

church of Christ at Greenwood

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Surprisingly Lethal

In 2018, the United States Centers for Disease Control compiled a study of the deadliest animals by state; in other words, what animal is most likely to kill you in each state (at least those which provided sufficient data for inclusion). Bears, wolves, snakes, alligators, etc? Well, some might surprise you! Among the deadliest animals —

Flying, biting, and stinging insects, in 7 states;
Deer or moose, in 7 states, including Indiana;
Cattle or bison, in 5 states;
and **Dogs**, in 7 states!

Things are not always as they appear or as we expect, and so it is in the spiritual realm also. The apostle Paul warned the Christians in Corinth of “false apostles, deceitful workers, **disguising** themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan **disguises** himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also **disguise** themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.” (2 Corinthians 11.13-15, emp. added) Jesus said, “There is no truth in [the devil]. Whenever he speaks a **lie**, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a **liar** and the father of **lies**.” (John 8.44, emp. added)

Consistent with his nature, deceptive tactics, and manipulative ways, Satan has perverted many things that are themselves *not* inherently evil. For example, **religious fervor** pleases the Lord and blesses the zealous one when properly channeled according to divine will (Matthew 7.21-23; John 14.15; 1 John 5.3), but corrupted zeal brings condemnation (e.g. 1 Samuel 13.8-14; Matthew 15.1-9). **Physical intimacy** was created by God Himself as a blessing to be singularly enjoyed within the confines of marriage (Genesis 1.26-27; 2.18-24; 1.31), but Satan’s influence has violated its sanctity and brought judgment (Hebrews 13.4). **Material wealth** comes from God for man’s benefit and pleasure (Ecclesiastes 5.18-20), but the devil tempts human hearts to covetousness and selfishness (Ephesians 5.5; Colossians 3.5; 1 Timothy 6.17-19). “*We are not ignorant of his schemes*” (2 Corinthians 2.11).

“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith...”
(1 Peter 5.8-9)

~jeremy paschall