

The Stewardship JOURNAL

October 18, 2021

**From the Desk of Our
Executive Director**

**What Every Christian Should
Know About Satan**

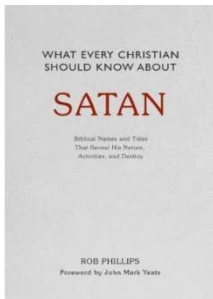
The Offering's New Normal

**Avoiding 4 Common Mistakes
Churches Make With Online Giving**

So Easy a Caveman Could Do It

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

From the Desk of Our Executive Director



MBC's Director of Ministry Support & Apologetics, Rob Phillips, has a new book entitled ***What Every Christian Should Know About Satan***. Rob does an outstanding job of directing the apologetics ministry of the MBC. If you have read any of his weekly columns in *The Pathway*, you know how thorough, detailed, and helpful his writing is. You will find the same scholarship in this new book published by MBC's High Street Press. Mark Brooks interviews Rob about his new book in our lead post. At the end, you will find a way you can get a copy.

Here is a preview of what you can expect in the pages that follow:

How much of your offering now comes online? The pandemic pushed online giving to the forefront for every church. Mark Brooks, The Stewardship Coach, gives his thoughts of how digital giving has changed our offerings in his post entitled ***The Offering's New Normal***. Mark says it well when he writes, "the offering is not dead; it's different."

The **Bonus Section** adds to the discussion of the offering by sharing the four most common mistakes to avoid with your online giving platform.

Do you ever have problems figuring out how to use technology? If so, you will love this week's Mission and Ministry Moment entitled ***So Easy a Caveman Could Do It***. It's a fun play on how technology can often baffle us and focuses on using technology in giving. This is one example of the new normal of the offering.

Remember, if you know of someone who would like to receive the *Journal*, please send them this link for easy signup <https://mobaptist.org/stewardship/stewardship-journal/>.

We are looking forward to seeing you next week at the MBC Annual Meeting in Branson. Stop by and say hello and let us know how the *Journal* has helped you this year.

Advancing the Gospel!

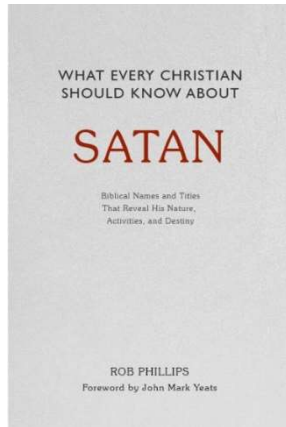


Dr. John Yeats

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

What Every Christian Should Know About Satan

Rob Phillips, MBC Director of Ministry Support



What Every Christian Should Know About Satan is a new book published by MBC Director of Ministry Support Rob Phillips. Phillips also directs the apologetics ministry of the MBC. Phillips' book on Satan explores more than a dozen biblical names and titles that reveal the evil one's character, tactics, and ultimate destiny in hell. Mark Brooks, The Stewardship Coach, talks with Rob about his new book in our lead post.

MB: Rob, first, congratulations on your new book. Reading your book made me feel like I was back at Southwestern Seminary! This book is a gem of information about our adversary that every pastor should have on his shelf. What prompted you to write this book? What are your hopes and goals?

RP: In reading through the Bible, I was struck by the number of diverse names and titles ascribed to Satan. My curiosity gave way to deeper study. And while there are many excellent books and other resources on Satan, I wanted to focus on what his names and titles reveal about his nature and activities. One of the more interesting discoveries was that the Hebrew word for accuser -- *satan* (or *ho satan* -- "the satan") -- in the Old Testament sometimes refers to humans, sometimes to angelic beings, and once to the Angel of the LORD -- the preincarnate Christ. The context of the Scripture passage tells us the type of accuser we're dealing with. Of course, the evil one is more than an accuser; he's our adversary, our ultimate enemy.

My hope for this book is that pastors and laypersons have a readable resource for personal or group study. We shouldn't be obsessed with an interest in the evil one, but we should have a basic understanding of our enemy.

MB: Where do you find most people go wrong in their views of Satan, and how does that impact their lives?

RP: I think it was C.S. Lewis who warned against two extremes. One extreme is to embrace a paralyzing fear of Satan; the other extreme is to never give him a thought. When Christians have a morbid, incapacitating fear of Satan, they give him more credit than he deserves -- and more power over us than is warranted. Satan is not God's equal. He's a created being with limited faculties. I love what the apostle John records in Revelation 20:1. An unnamed angel -- not Michael or Gabriel, but a nondescript messenger of God -- is sent down from heaven to bind Satan in chains and throw him into the abyss. It's as if God said, "Let the kid do it." What a great illustration of God's sovereignty and Satan's limited power.

On the other hand, if we fail to give Satan due consideration -- to think he has no power to tempt us or deceive us -- we're in danger of falling into grievous sin. Remember that even Michael the archangel did not rebuke Satan when they disputed over the body of Moses. Instead, Michael said, "The Lord rebuke you!" (Jude 9). A biblically faithful approach to the evil one recognizes both his retained power and his limitations.

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

What Every Christian Should Know About Satan

MB: What about Christians? Is the typical church member any different in their view of Satan? And what impact does that have on churches?

RP: One movement by liberal scholars over the last century has been to “de-mythologize” the Bible – that is, to strip away the miracles of Jesus and place the spiritual realm in the same category as legends or ghost stories that somehow found their way into the Scriptures. Certainly, Christians seem to give more credibility to the Bible and its characters than the unbelieving world does. But I’d like to see us, in our churches, spend a little more time examining what the Bible has to say about Satan and evil spirits.

Jesus clearly taught that Satan and evil spirits are real. He faced Satan in the wilderness right at the start of his earthly ministry. He spoke to and cast out demons on numerous occasions. So, the more we understand about Satan, evil spirits, and the unseen realm, the more clearly we see the redemptive role of Jesus, who defeated Satan, sin, and death for us.

MB: Rob, you know I tend to be single-minded, and I think all the time about how things impact giving. I found myself reading your pages and saying, “That is why people struggle with giving away money!” But again, I tend to think that way. This is *The Stewardship Journal*, so what is your view of how Satan impacts stewardship, and what can a pastor do about that?

RP: Satan is happy to help us erect idols in our lives. Money can be an idol. Our work can be an idol. Our own selfish desires can rise up and demand our worship. If Satan can get us to think, “This is my money, my career, my life,” he can cause us to miss out on the blessings of generosity. In some of his parables, Jesus tells us about the rewards awaiting those who are faithful stewards – and the consequences of poor stewardship. As stewards, we are not owners, but managers of all God has entrusted to us. Satan works hard to convince us otherwise.

MB: Rob, every chapter ends with discussion questions. Share with us your idea on how this book can be used in a church.

RP: Like the other resources the Missouri Baptist Convention provides through High Street Press – for example, *What Every Christian Should Know about Salvation* and *What Every Christian Should Know about the Trinity* – this book is designed for pastors and laypersons alike. Our hope is that it’s an in-depth but readable resource that may be used for personal or group study.

You can see and order all the resources of High Street Press at <http://www.highstreet.press>.

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

Current Events and Relevant Thoughts From:

The Stewardship Coach

Mark Brooks

The Offering's New Normal



COVID-19 forced every church to rethink how they collected the offering. In 2011, **only 14%** of churches offered any type of online giving option. Ten years later, nearly every church in America provides some type of online giving. As with many things, the pandemic sped up a trend of cashless gifts that was yearly gaining steam as Americans moved almost completely away from cash and checks.

With so much of our giving coming online, especially end-of-year giving, we need to adjust our thinking about how we approach the offering. That is why this edition of *The Stewardship Coach* is entitled ***The Offering's New Normal***. Here are my thoughts on the present and future of the offering.

- **First, the offering is not dead; it's different.** I've been saying this for almost two years now. Surprisingly, giving for healthy churches has stayed relatively steady despite an initial decline. People rallied to continue giving their offerings. So, the virus didn't kill the offering. What changed?

COVID has changed *how* we collect the offering. What percentage of your giving came online before COVID, and what is that number now? Before the pandemic, most churches' percentage of online giving was well below fifty percent. That quickly changed overnight with the lockdown. Churches with existing online platforms fared vastly better than those that had none before the pandemic. The percentage that most of my clients see now is well above 80% or more coming in some digital format. It is not unheard of to talk to churches running nearly 100% of their giving being online. Even as we see more coming back to onsite worship, I believe you will see your online percentage remain well above 70%. At some point soon, all our giving will be online. So, get ready for the future now. And with the demise of cash and checks, if you don't figure out how to collect your members' offerings without "taking up" the offering, you're in for some difficult financial days.

- **Next, the traditional offering is dying because traditional processes are dying.** I know only a few churches that pass a plate, so offerings are not dead yet. This is going to be a regional and size of congregation issue. Red states are less restrictive and cautionary than Blue states. Smaller congregations typically can go back to pre-pandemic practices much easier than larger churches. I do think the trend moving forward will be to continue minimizing physical contact as much as possible. Thus, we may well have seen the last of the offering plate being passed by attendees for most churches. With commerce moving almost exclusively digital, this would have occurred sooner or later. This is our new normal. So, the how of taking up the offering is changing but not the offering.

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

The Offering's New Normal

- I firmly believe, **the offering should *always* be a part of our worship.** Why? First, out of obedience to God's commands. Next, it's a teachable moment for disciples to learn the life principles of stewardship, leading to the typical church gives more time for announcements than setting up their offering to be worshipful. For most churches, the offering is an interruption to worship rather than worship. If you are going to fund present ministries and missions, you must have some kind of offering moment that elevates the biblical principles of stewardship. Challenge your team to make each offering moment something people look forward to. See our Missions and Ministry Moment.

STOP! If you plan out every offering, you **will** see an increase in giving. But you must do it weekly!

- **One major shift in our thinking is the realization that the offering plate is open 24/7/365.** Frankly, every church needs to embrace the idea that its doors are never closed. As a result, we must provide access to the offering plate to those that engage with your church site 24/7/365. At the same time, we need to think outside the Sunday morning box. Throughout the week, you should be sharing the vision of what you are doing and, through hyperlinks to your giving page, challenge people to support that vision. If I can pray any time the Spirit moves me, why can't I give any time the Spirit moves me? A robust online giving platform provides you with that opportunity.
- **There is only one way to Heaven, but you had better provide multiple ways for people to give.** Multiple studies confirm this. From traditional to digital, you must provide all the current means your members use to do commerce. At <https://www.onlinegiving.org/>, we offer churches twelve ways, including cryptocurrency. And, yes, cryptocurrency is in your future so get ready.



Let me end by repeating what I said at first, the offering is not dead; it's just different. I would agree that, at least in this instance, there is no going back to the way the offering was handled. Let's not cry over spilled milk but determine how we can increase giving and givers using today's tools! Your vision is too vital not to be fully funded.



Mark Brooks – The Stewardship Coach
mark@acts17generosity.com

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

Bonus Material

Avoiding 4 Common Mistakes Churches Make With Online Giving

If you want to make online giving work for you, avoid these top 4 mistakes churches make when it comes to online giving. Most churches have some kind of online giving. Yet many are making mistakes in how to properly use this tool.

Mistake #1 – Setting up an online giving site and then forgetting about it. Your members won't magically find your giving site. You have to continually keep online giving in the mind of your donors. Consider running a campaign announcing online giving features, how easy it is, and encouraging members to sign up. Then throughout the year, at various times and across all platforms, encourage people to give online.

Mistake #2 - Not making your giving site easily accessible and clearly visible. Studies show you have less than 10 seconds once a person has landed on your website before they bail out. So, make your giving site easy to find and easy to use. It doesn't have to be a flashing light, but people should not have to search for your giving site.

Mistake #3 - Not utilizing clickable links to your giving site. Every print and digital communication should always contain a clickable link for ease of use that sends people directly to the giving page. A clickable link in a Social Media post is a great way to show people what their gift accomplishes while allowing them to give. Here is a sample of a link that is clickable, <https://www.onlinegiving.org/>.

Mistake #4 - Not giving multiple options by which people can give online. You have to have all the major platforms people use today. From text giving to recurring giving, you want to provide multiple options, thus allowing people to use what they like best.

At OnlineGiving.org, <https://www.onlinegiving.org/>, we give you 12 different methods of giving!

The overall goal for online giving is to make it easy for people to give so that they WILL give! The easier you make it for people to give, the more likely they will GIVE! So, avoid these four common mistakes to improve your chances of being fully funded!

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

Missions and Ministry Moment: Setting Up Your Offering

Every week we provide what are called offering talks. We have found that the easiest way to see an increase in giving is to improve how you approach the offering time. Instead of telling people they don't have to give, we like to show them what giving to a church accomplishes. By showing people your mission and ministry focus, you create a desire in your attendees to *want* to give to support that life change. That's why we call them Missions and Ministry Moments.

You can read them exactly how we write them or use them as idea starters for how the message would fit your culture and context. Our goal is to develop lifetime stewards, but we must get the first gift to begin them on the journey. Here is this week's offering talk.

So Easy a Cave Man Could Do It

Do you remember the ads that featured the Caveman? They would always tell us that it was so easy even a caveman could do it. Then remember the show, "Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader?" Those kinds of things can often drive us nuts as what seems so simple to some confounds other people, like programming your VCR. For you Millennials, VCR means...never mind! Anyway, my point is, you might have to call your fifth grader to help you understand how to work your phone or computer. Does anyone identify with that? Me, too! I need caveman simplicity!

I have good news for you. Giving here CHURCH NAME is so easy and convenient that a caveman like me can do it. (Give a brief overview of your giving platform and how to access it.)

We desire to provide you with the easiest, quickest, and most secure way to give. Your faithful generosity continues to allow us to impact our city for Jesus! Find the way of giving that works best for you. Thanks for giving!
