



# The SCC Standard

A monthly journal covering the Shuswap Community Church Statement of Faith as found on our website.



Church Gathering  
Locations:

Chase: 547 Shuswap Ave

Salmon Arm: 3151 6th  
Avenue NE

Sicamous: 1091 Shuswap  
Avenue

Sorrento: 1150  
Passchendaele Road

Each month here on The SCC Standard we are going to be looking at the individual statements found in the Shuswap Community Church Statement of Faith. This statement as a whole can be found on our website at [aplacetobelong.ca](http://aplacetobelong.ca) and either downloaded, read or printed from there. Each month an assortment of pastors, elders, staff and lay people will share their answer to the simple question, “Why does this matter to me?”. We hope that this will be a helpful and learning experience as we all look a little closer and dig a little deeper into our commonly held theological belief standards.

This month we are looking at the third complete statement which reads as follows:

### III. OF THE DEVIL, OR SATAN

We believe that Satan is a person; that he is the malignant prince of the power of the air, and the unholy god of this world; that he is man’s great tempter, the enemy of God and His Christ, the accuser of the saints; that he is the author of all false religions, the inspirer of all apostasy, and the chief of all the powers of darkness; that he with his principalities is overcome by our

appropriation of Christ's victory on Calvary; that he along with his hosts is destined to final defeat at the hands of God's Son, and to suffer eternal punishment in a place prepared for him and his angels.



Kevin Hardy  
Youth Pastor, Salmon Arm  
[kevin@aplacetobelong.ca](mailto:kevin@aplacetobelong.ca)

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When I was 4 or 5 years old I remember praying with my oldest brother before bedtime to receive Christ. I was terrified of the thought of Hell and the schemes of the devil and I wanted Jesus to live in my heart. Of course, my theology of salvation and knowledge of the gospel has been filled out since my adolescent days but the belief of the devil or Satan is still very much a reality for me as it should be for all Christians.

Several years ago I watched a movie where many interesting exchanges between the two main characters, a Catholic priest and a seminary student take place. One quote from the priest has stuck with me: "Be careful, choosing not to believe in the devil doesn't protect you from him."

Just as we believe in the Triune God who saves, we also believe as our statement of faith says, "that Satan is a person; that he is the malignant prince of the power of the air, and the unholy god of this world..." Throughout the Scriptures we see this to be true. In 1 Peter 5:8 we read, "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." The Apostle Paul tells us that without Christ, we are "dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2).

Author Bob Bevington writes: "The Bible warns against being ignorant of Satan's designs, because the simplest way to be outwitted by him is to allow him to deceive you into believing either that he does not exist, that he has no designs, or that they don't matter. He does, and they do. Jesus definitely believed this. He believed in the personal existence of Satan and demons, and so should we. The proverbial ostrich in with its head in the sand is completely defenceless against predators."<sup>1</sup>

We must start with belief and understand that we do have an enemy as we are born again and "made alive together with Christ," as we are saved by His grace (Eph. 2:2). We must understand that the devil is our adversary. "An adversary is a foe, an antagonist, a combatant, an enemy."<sup>2</sup> As we believe what the Bible says about our enemy, we are also comforted as our statement of faith reminds us, "that he with his principalities is overcome by our appropriation of Christ's victory on Calvary; that he along with his hosts is destined to final defeat at the hands of God's Son, and to suffer eternal

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punishment in a place prepared for him and his angels.” As we believe what the Bible says about our enemy, we also believe what the Bible says about our Saviour!

Jesus is King and he will finish what he started - ultimate defeat of our enemy. As we follow Jesus and fight against our enemy, aware that he is a formidable foe, we also know that as believers Jesus gives us what we need to face what comes against us and we can sing with the Hymn writer:

**No power of hell, no scheme of man**

**Can ever pluck me from His hand**

**Till He returns or calls me home**

**Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.**

- Kevin Hardy

<sup>1</sup> Bevington, Good News About Satan: A Gospel Look At Spiritual Warfare, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



Steve McLean  
Campus Pastor, Sorrento  
[steve@aplacetobelong.ca](mailto:steve@aplacetobelong.ca)

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We live in a world that is a mixed bag of realities. On one hand those who know Christ, walk redeemed, knowing our futures are secure in the only one that can secure them, Jesus. At the same time we walk in a world that is not a safe place for our hearts, minds and souls.

As the third statement clearly says, Satan is real, he has more power than we do, he takes joy in deceiving those who believe in Jesus Christ. Why? Because Satan can not and will not admit what we know is secured, his defeat, and our victorious future in Christ.

This is why this statement is important. Once we know and understand that the playfield we live in is not level, it is tilted we can take comfort in that fact. Be sure of this, despite the fact that we know Satan is real, and that he has more power than we do, and his deceptions are clever and believable, Jesus has all authority over all things, including Satan. (Matt 28:18)

No amount of power that Satan can muster was able to either kill Jesus, or to keep him in the grave. Our saviour was not subject to the effects of sin, or death, or the grave, and he will not be subject to Satan's wishes either.

No lie that Satan can tell is better than the truth that Jesus brings. This is one that can be very difficult for believers to work through. That is due to the fact that Satan is supremely clever. He knows how to spin a lie so that it sounds like the truth, while at the same time touching directly the longings of our own sinful hearts. (John 8:44)

That is how it starts. It is an all too familiar question, “Did God really say/mean ...” and then we can fill in the blanks.

This is the power that Satan has and works so well. To know those deep, hard to reach corners of our hearts and minds that want to put ourselves in the position of authority and power in our own lives. We love being in control, we like to be the ones who call all the shots, we like being able to do what we want, when we want to. And Satan knows this and how to convince us that just a little rebellion from Christ will be ok.

That is how it starts. It is an all too familiar question, “Did God really say/mean ...” and then we can fill in the blanks. (Gen 3:1) Did he really say we can’t do this or that? Did he really say that we should/have to do this or that? And this small wedge drives a point straight into our own search for happiness.

I mean who wouldn’t be happier if we could always do as we please, always have what we wanted and never have to do anything that did not make us happy. That is what our sinful hearts want, no matter the cost, not matter what.

It is only when we remember that Satan is a doomed creature, who is looking to take as many people in this world with him to an eternal lake of torment and fire as possible, that we understand how sickly evil he is. What is Satan’s joy? Our torment, both in this life and the next which is all eternity. (Rev 20:10)

It is because Satan is real, and has real power that we need to daily be in God’s Word, to regularly claim the power and authority over sin that comes in Christ sacrificed blood, and rest in the promise that is Christ victory over the grave that sets us free from all eternity.

- Steve McLean



Richard Magill  
Redemption Counselling  
Richard@

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The elder generation among us may remember the days before the shift of focus that our pulpits have undergone in recent decades. It is for the most part good that somewhere around 40-50 years ago, many of our pastors shifted from preaching largely “Hell, Fire, and Brimstone,” to sermons focusing on God’s love and grace. We began to hear “Jesus loves you,” far more than we heard, “God is angry at you.”

Praise God!

Unfortunately, some may have gone too far the other direction, now virtually ignoring or even arguing against the reality of the powers that oppose God’s kingdom; the powers that oppose those who love God and are loved by God. This is unfortunate because we best understand the depth of God’s love and grace when we first understand just what we needed to be saved from; just how much God had to do in His love and grace to redeem us.



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God.

This is but one of the many reasons we must discount all teaching that purports Satan and hell as being less than real. We must denounce all teachers who teach Satan and hell as false or allegorical as being false teachers, destined, sadly, themselves for the very place they teach against and are, even more sadly, taking many of those who would follow them and their teachings with them as they go.

Satan's very name means "adversary" (cf.: 1 Chron. 21:1; Job 1,2; Zech. 3:1-2). Other names include "Devil" which means "accuser" (cf.: Rev. 12:9-10); "Apollyon," or "Abaddon," which means "destroyer" (cf.: Rev. 9:11); "Tempter" (cf.: Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5); "the Evil One" (cf.: 1 Jn 5:18-19); and "Prince and god of this world" (cf. eg.: John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).<sup>2</sup>

Needless to say, Satan is a vicious enemy of God, His precious children, and all things good and right. He must be taken seriously if we are to, by taking up the shield of faith, "extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one" (cf.: Eph. 6:16). We must remember that though He is only the second most powerful being in the universe (second, of course, only to God Himself), He is still the second most powerful being in the universe. He is still far more powerful than you or me.

Yet the Christian need not fear the enemy. "He [Christ] disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him" (Colossians 2:15). "Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). In other words, apart from Christ, we are helpless against Satan and His dominion. In and through Christ: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you" (Romans 16:20).

Though it may at first seem hard to believe, Satan is a necessary, albeit an unwilling and unwitting, servant of God's plan. If God is truly just (cf.: Isaiah 61:8-9; Ps. 33:5; 2 Thess. 1:8-9; Rev. 20:12-13), then there must always be a penalty for wrongdoing. Letting wrongs go unpunished; just ignoring them or pretending they never happened is not grace or forgiveness. It is licentiousness and expressly unjust. It is, as many have called it, "cheap grace."

If God is just, then ALL sin must be punished. All sinners must be subject to the justice of God. This penalty for our sin is either paid by Christ on our behalf via the cross, or by ourselves via eternal death and separation from God (i.e.: Hell). Satan serves as God's jailer, so to speak. He is an instrument of God's justice whether he realizes it or not... whether he desires to be so or not.

For anyone who has suffered from another's wrongdoing; for anyone who's been betrayed, abused, neglected, abandoned, slandered, rejected, objectified, or otherwise victimized, the understanding that Satan is an instrument of God's justice can be immensely comforting. The oppressor will not go unpunished. The victimizer didn't just "get away with it."

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In conclusion, Satan is very real, very powerful, and the ultimate instigator of all things evil; all that is wrong with this world. This in no way implies that we are without blame. He is the tempter. We choose to follow through. We cannot use as our excuse, “The Devil made me do it.” Nowhere is the old saying: “that is a lie from the pit of hell and it smells like smoke,” more true than here.

- Richard Magill