



**ACBC Theology Exam – Question #8**  
**April 1, 2026**

**Question #8: Describe in biblical categories the operations of the devil. Is there a difference between Believers and unbelievers regarding the activity of the devil? What is a biblical methodology for responding to the demonic in the context of counseling?**

**Introduction:**

**Describe in biblical categories the operations of the devil:**

**1. Wants to be God:**

**Ezekiel 28:12-14**

**Isaiah 14:12-15**

## 2. Opposing God:

**Ruler of this world** = John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11

**Ever active** = Who is constantly at work on earth during the present age. “Prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” 1 Peter 5:8

**Lies** = Devil tells lies, John 8:44

Influences people to lie, Acts 5:3

Disguises himself as angel of light (deceives in his disguise) 2 Cor 11:13-15

**Snatches gospel from unbelieving hearts** = Mt 13:19; Mark 4:15; Luke 8:12

**Holds unbelievers under his power** = Eph 2:2; 1 John 3:8-10; 5:19

**Traps & deceives unbelievers, holding them captive to do his will** = 2 Tim 2:26

**Tempts believers to sin** = 1 Cor 7:5; Eph 4:27

**Seeks to deceive the children of God** = 2 Cor 11:3

**Seeks to destroy the faith of believers** = Luke 22:31 (Peter sifted like wheat)

**Torments the servants of God** = 2 Cor 12:7

**Wages war against the church** = Eph 6:11-17

MacArthur & Mahue “*Biblical Doctrine*”

**Destroy all that God created and that glorifies God**

## 3. Imitating God: 2 Cor 11:13-15

He makes bad appear good.

He makes good look like something is being withheld, something good or better is being kept from you.

Sinful to look righteous.

Disguised as an angel of light, while being the messenger of darkness.

Gives appearance of genuineness to that which is spiritually counterfeit.

Substitutes the worldly things that give people instant pleasure for the holy things that bring God eternal glory and are for an individual’s good.

Camouflages his lies to be so appealing to people that they reject God’s truth.

MacArthur & Mahue “*Biblical Doctrine*”

## Qualifying the Operations of the Devil - How powerful is he?

Satan does possess great power as a created being, but his power does not compare with God's, Jeremiah 32:17, 1 Chronicles 29:11-12. God is the first and the last, and alone possess His divine attributes, Isaiah 44:6.

Satan's power is supernatural compared to human ability, like that of Michael the archangel, Revelation 12:7. He is active in heaven, Job 1-2, and he is powerful on earth, 1 Peter 5:8. Satan rules this fallen world, John 12:31; Ephesians 6:12. He also is the ruler over demons as he is "the prince of the power of the air", Matthew 25:41; Rev 12:7-9.

Satan is a created being with limitations. **Colossians 1:16** "For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him"

## Is there a difference between believers and unbelievers regarding the activity of the devil?

### **Believers:**

1. In believers Satan can and does tempt to sin but it is always from the "outside".  
**Col 1:13** = the believer has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and delivered from Satan

"The devil made me do it" is not affirmed in Scripture.

**James 1:14** "But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust".

**Romans 8:13** "For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live".

2. Satan is not able to "control believers". Satan is not able to "possess believers".

**1 John 4:4**

**2 Corinthians 6:14-18**

**Ephesians 4:30**

**Mark 3:27**

**Romans 8:9-11**

3. Satan is able to cause suffering, afflict, or even kill Christians.

a. The **book of Job**

b. **Matthew 10:28**

### **Unbelievers:**

**2 Tim 2:24-26**

**1 Jn 5:19**

**2 Cor 4:4**

**Luke 8:26-35**

### **What is a biblical methodology for responding to the demonic in the context of counseling:**

#### **Example #1:**

Powlison “. . . notice Job’s mode of spiritual warfare. Job actually never mentions Satan . . . Nor does he focus on the tertiary causes: murderous raiders and thieves, painful sores covering his body, rejection by his wife and relatives.

**Instead Job wrestles with God**, the primary cause, because God is sovereign. And **finally Job repents of self-righteousness**. He proved to be the wise spiritual warrior by honesty, by reproofing his wife’s and counselor’s folly, by repentance, by faith. In so doing, Job glorified God and humiliated Satan.”

i. **Job 1:21** And he said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I shall return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”

ii. **Job 2:10** But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

iii. **Job 38:1-4** Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.

iv. **Job 42:1-6** Then Job answered the LORD and said: “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ‘Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.’ I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

## Example #2:

The pattern of Jesus facing Satan in the desert. “The textbooks for spiritual warfare in this mode have been Psalms and Proverbs, the ways that Jesus addressed moral evil, and the teachings of the New Testament epistles.”

“Spiritual warfare with the power of evil is a matter of consistently and repeatedly turning from darkness to light in the midst of assailing darkness. Christians fight spiritual warfare by repentance, faith, and obedience.”

“. . . human beings are always responsible moral agents and . . . People are responsible for their own evil . . . ”

“. . . the mode of warfare that God taught was having faith in the Word of God, fearing God, turning from evil involvements, taking refuge in the LORD, and obeying his voice.

David Powlison, *Power Encounters: Reclaiming Spiritual Warfare*, 61

## What to do?

- **Cling to Jesus**
- **Fill mind with His Word - Trust & follow it**
- **Pray**
- **Repent of sin**
- **Meditate on and trust God’s character**
- **Meditate on the gospel.**

## The Armor of God, Ephesians 6:10-20: *MacArthur Bible Doctrine*

**The belt of truth-** most likely referring to Christian’s attitude. Believers who gird their loins (6:14) with truth have a heart for the battle because of their commitment to Christ. They’re guarding their mind/heart by “**speaking truth / what is true” to their heart.**

**The breastplate of righteousness-** to protect the mind & emotions. The practical **progressive personal righteousness** of a believer the is born in him/her at regeneration and afterward progressively grown by the Holy Spirit as the person transforms progressively into the image of Christ, **2 Cor 3:18** (as we are being transformed into the same image...); **2 Pet 3:18** (grow in the grace & knowledge of our Lord and Savior...)

**Footwear of readiness/preparation of the gospel-** embraced the gospel and the good news of peace with God, and meditating continually on the gospel.

Union & Communion with God through **the gospel**.....

**The shield of faith-** Paul referring to a large shield. Spiritually speaking, when the flaming darts of the Evil One fly, a believer will be protected by raising the shield of **salvific faith**. The shield will be so effective that the weapons of Satan will be extinguished, because well-equipped believers conquer overwhelmingly in the battle, Rom 8:37.

**The Helmet of Salvation-** I think most likely, Paul referring to the **present & future aspects of our salvation**. Assurance of God's continuing work in our life, and the confidence in the full and final salvation to come = glorification.

**The sword of the Spirit-** refers to a dagger likely 6-18 inches long. Used in hand-to-hand combat both defensively and offensively. Not a broadsword that just flails around hoping to do broad damage. Is precise, targeted, hits a vulnerable spot to be effective. Same Greek word in Heb 4:12. "the sword of the Spirit which is **the Word of God.**"

**Prayer-** All 6 pieces of spiritual armor can be classified as primarily defensive in nature. Now most effective offensive resource available = prayer, 6:18.

1. "at all times". Frequency and duration
2. "in the Spirit" refers to one's submission to the will of God's Spirit
3. "all prayer and supplication" speaks to all varieties of prayer
4. "keep alert" demands constant focus
5. "all perseverance" is necessary in both positive & negative circumstances
6. "all the saints" can include praying with regard to self & for other believers

#### **Scripture to meditate & memorize:**

**Ephesians 4:27**, do not give an opportunity to the devil but resist him.

**James 4:7**, the promise for the believer is that if they do submit to God (humbling coming to His throne of grace, striving to obey His commands), and if they do resist the devil, he will in fact flee.