

# DEEP SIX STUDY

February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026

## ***The GOAT Problem – “Where ‘Better Than’ Began”***

### **MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS** *(You can view the full message online at [capecodchurch.com](http://capecodchurch.com))*

**Opening:** We’re in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of a series that started with a simple idea: seeking a better way than “better than.” Each week we’ve looked at a practice to help us overcome our natural propensity toward unhealthy comparison and competition with others. This week, we go “all the way back” to try to understand where this temptation came from – and how Jesus himself was able to overcome it.

#### **1. Where “Better Than” Began** (Isaiah 14:12-15; Luke 10:18)

- The temptation toward comparison and competition is old – really, really old. In fact, it’s older than humanity itself. It turns out that the desire to be “better than” goes back to before the beginning of creation itself – back, in fact, to the fall of Satan.
- The prophet Isaiah gives us some context. Isaiah writes about how Satan was cast down from heaven because of his sinful desire to be like God – to be “better than” the other angels and compete with God himself. Satan’s “original sin” was to try to take God’s glory for himself.
- Because we humans gave into Satan’s temptation to do the same thing (seek glory for ourselves), God is allowing him to act as “the ruler of this world” *for now*. But his time is coming...

#### **2. The Age-Old Temptation** (Matthew 4:1-9)

- Famously, Jesus allowed Satan (as “the ruler of this world”) to tempt him in the wilderness with the same temptations we’re so prone to – the temptations to strive for glory and be “better than.” In the desert, Satan tempted Jesus in three specific ways:
  - a. Tempted to Prove Superiority – “If you’re really God, you shouldn’t go hungry – that’s *beneath you*. You deserve to have what you desire.”
  - b. Tempted to Prove Himself to Others – “If you’re really God, prove yourself publicly – and gain glory and recognition like God himself – so people will applaud you and bow down to you.”
  - c. Tempted to Take Shortcuts – “You can have all of creation (and the people you came to save) *easily*, if you just take the shortcut I’m offering you. No need for you to suffer and die...”

#### **3. Reflecting Glory to God** (Matthew 4:9-11)

- Jesus’ response to Satan’s final temptation (to take a shortcut to glory) shows us how to respond to the part of us that is so prone to striving and comparing and competing with others: “You must *worship* the Lord God and serve him *only*.”
- We, like Satan, were made to worship God, not to *be worshipped*. We were made to reflect God’s glory back to him – because our only real glory comes from giving God the glory he deserves.
- Worshipping God – with our words, our heart and our deeds – is the key to overcoming the cancer of “better than” in our lives, because he is the only one who deserves our worship – not us.

## **ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE**

*These passages may provide additional insights related to the subject of this week's message. All verses are NLT unless otherwise noted.*

Psalms 71:5-8; John 4:23-24; John 14:27-31; Hebrews 2:18; James 4:7-8; Revelation 12:7-12

Video of the Week: [The Test](#) by the Bible Project

## **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION**

1. Looking back on your life so far, what was one achievement or accomplishment that brought you “glory” (recognition and acclaim)? How did that recognition make you feel?
2. Is there anything wrong with earning the acclaim of others by our accomplishments and achievements? Why or why not?
3. Read Isaiah 14:12-15 again. What, exactly, did Satan do that was so bad that it got him “thrown down” from heaven? How was Satan’s sin similar to humanity’s own “original sin”?
4. As pointed out in the message, Satan was just another created being (an angel). Knowing that he was going to rebel (and “destroy the nations”), why in the world did God create him in the first place?
5. By your understanding, how, exactly, does focusing our lives on serving and worshipping God work to overcome “the cancer of ‘better than’”? How does that process work?
6. What’s one area of your life right now (e.g., work, family, friends...FaceBook?) where comparison and competition might be causing you to fall into the “better than” trap? How can you turn that area into an opportunity to bring God (not yourself...) glory?