

# When Satan Joins the Church

Acts 5:1-11

## Introduction

Joseph, called Barnabas, “a Levite, a native of Cyprus.” 3:36

Luke reveals the thing that means the most to God: *The intention of the heart.*

Satan thought persecution would be enough to stop the spread of Christianity, but it only fueled it.

So, Satan decided to *join* the church. And he has been there ever since.

**Wherever God plants wheat, the Enemy plants *weeds*:** A Parable in Matthew 13:24-30

**Satan typically attacks at the beginning of a new work of God**

- 1) Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10).
- 2) Achan (Josh. 7).
- 3) The Exodus from Egypt.

God uses these judgments as *warnings* to the people, and even to us. 1 Corinthians 10:6, 9-12

**Satan long ago realized that one of his most effective ways of attacking a church is from the *inside*.**

“*Satan has filled your heart*” from Gk root *pleroo*; i.e., has controlling influence.

Paul’s warning to the Ephesian elders: Acts 20:28-31

**When Satan joins the church, he brings lies and deception with him.**

“the household of God...the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth.” 1 Timothy 3:15

Satan is: “the god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4); “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11); “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19).

**The church is much safer when Satan attacks it from the *outside*.**

“*why?*” Peter asks, ‘*How is it that Satan so filled your heart?*’ (NIV). ‘What made you do this evil thing?’

**Satan uses the 3 effective means to open the door of the heart of a Christian so he can make entrance:**

– “*the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life*” (1 John 2:16).

Jesus to the churches: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock” (Revelation 3:20). *Two* stand at the door of the churches: Jesus and Satan. Which one will you let in?

**Christians are in danger of being used by Satan to accomplish his evil purposes.**

“there is sin that leads to death” (1 John 5:16). Ananias obviously qualifies because *he died*.

The progression of lust leading to sin ending in *death*: James 1:13-16

The believer must resist the attempts of Satan to fill his mind with lies and deception, and his heart with sinful temptation:

1 Peter 5:8-9

**Nothing is hidden from the Lord. Every heart is open before the eyes of our ever-present God.**

“The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.” Proverbs 15:3

Job 34:21-22

Proverbs 5:21

“For my eyes are on all their ways. They are not hidden from me, nor is their iniquity concealed from my eyes.” Jeremiah 16:17

Jeremiah 23:24

Hebrews 4:13

**Reasons for committing sin fall into 3 general categories: *ignorance, weakness, or presumption.***

**Presumptuous Sins**

“Presume” = ‘To assume or take for granted. To act on the assumption of right or permission.’

"*To test the Holy Spirit*"

“Jesus said to him, ‘Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” Matthew 4:7

Numbers 15:30-31; NKJV

**The progenitor of all presumptuous sins was Satan himself when he told Eve:**

“You will not surely die.” (Genesis 3:4)

**Other examples:**

- 1) Nadab and Abihu offering “strange fire” in the temple (Lev. 10:1-2).
- 2) Israelites murmuring against the Lord at Meribah (Exod. 17:2, 7; Exod. 16:7-8; cp. 1 Cor. 10:5-6).
- 3) Achan stealing “devoted things” from the battle with Ai (Joshua 7).
- 4) Saul, sacrificing instead of the priest (1 Sam. 13:8-14).
- 5) Saul, sparing the livestock and the king of the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:3, 9-23).
- 6) Uzzah in steadying the ark of the covenant (2 Chron. 26:16).
- 7) David in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah (2 Sam. 11).
- 8) David in numbering Israel (2 Sam. 24:1-17).
- 9) Jonah 4:1-8
- 10) Peter in objecting to Jesus’ claim that He must die (Matt. 16:21-23).
- 11) Diotrefes (3 John 9).

### Common characteristics of presumptuous sins:

- 1) The guilty party knew what they were doing was a serious sin against God, but did it anyway.
- 2) The guilty party is prideful and arrogant.
- 3) The guilty party is mocking God by deliberately committing a serious transgression.
- 4) The guilty party is blaspheming God (*blasphemy*: 'the root meaning of the word is an act of effrontery in which the honour of God is insulted by man').
- 5) The guilty party is an abuser of God's grace, mercy, and patience.

"Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me!" Psalm 19:13

God wants His churches to be pure and without pretense.

2 Corinthians 6:11-13

The main issue in Corinth was pride, arrogance, and pretentiousness.

This is an ugly blot on any church.

"The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil." Proverbs 8:13

Are we guilty of similar pretensions and presumptions? Answer these questions sincerely and you'll know?

- 1) When you tell someone you're going to pray for them, do you?
- 2) When you pray in public, does that affect what you pray or how you pray?
- 3) When you read your Bible, do you receive what it says into your heart?
- 4) When God's Word reveals areas of sin in your life, what do you do about it?
- 5) When you do sin, do you alleviate your conscience by excuses or by abusing grace?
- 6) When you do something for someone, how important is it that they know about it?
- 7) When you give, do you do so freely, joyously, generously, sacrificially, and privately?
- 8) When you sing, does it reveal genuine praise to the Lord from your heart?

"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." Matthew 15:8; NIV

Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God openly, sincerely, acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

"thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire."

Hebrews 12:28-29