

Satanology

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SATANOLOGY--PART 1

Preached By W. E. Best

At Kingwood Assembly of Christ

On Sunday February 22, 2004

Satan was not created in his present, corrupt form. He was created finitely perfect. His original creation is described in Ezekiel 28. Satan is included as one created by Jesus Christ, because he is one of the invisible powers who owe their existence to the Son of God (Col. 1:16, 17).

Satan's appearance to Eve in the garden of Eden was not his origin. Satan originated when Lucifer, his former name, rebelled against God and became what he is. God, the Creator of all things, did not create Satan as Satan. He created Lucifer as the bright and shining one. Lucifer surpassed the other heavenly beings except Michael and Gabriel. The order of the angels was subject to him. Unlike God, who is Spirit (John 4:24), Lucifer was a created spirit being. He is neither self-existent nor eternal.

No reference is made in the first chapters of Genesis to the creation of this angelic creature. Both Isaiah and Ezekiel recorded the original state of Lucifer before his fall and the sin that caused his fall (Is. 14; Ezek. 28). Although the primary reference may be to the fall of the proud king of Babylon and the leader or prince of Tyre, the message goes beyond them. Who filled the king of Babylon and the leader of Tyre with pride and self-confidence? These rulers were nothing more than puppets under the control of Satan. When Lucifer was an unsinning angel, he was perfect: "You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created, Until unrighteousness was found in you" (Ezek. 28:15 NASB). Such language as "created" and "blameless in your ways" could not apply to the leader of Tyre. However, the expression does apply to Lucifer before his fall.

In his prophetic vision, Ezekiel stood on the threshold of angelic history and saw in prospect the end of Satan's career. In his prophetic vision, Isaiah stood at the end of history and saw in retrospect what he recorded. In order to make the identity sure, Satan was directly addressed: "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn..." (Is. 14:12 NASB). The scene then turned back to the beginning of his fall. His original position and his declaration of independence are recorded in Isaiah 14:12-14.

Ezekiel's lamentation expressed over the prince of Tyre, while addressed to an earthly potentate, goes beyond the earthly prince and applies to one of greater power and wickedness (Ezek. 28). The real, earthly ruler of Tyre was Satan working through the prince. The person described here under the title of

“leader [prince] of Tyre” is discovered to be the chief among the angels, Lucifer. The language employed in Ezekiel 28 could never apply to a heathen leader during the time of Ezekiel or any other time, except as he is a type of the Antichrist. The leader of Tyre was a type of the Antichrist in his relation to the greatest of angels, Lucifer, in his fallen state.

The answer to two questions should suffice to disprove the theory that Ezekiel was comparing the leader of Tyre with Adam and what happened to him: (1) Was the leader of Tyre created, or was he propagated by human parents? He was propagated by human parents, but the one of whom Ezekiel wrote was created. (2) Was the leader of Tyre perfect? He was not perfect. Ezekiel spoke of one who was created finitely perfect; but by his own sin, he became Satan.

Before Lucifer’s fall, a region was committed to his rule; but his rulership was subordinate to God: “You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire” (Ezek. 28:14 NASB). No one should doubt that Lucifer at one time held a responsible position in the heavens. This anointed cherub had access to the throne of God.

There was a time before man when the world prince of God renounced his allegiance to the most High, and thereby the bright and shining one became the great adversary of God. He remains that adversary until he shall be put in his place in the bottomless pit for eternity.

Speculation must be avoided and ignorance shunned concerning Lucifer’s fall. We are not to be wise above what is written, but we are to be wise in what has been written. (1) That heaven was Lucifer’s original abode cannot be denied (Luke 10:18). (2) The reason for his fall is given (I Tim. 3:6; Is. 14:13, 14). (3) Since God prepared for Adam, the representative head of mankind, an abode—the garden of Eden—suitable for his highest enjoyment, did He not do the same for Lucifer, the head of the angelic beings? (4) Satan came as a fallen creature to the garden of Eden. There is no Biblical proof that the Eden of Ezekiel 28 and the Eden of Genesis 2:8 occupied the same place. (5) The Eden in Genesis is never called the garden of God, but the Eden of Ezekiel 28 is called the garden of God. The garden of Eden in Ezekiel was a mineral garden; whereas, the garden of Eden in Genesis was a vegetable garden. Since Lucifer was a spirit being without a body, the mineral garden of Eden was his abode. Adam was taken from dust in the vegetable garden of Eden to which he would return at death.

Lucifer sinned, and the Lord said to him, “By the multitude of your iniquities, In the unrighteousness of your trade, You profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; It has consumed you, And I have turned you to ashes on the earth In the eyes of all who see you” (Ezek. 28:18 NASB). Lucifer’s position enabled him to traffic with the angels that were under his charge, and the unrighteousness of his trade was manifested. His trafficking suggests slander and may refer to his going among the angels to secure their allegiance to his program of rebellion against God. He was a politician prior to the fall of Adam and Eve.

There was only one will before Lucifer fell, and that was the will of God. Satan brought his will into the world and influenced man to exercise his will. Recorded in Isaiah 14:13-14 are the following phases of Lucifer’s attack against God:

1. Lucifer expressed his first phase of attack against God: "I will ascend to heaven" (Is. 14:13 NASB). He was determined to carry his government into the third heaven, the place of God's abode (II Cor. 12:1-4). In Christ's resurrection and ascension, He is seated in heaven "far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion" (Eph. 1:20, 21). There are three distinct areas of residence: (1) the eternal realm, which is Divine; (2) the celestial region, which is heavenly; and (3) the terrestrial region, which is earthly. God has a trinity of sons: (1) the eternal, uncreated, unique Son who is co-equal with the Father; (2) the angelic sons (Job 38:4-7); and (3) the sons of God, Christians. The eternal Son created both the celestial sons and the human sons (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16; Gen. 1:26). The residence of each of the trinity of sons is easily determined. The residence of the eternal Son is the eternal realm; the angelic sons, the celestial realm; and the human sons, the terrestrial realm. Lucifer, "star of the morning, son of the dawn" (Is. 14:12), coveted the Divine realm and was unwilling to live in his realm where God had placed him. He had a place of authority, but he was dissatisfied with his delegated authority. His knowledge of God's purpose caused him to rebel. He wanted the place where God is. After his fall, he put into the hearts of our first parents the desire to be like God. Therefore, what happened to Lucifer has been brought into the human stream. All the unregenerate desire independence from God.

2. Lucifer expressed his second phase of attack against God: "I will raise my throne above the stars of God" (Is. 14:13 NASB). Stars are used two ways in Scripture: (1) They are used to refer to the stars in the stellar system, and (2) they are used to designate messengers (Job 38:7; Dan. 12:3; Jude 13; Rev. 1:16, 20; 12:4). Our text refers to messengers of God. Those who think Lucifer made his second attack after God created the earth and made it habitable for man, and then God created man to have dominion over the earth, have the wrong concept of the origin of sin. Lucifer's rebellion against God was the origin of sin. He was already in the garden of Eden to tempt Adam as soon as God created him.

3. Lucifer expressed the third phase of his attack against God: "I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north" (Is. 14:13 NASB). The mount is a symbol of Divine government. The assembly refers to Israel; therefore, Lucifer's determination aims at rulership in the kingdom, because Israel and the kingdom are inseparable. Israel's foes come from the north (Ezek. 38), and attacks on the Christian faith come from the hidden region.

4. Lucifer expressed his fourth phase of attack against God: "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds" (Is. 14:14 NASB). The significance of this phase of attack is discovered in the meaning of the word "cloud." Jehovah, the covenant God, appeared in the clouds (Ex. 16:10). He rides on a swift cloud (Ps. 104:3; Is. 19:1). Jesus Christ ascended in a cloud (Acts 1:9). When He returns, He will come in a cloud (Rev. 1:7; I Thess. 4:17). Lucifer's intention was to rise above Jehovah.

5. Lucifer expressed his fifth phase of attack against God: "I will make myself like the Most High" (Is. 14:14 NASB). This is the climax. Satan told Eve in the garden of Eden that she would be like God if she ate of the forbidden tree. This is the key to the motives and methods of Satanic operations. His purpose is to gain authority over heaven and earth. Of all the names ascribed to God, why did Lucifer choose the title "Most High"? The Most High God is the possessor of heaven and earth, and Lucifer desires to be the possessor of heaven and earth (II Thess. 2:1-12). Satan does not wish to make a hell of earth. He wants it

intact for himself.

God determined to permit Satan to run his course in order for the universe of mankind to see what the highest creature, the son of the morning, apart from God can and would do. The spirit of independence will be allowed to expand to its highest fruition. This proves that apart from God there is no life, peace, joy, satisfaction, contentment, etc. People seeking to do the will of God are the most contented. No person saved by grace desires to abrogate to himself authority that he knows belongs to God. In what way could the creature be like the Creator? He can never possess the inherent attributes of God. Satan sought to be like God in independence. This same independence is manifested in all unregenerate persons.

The quality of the heavenly state before the fall was the fact that there was but one will, the will of God. No sooner had time begun when a second will, which opposed the will of God, came into existence. The second will originated in the heart of Lucifer who degenerated into Satan. When Lucifer was unwilling to rule as a subordinate, he became a traitor. Treason is the violation of a subject's allegiance to his sovereign. This was the beginning of a conflict that will intensify until the coming of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. Since the time Lucifer exercised his will contrary to the will of God, there have been many wills. In the eternal state, there will be only one will. This is the distinguishing characteristic between eternity and time.

Satan's power and authority today as the fallen one are within the purpose of the sovereign God (Matt. 4:8-10; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Eph. 2:2). There is no power except by God (Rom. 13:1). The sovereignty of God is His absolute and independent right to dispose of all creatures according to His pleasure. The will of God is called His pleasure in opposition to any constraint, restraint, or obligation. Intelligent creatures may do things voluntarily but not according to their pleasure, because there is a degree of restraint in every subject to his sovereign. However, this can never be true of God. God's will is the first and not the second in every movement in time. No mortal individual is absolutely free. God alone is absolutely free; therefore, what He does is according to the good pleasure of His will (Eph. 1:5).

The earth has always been a reflection of its inhabitants. When Lucifer fell, the garden of God (Ezek. 28:13) became chaotic (Gen. 1:2). When Adam was created upright, the world was a garden of Eden. When he fell, God cursed the ground for man's sake, and it became the reflection of man's depravity. An opposing will to God's will was the cause of the fall of both Lucifer and man. Sin had its origin with Lucifer, not with Adam. The only reference in the Bible to the exact origin of sin is Ezekiel 28:15—"You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created, Until unrighteousness was found in you." This was the beginning of sin with the angelic host. Sin with mankind began with Adam in the garden of Eden. The sinfulness of Adam's sin is not discovered by comparing it with the wickedness in the human sphere, but by a due comparison of it with the holiness of God. Satan was not only the first actor in sin, but he was also the first tempter to sin.

As God is the embodiment of good, Satan in his restricted sphere is the embodiment of evil. God being infinite is infinitely good. Satan being finite is evil to the extent of his resources and means. The first sin committed not only bears much on our understanding of the one who committed it, but it is also the pattern of all sin to follow. Satan's entire career is an unbroken manifestation of self-will. Scripture

indicts him for this sin:

1. “How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High” (Is. 14:12-14 NASB).

2. “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, That they may see you” (Ezek. 28:17 NASB).

Pride, which is self-will, self-esteem, conceit, and egotism, is the usual definition of Lucifer’s sin. Lucifer’s self-will prompted him to unholy ambition. He repudiated the Creator and displayed dissatisfaction with the subordinate position to which he had been Divinely appointed. Lucifer proposed by ambition and self-promotion to advance himself to the highest heaven and into the likeness of the sovereign God of the universe.

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SATANOLOGY--PART 2

Preached By W. E. Best

At Kingwood Assembly of Christ

On Sunday February 29, 2004

Satan is a fallen spirit being, but he is not without form. He is a person. The discussion of Satan's form should be preceded by considering that God has form. Moses testified that he witnessed God's form when he asked to see His glory: "Then Moses said, show me Thy glory! And He said, I Myself will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion. But He said, You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live! Then the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen" (Ex. 33:18-23 NASB).

When Moses pitched the tabernacle outside the camp of the disobedient Israelites and entered the tabernacle, the Lord spoke to him face to face: "And it came about, whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the LORD would speak with Moses....Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent" (Ex. 33:9, 11 NASB). The apostle Paul also confirmed the truth that God has form (Phil. 2:6; Rom. 5:14).

God is spirit: "Jesus said to her, Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father. You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:21-24 NASB). The words "God is spirit" describe the nature of God. The doctrine of the trinity does not contradict the essential nature of God. Spirit is not matter but a nonmaterial subject. Since God is spirit, the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ could go through a closed door. The substance of God is invisible, un compounded, and indestructible. Spirit is invisible; therefore, God is invisible (Col. 1:15; I Tim. 1:17).

God is not a corporeal being. The incorporeal nature of God is the basis for the commandment that

forbids the worship of the likeness of anything of a corporeal nature (Ex. 20:4, 5; Deut. 4:14-19). In the Biblical view of things, a spirit may become corporeal by dwelling in a body (Eccl. 12:7; I Thess. 5:23). The statement that God made to Moses, "...you shall see My back" (Ex. 33:23), might lead to the idea that God is corporeal; but the context contradicts such an idea. God is known by His actions and manifestations (Rom. 1:19, 20). God's glory (Ex. 33:22) and His moral character (Ex. 34:5-8) were manifested to Moses.

God is spirit in the same way that God is light and God is love. We would not say God is "a" light or God is "a" love. God is so inaccessible that we cannot know Him perfectly. On the other hand, God is so greatly manifested in nature and in Holy Scripture that we cannot be totally ignorant of His existence (Rom. 1:18-23; Ps. 19:1-11). As the light from the sun manifests other things to us, it also manifests itself to us. God who manifests things to us also manifests Himself to us: "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20 NASB). The light of reason that God gives us to understand other things (John 1:9) enables us to understand the existence of God.

While God is pure spirit being, one must not suppose that He is without form. God is not some electromagnetic radiation that permeates space. The eternal Deity of Christ is confirmed by the statement "existed in the form of God" (Phil. 2:6 NASB). Form is equivalent to our phrase "specific character." God is pure spirit substance, and His form is that body of qualities that distinguish God from all other spirit beings. Jesus Christ had all those qualities that make God, God. Form carries with it the idea of shape. One does not think about a sword without visualizing shape, and no one thinks about God without visualizing form. Paul did not attempt to explain the form in Philippians 2:6. There is an unspeakable contrast between the heavenly and the earthly. Eliphaz said to Job, "...but I could not discern its appearance; A form was before my eyes; There was silence, then I heard a voice: Can mankind be just before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?" (Job 4:16, 17 NASB).

Since God is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, how can He have form? The answer to this question is explained by Jesus Christ's statement concerning Himself: "And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, even the Son of Man" (John 3:13 NASB). While Jesus Christ was here on earth, His human body restrained Him. He became hungry and weary, but He surrendered none of His attributes as God absolutely considered. The physical body of Jesus Christ, which is the form of man, did not hinder His omnipresence; likewise, the spirit form of God does not hinder His omnipresence.

God who has form assumed forms by which Deity is manifested. God who created man in God's image and after God's likeness manifested Deity to men in Jesus Christ in the form of man. (Study Gen. 18:2 and Dan. 3:25.) Adam was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26); thus, he was a type of Christ (Rom. 5:14). The Greek word for "type" (*tupos*, translated mark, place, print) originally meant the mark caused by a blow (John 20:25). It came to mean the figure that a tool bears and hence a pattern or model. Finally, it came to mean a person or event prefigured by someone or something.

The incarnate Son is the ultimate in the manifestation of God's form. He assumed the form of a servant by coming into the world in the likeness of men (Phil. 2:7). He did not become merely a man; but by taking the form of a servant, He came into a state in which He appeared to unregenerate people as nothing more than man. He remained God when He assumed humanity; therefore, He had only the appearance of man. He came in the "likeness" of sinful flesh. In the spirit of unselfishness and self-sacrifice, Christ assumed the form of a servant. Being in the form of God proves Christ was one with the Father. Being in the form of a servant proves what He unselfishly did for the elect. Christ did not change one form of being for another. He changed only His appearance by assuming a human nature. "To be" and "to be manifested" are distinct. There was no metamorphosis of substance in Paul's statement: "who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:6, 7 NASB).

To escape an anthropomorphic god, we do not throw ourselves at the feet of a morphic god. God does not lack form. He is the ethical God to be loved and trusted. We may feel awe in the presence of the absolute, as we feel awe in the presence of a storm or flood. However, our feeling of awe in the presence of a storm does not cause us to love but to fear. God revealed to His own that He loves us by sacrificing Himself for us. Self-abnegation, not self-depreciation, is commended to us in Philippians 2. Christ did not stand on His right of retaining the position of equality with the Father in glory that He enjoyed eternally before assuming a human nature, but He was willing for our sake to become subordinate to the Father as He assumed the form of a servant.

Does God have form? "For in Him [Christ] all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Col. 2:9 NASB). That is form. There is nothing in Scripture to indicate that when we step out of time into eternity we will see either the Father or the Holy Spirit. The only manifestation of the Divine Triunity is Jesus Christ. He is in His glorified body. We will recognize Him, and He will be our King of kings and Lord of lords throughout eternity.

While Satan is a fallen spirit being, one should not suppose that he, any more than God, is without form. The form of Satan is confirmed by the Biblical description of his creation: (1) He was created "full of wisdom and perfect in beauty" (Ezek. 28:12 NASB). Who but a person with form could be described in such a manner? Beauty can be applied to things as well as persons, but wisdom can be applied only to living beings. (2) He was created as a cherub that covers (Ezek. 28:14). He was anointed. The word "anointed" is used with reference to Satan only one time in the Old Testament, and it has the significance of outspreading wings. Lucifer, therefore, was the overspreading cherub that covers. (3) The heavenly creatures had form. The representation of the cherub over the mercy seat had form (Ex. 25:20). The four living creatures of Ezekiel 1:5 had the likeness of a man. The seraphim of Isaiah 6 had form. The angels appeared in form to Lot in Genesis 19. The human form in general is emphasized in that chapter.

Lucifer, who became Satan in his fall, retained form that carries the idea of shape. The characteristics of intelligence (Eph. 6:11), knowledge (Rev. 12:12), memory (Matt. 4:6), will (Is. 14:13, 14; II Tim. 2:26), speech (Job 1:9, 10), emotions (I Tim. 3:6), and wrath (Rev. 12:12) are ascribed to Satan as a person, and a person has form. The personality of Satan sounds crude to this scientific age. It may sound to many like

spooks, ghosts, and myths. The modern idea of Satan resembles the concept that since men voted the Devil out, then the Devil is gone. If that is true, we would like to know who is carrying on his work.

Satan, who has form, assumes many forms by which evil is manifested. He took the form of a serpent to deceive Eve. The serpent was the most clever of all the beasts that God had created. This cleverness was the harmless cleverness patterned after being “shrewd as serpents” (Matt. 10:16 NASB). The serpent’s speaking emanated from Satan, not the serpent. The serpent was only the form through which Satan operated. Human beings are not beyond being used of the Devil to speak the things he desires rather than speaking the things of God. Peter illustrates this when he was rebuked by the Lord for acting like Satan (Matt. 16:21-23). Satan is an invisible spirit being; thus, he disguises his true motive.

Satan disguised himself in the garden of Eden as an angel of light. He began his confrontation with Eve by asking a question. He promised greater power and glory than Adam and Eve possessed. The Devil injected into Eve’s heart the principle of self-love; and through Eve, he reached Adam. In this manner, our first parents plunged from God-consciousness to self-consciousness. Satan blinds the minds of unregenerate people by assuming an optimistic view based on self-consciousness. This world is governed by Satan (I John 5:19), as far as people are concerned. His spirit works in the children of disobedience. All persons disobedient to God’s word are the workers of Satan. However, there is a Ruler (God) overruling and permitting Satan to operate.

The ultimate of Satan’s form will be in the coming Antichrist (II Thess. 2; Rev. 13). The mystery of Godliness had its embodiment in the Lord Jesus, and the mystery of iniquity will find its embodiment in the Antichrist. Saul, the first king of Israel, stood from his shoulders upward higher than any of the people (I Sam. 9:2). He prefigured the coming of the man of sin, who in intelligence, governmental power, and Satanic might will tower above all of his contemporaries (Rev. 13:4). The Antichrist will be charisma personified. Saul blatantly performed the office of a Levite (I Sam. 13:9). The time of his reign was immediately before that of David, and the Antichrist will immediately precede the Son of David, David’s Lord. Saul was a mighty warrior (I Sam. 11:11; 13:1-4; 15:4). He was a rebel against God (I Sam. 15:11). He hated David, and the Antichrist will hate God (I Sam. 18:7, 8, 11). This wicked king slew the servants of God, and Antichrist will do the same (I Sam. 22:17, 18). Saul had communication with evil spirits (I Sam. 28:7-14). He died by the sword (I Sam. 31:4, 5).

No one questions that David is a type of Jesus Christ. Since Jesus Christ is the greater David, Saul was a type of Christ’s opponent. The first king of Israel retained the throne after he was Divinely rejected. David, the true king chosen by God, was hunted like a bird on the mountains and found his refuge in the cave called Adullam. However, God did not at once intervene by power and take the dignities of the kingdom from Saul, although Saul had lost title to them. As Saul was king for a short period of time and usurped authority, the Antichrist will do likewise.

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SATANOLOGY--PART 3

Preached By W. E. Best

At Kingwood Assembly of Christ

On Sunday March 7, 2004

There are only nineteen direct references to Satan in the Old Testament Scriptures, and fourteen of them are found in Job 1 and 2, leaving only five in the remainder of the Old Testament (I Chr. 21:1; Ps. 109:6; Zech. 3:1, 2). This has been explained on the principle that where lights are brightest, shadows are darkest. Therefore, the complete revelation of God to man is necessary to show us the deepest depths of evil.

Satan came fully into view in the book of Job, one of the ancient books of the Old Testament. God asked Satan where he came from; and he replied, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it" (Job 1:7 NASB). God told Satan that Job was an upright man, one who feared God and turned away from evil. God asked Satan if he had considered his servant Job who is blameless and upright, fearing God and turning away from evil (Job 1:8). Satan's estimation of Job was altogether different: "Does Job fear God for nothing?" (v. 9 NASB). He estimated that Job's character was superficial. He reasoned that if his outward circumstances were different, Job would be different; that underneath his garb of goodness lay impiety, which a change in circumstances would bring to light. Job designated himself as insignificant (Job 40:4) and of unclean lips. However, Job's estimation of himself was not God's estimation: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil" (Job 1:1 NASB).

The true character of Satan is manifested in the book of Job:

1. He has personal existence (Job 1:6, 7, 8, 9, 12; 2:1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7). The personality of his existence is declared elsewhere in Scripture (Matt. 4:3; John 8:44; Acts 26:18; Eph. 6:12; I Thess. 3:5; II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 12:10).
2. Satan is an intruder into the sacred: "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them" (Job 1:6 NASB).
3. Satan is a vagrant, "roaming about on the earth and walking around on it" (Job 1:7 NASB). Since Satan is both zealous and homeless, he is zealous to live in the hearts of men through the agency of demons.

4. Satan is a slanderer of men to God and of God to men. His statement concerning Job is an illustration of the former: “Does Job fear God for nothing?” (Job 1:9 NASB). His encounter with Eve is an illustration of the latter: “Indeed, has God said...” (Gen. 3:1 NASB).

5. Satan is subject to God’s will: “Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him” (Job 1:12 NASB). God drew the line for the Devil’s mistreatment of Job. Satan can do only what God allows.

The word of God names Satan as the originator of deception. He is the great impersonator. He impersonates God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the message of God, and God-called preachers. People in general want something academic or philosophical, but God in His providence has subjected us to what Scripture says not only about the great deceiver himself but also about some of his deceptions. Therefore, the more one knows what the Bible says about the chief deceiver, the easier he can detect the deceptions. The chief deceiver is called by various names: dragon, serpent, Devil, Satan, Apollyon, prince of this world, prince of the power of the air, god of this world, evil one, Beelzebub, etc. As an accuser, Satan is opposed to Jesus Christ as the great high Priest. As the liar, he is a liar from the beginning and the father of lies (John 8:44). As the false prophet, he is opposed to Christ as the true Prophet. As the usurper, he is opposed to Christ as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Satan is now the god of this evil system: “...the whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (I John 5:19). He is the god of this age (Eph. 2:1-3). Satan deceives the whole evil world system. Jesus Christ spoke of him as the ruler of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11 NASB). The whole world that Satan deceives to destruction does not include every person in the world, but it does include the whole evil world system. Christians are in the world, but we are not of it. We have been saved out of it; therefore, we have nothing in common with it.

It has been said that no human hand would have drawn aside the veil to manifest such a skeleton hidden in the closet, especially since Satan’s manifestation dishonors God. Nevertheless, the Bible speaks of “the deep things of Satan,” a title that describes the character of such depths or mysteries (Rev. 2:24 NASB). As God has His mysteries, Satan has his depths. The depths of Satan differ from the depths of God. Satan seeks to conceal his mysteries, but God reveals His mysteries to His own by the Holy Spirit of regeneration. The interpretations of Biblical mysteries are always shorter than the mysteries themselves. For example, Nebuchadnezzar’s vision was a manifestation of himself in a mystery, but Daniel’s interpretation of it was short and to the point (Dan. 2:1-35; 4:4-25). On the other hand, the depths of Satan are short, but the interpretation is long. The teachings that John called “the deep things of Satan” in Revelation 2:24 (NASB) appear within the context of the conceits of sophisters of religion that differed “from the simplicity [*haplotēs*—sincerity, liberality, or single-hearted devotion] and purity of devotion to Christ” (II Cor. 11:3 NASB).

Satan is the deceiver of deceivers, the cheater of cheaters, and the deluder of deluders. He entered the realm of human history for the purpose of deceiving. Eve was deceived by Satan’s subtlety. Three poison

darts produced the deadly wound in Eve's fall: Satan seduced her flesh to lust, her eyes to long for the forbidden, and her pride to covet what she saw (I John 2:15-17). The forbidden fruit was first exhibited as good for food, then as pleasant to the eyes, and then as desirable to make one wise if eaten. Satan was the first commentator unwilling to take God's words as they stand, and Eve should have been on guard. She failed to consult her husband and leaned to her own discretion. Eve was the one deceived. Adam deliberately partook of the fruit, knowing the consequences. Satan proposed only a slight change. He added the negative word "not." The amendment was accepted, and mankind was lost. Eve fell; Adam fell; and we all fell in Adam. Satan repeats that kind of commentary with every generation. He induced one foolish woman to accept his eisegesis. Now, he has theological professors throughout the world following his example. They are false teachers. Error knows no end.

Unregenerate men in this evil age endlessly wander farther and farther from the truth of Holy Scripture. However, the root of all this evil is the great deceiver himself, Satan. As God uses regenerate men for the conversion of others, Satan uses unregenerate men to deceive others. However, Satan cannot deceive the elect of God to their eternal destruction (Matt. 24:24). As Christians delight in converting others, wicked men delight in perverting others: "and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them" (Rom. 1:32 NASB). Where grace does not intervene, sin begets sin, blood touches blood, and murder begets murder (Hos. 4:1-11). Hosea described a time in history when converting agencies were restrained. The time will also come when restraints will be attempted on God's men.

Self-will is in all unregenerate people, because Satan is the god of the evil world system made up of those who are strangers of grace (Eph. 2:1-3). The arrangement of the world is based on complete independence of God. Left to themselves, all men are unwilling to come to Christ because they are hostile toward God. Self-will makes men unreasonable and teaches them to turn the mirror to see themselves independent of all others. Therefore, every man does what is right in his own eyes. However, the sovereign God overrules the natural self-will of the elect and makes them willing in the day of His power. Although self-will reigns in the unregenerate, it does not reign in the regenerate.

Trying to explain away the evil one so long as the world is undeniably filled with evil ones is futile. This is the question that demands an answer: where is the seed from which so many evil ones have sprung? Where did the evil spirit come from that tempts, seduces, deceives, and prompts to rebellion? The mystery is as inexplicable as it is dreadful if man remains ignorant of a spiritual world beneath him and one above him. However, to learn that man's transgression does not have the same consequence that was preceded by the original transgressor gives man hope in spite of his transgression.

What is the difference between the transgression of Satan and the transgression of man? Since Satan is a pure spirit being, his fall was one from which he could never rise. There is no redemption for Satan or the fallen angels, because there was no provision in grace for Satan's transgression. Satan's sin was self-originated; therefore, there is no hope of his recovery. On the other hand, man's sin was not self-originated; therefore, he did not become a satan. Man was not made a pure spirit being. Since there was no representative responsibility with the spirit beings, God did not spare the angels that fell with Lucifer. (Read II Peter 2.) However, there was a representative responsibility with Adam. We sinned and fell in

Adam, but God chose to save some from among mankind.

The last direct reference in the Old Testament to the chief deceiver is Zechariah 3:1-10. Zechariah described Joshua's ministry in defense. Joshua ministered not in the priest's robes but in filthy garments. If as Christians we do our duty, Satan is at our right hand to hinder us. When we do not do our duty, Satan is there to accuse us. Joshua did not plead his own cause. He answered by his counsel. The Lord rebuked Satan (Zech. 3:2). While Satan is at our right hand accusing us, we also have Jesus Christ sitting at the Father's right hand pleading our case. Therefore, there is no doubt as to who will win our case, because greater is He who is in us than he who is the god of this age.

Satan is to be feared by all people, both saved and unsaved. The Christian fears him, but he does not fear that Satan will destroy him, because he is between the hand of the sovereign God and the hand of the crucified Savior. Nevertheless, the Devil can do many destructive things through the Christian. When Peter rebuked Christ, the Lord said, "Begone, Satan!" (Matt. 4:10 NASB). Jesus Christ declared that Satan has no power over Him: "...the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me" (John 14:30 NASB). About the conflict of the cross Christ said, "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out" (John 12:31 NASB). Even in the days of Christ's rejection, He is Lord of all. To Peter, He said, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat" (Luke 22:31 NASB). To Peter, James, and John, the Lord said, "Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14:38 NASB). Moses spoke unadvisedly; Job cursed the day of his birth; Elijah feared Jezebel; and Peter renounced his Lord. Since there is a blemish in every duty we perform and a mixture in every character, our fearing Satan in the following ways is expedient:

1. We are to fear Satan as a lion (I Pet. 5:8). Peter was addressing the chosen of God (I Pet. 1:1; II Pet. 1:1), admonishing us to give diligence to make our calling and election sure. The first Epistle by Peter is filled with practical application of the Christian life. Having cast all our care on Christ, we are commanded to be self-controlled and alert because our adversary, the Devil, is walking about as a lion seeking who to devour.
2. Satan is to be feared more as a serpent: "I wish you would be patient with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are being patient with me. For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband that I may present you as a pure virgin to Christ; but I fear lest by any means, as the snake deceived Eve in his cleverness, that your minds should be seduced from the sincerity and purity of Christ. For indeed the one coming proclaims another Jesus whom we did not proclaim, or if you receive a different spirit which you did not receive, or another gospel which you did not receive, you tolerate well with him" (II Cor. 11:1-4—translation). Paul went from expressing his godly jealousy for the Corinthians, who he gave in marriage to Christ, to his expression of fear lest they had been deceived through the cleverness of Satan. Paul's great concern was the seduction of the minds of the Corinthians from single-hearted devotion to Jesus Christ. Satan's cleverness as a snake is to be dreaded, because he knows more about our weaknesses than we do. We cannot meet him on his own terms; therefore, there is no alternative to putting on the whole armor of God.

3. We are to fear Satan most of all for fashioning himself as a minister of light (II Cor. 11:14). He does his most dastardly work through false teachers/preachers and apostles. (There are no apostles today. In order to be an apostle, one must have seen Jesus Christ in Person—Acts 1:22 and I Cor. 9:1.) Satan takes the form of an angel of light; otherwise, he could not deceive people. Consider those Satan used who are spoken of as being beautiful, strong, mighty, etc. (Study II Cor. 11:13-15.) He is a wolf in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15). Satan is not at war with culture or prosperity. He wants to use people who are prosperous. His desire is for the glory of civilization to be satisfied with his reign. He fosters the religious spirit. Apart from religion, he knows he cannot attain his highest goal—the worship of himself. He is preparing the way for the Antichrist. Satan is willing to give many things that Christianity itself confers, minus devotion to the true and living God. He is an artist. He knows the value of truth; therefore, he stresses some things that are good until they eclipse the things that are bad. He is a liar (John 8:44).

The informed Christian is realistic. He is concerned for what is real or actual. Realism must be distinguished from the speculative, conjectural, or abstract. Some are optimistic when there is no basis for their optimism. An application of this is the deplorable state of Jerusalem and Israel's refusal to trust the Lord during Zephaniah's time of prophesying (Zeph. 3:1-8). Where some people are optimistic without basis, others are pessimistic, because they cannot see beyond the horizontal world system that naturally tends to evil. There is no book more pessimistic and optimistic than the Bible. Vast opposites are presented in the Bible—heaven and hell, light and darkness, truth and error, love and hate, etc. By God's grace, we are both pessimistic and optimistic.

Christians thank God for grace that enables us to be realistic. We are not pessimistic, because we see the defeat and passing away of horizontal evil by the vertical power of the sovereign God of the universe. We do not optimize that the world system is becoming a better place in which to live, because we know "evil men and imposters will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Tim. 3:13 NASB). We can expect nothing else, since the course of this world is governed by the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working in the children of disobedience (Eph. 2:2). Let us lay aside our academic philosophical niceties and face the realism portrayed in God's word.

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