen by chance and (2) life did not start from one single cell. But these two things are exactly what is taught by evolution. Evolution is the belief that one single cell slowly changed by chance over long periods of time into all the different animals and plants we see now.

Evolution is an attack on the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a reminder that God made the earth in six days and rested on the seventh. But evolution says the earth took 4.5 billion years to make. Evolution takes the six days of God's work to make this earth and turns it into a fairy tale. So, would people who believe in evolution really want to risk their lives for the Sabbath truth in the last days? Why would someone want to risk being attacked or even killed for a truth he or she does not believe in? The answer to that question helps us understand why evolution is such a dangerous attack on the Sabbath in the last days.

THE FAKE THREE-IN-ONE GOD (Revelation 12:17)

The Bible teaches that God is Three Persons but One God. Revelation shows us there also is a false three-in-one god. Who is it? Revelation 13 shows us that it is the dragon, the wild animal that came from the sea, and the wild animal that came from the ground. These animals are word pictures for powers that rule on the earth in the end time.

Read Revelation 12:17 and Revelation 13:1, 2. What do these verses describe?

The dragon, or Satan, is the one who is clearly in control of the other two powers that are part of the false three-in-one god. The dragon tries to take God the Father's place. The dragon also gives power and a throne to the wild animal from the sea. The wild animal that came from the sea is a false Jesus. Why is this second power a false Jesus?

Read Revelation 13:2–5. How do these verses describe the wild animal power from the sea? What does he do?

God gave Jesus His power (read Matthew 28:18). The dragon gives power to the wild animal from the sea too. Jesus died and then woke up from the dead. The wild animal from the sea also faces death but then comes back to life (Revelation 13:3).

Read Revelation 13:11–17. How do these verses describe the wild animal power that comes from the land?

The Holy Spirit brought down “fire” from heaven (Acts 2:3, NLV). The wild animal power from the land also “made fire come down from heaven” (Revelation 13:13, ERV).

“In the last days, the wild animal power from the land makes a false Pentecost happen. [Pentecost was the time when God poured out the Holy Spirit on Jesus' followers after Jesus woke up from the dead and went to heaven.] Why did the wild animal power from the land do that? To prove to everyone on earth that the false three-in-one god is the true God.”—Jon Paulien, *What the Bible Says About the End-Time* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald® Publishing Association, 1998), page 111; adapted.

What are more of Satan's tricks in the last days? How can we protect against them and help people to do the same?

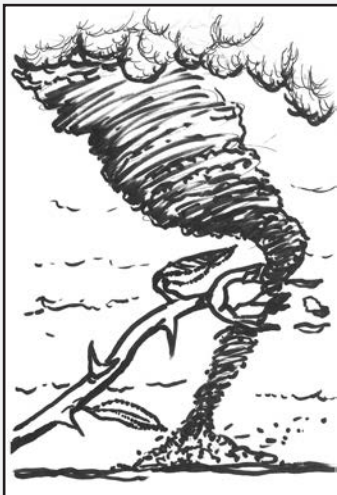


Revelation 13 teaches us there is a false three-in-one god. Who is it? The dragon, the wild animal from the sea, and the wild animal from the ground.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Let us talk a little bit more about the Sabbath and evolution. Evolution is the unproved idea that life on this earth started from one single cell that slowly changed over long periods of time into all the different animals and plants we see now. Charles Darwin is the father of this false idea. He had a difficult time understanding how a loving God could let there be evil and suffering.

Darwin worked more deeply on his idea about evolution during the mid-to-late 1800s. It is no accident that during this time God started the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This church stands against everything that Darwin believed in about evolution. How interesting that the Seventh-day Adventist Church began to grow larger about the same time as Darwin's false idea about how life started on earth. Who knows what would have happened if Darwin could have read these few short lines from Ellen G. White: "It is true that the earth was under a curse. Even so, nature was man's lesson book. Nature did not show us only God's goodness and love. After all, evil was everywhere. Evil spoiled the perfect beauty on the earth, in the sea, and in the air. Before sin, nature showed only God's love and that everything was good. Now nature showed Satan's hate for God and that there was evil. Nature would now always be filled with warnings to man about what would happen when he sinned."—*Education*, page 26; adapted.

Darwin's ideas about evolution came from his misunderstanding about God and about the awful things that sin has done to this earth. Evolution is very dangerous for many reasons. One reason is because it causes people to believe in more of Satan's lies during the last days.



"Now nature showed Satan's hate for God and that there was evil. Nature would now always be filled with warning to man about what would happen when he sinned."—Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 26; adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Why do so many Christians believe that the devil is not real? What does this view teach us about how dangerous it is to turn away from the clear teachings of the Bible?
- ② What would you say to someone who tells you that he or she had a near-death experience (NDE)? What can you say to help this person understand that we do not go on living after our bodies die? What Bible verses could you share with this person?
- ③ What other reasons can you think of that make a belief in evolution so dangerous in these last days?