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Satanology: Our Invisible Adversary, the Devil

by

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Introduction

Satanology or the doctrine of Satan is properly a part of *Angelology* since Satan is a fallen angel. It is that part that deals specifically with the ruler of the fallen angels or demons (Matt. 25:42; Rev. 12:7-9). The study of the rest of his hideous kingdom, the fallen angels or demons, is sometimes called *Demonology*. The career of Satan, which extends from the dateless past, before man's creation (Job. 38:7), to eternity future, is inclusive in the Bible and forms a major and an important doctrine of the Word of God.

Some people might question, "Why we should even study about the devil. After all, there is enough trouble in life. Let's just leave him alone." But to do so is to ignore a considerable portion of God's revelation to us in Scripture. Satan is mentioned throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. While our need is to dwell on the riches of Christ rather than on Satan and the demons, we do need to know this doctrine of the Bible that we might be alert to who and what he is. As a major area of God's revelation, the study of Satan teaches us about his character, purposes, the nature of temptation, and the Christian's provision against him. The Bible's teaching about Satan is part of "the faith," the body of God's revealed truth. So the Apostle Peter exhorts us to be alert to the devil and his tactics by standing "firm in the faith," the body of truth that we need know and believe.

1 Peter 5:8-9 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith ... (NIV)¹

Unfortunately, because many people are ignorant of his nature and schemes, they become sitting ducks for his attacks. Some, of course, go way beyond the teaching of Scripture and find a demon behind every problem they face. Rather than accepting responsibility for personal actions, like Eve who blamed the serpent for her choice, such theology seeks to put all the blame on the devil. Others may talk about the devil, but often with tongue-in-cheek. They refuse to believe in a personal devil and ridicule the whole idea. For many Satan or the devil is just an evil influence, or they think of the idea of the devil as merely a synonym for evil but deny that he is a real personal being at work in the world as he is described in the Bible. Ryrie writes:

The denial of Satan's reality usually takes the form of considering the idea of Satan as the personification of evil but not actually a being who has his own separate existence. The idea of "Satan" as a person developed more in New Testament times, and this necessitated, we are told, reinterpretations of the "legends" of the Old Testament, since, it is claimed, they do not contain the idea

of a distinctive demonic figure. In addition, Iranian dualism, it is said, contributed to the Jewish idea of a personal Satan during the Greco-Roman period (see T. H. Gaster, "Satan," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* [New York: Abingdon, 1976], 4:224-8).²

To others he is the keeper of hell, a slithering snake in the grass, or something obviously evil and easily recognized. For others, the "devil" is merely the demon in a bottle of booze, or some macabre, gruesome being with horns, a tail, and of course, the pitch fork which he uses to pitch people into his jail called hell. But Satan isn't the keeper of hell. Biblically speaking, such ideas are nonsense and the product of man's imagination, tradition, and Satan's own deceptions.

As will be demonstrated in the material that follows, Satan is not just an evil, impersonal influence, but a very real person, a fallen angel with supernatural powers. He is also not the keeper of hell. The lake of fire was prepared for him and his angels. Furthermore, it is not the devil who confines people to hell or Hades. It is God who sends men there and later to the lake of fire to join Satan and the demon hosts (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:11-15). Those who populate hell do so only because they have rejected Jesus Christ (John 3:18, 36). This study of Satan will demonstrate that he has many faces, schemes, and approaches and they aren't always obvious or ugly. They may appear very lovely, handsome, sophisticated, educated, polite, and apparently good. But it is all a dangerous sham designed to deceive and defeat.

Wise military leaders and coaches never go into battle without carefully studying their opponents if at all possible. They want to know how they operate, their character, their strengths and weaknesses, their methods or schemes and so on. To be effective against the enemy you must know your enemy so you can be prepared to effectively counter his attacks. For this reason alone, the doctrine of Satanology is a very important study, and one which is often filled with opposition because Satan, the deceiver, never likes to be revealed for who and what he is and how he operates. But Christians need to be informed. The Apostle Paul wrote, "we are not ignorant of his (Satan's) schemes" (2 Cor 2:11b), and "but I am afraid, lest as the serpent (Satan) deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray . . ." (2 Cor 11:3).

The Existence or Reality of Satan

To reject the reality or existence of Satan is to reject the Bible as God's inspired and infallible revelation to man. As God's Word, the Bible is comprehensive in its teaching about the reality of Satan or the devil. His existence is taught from Genesis to Revelation. Seven Old Testament books teach his existence (Genesis, 1 Chronicles, Job, Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah) and every New Testament writer refers to his reality and activity as a personal being. More importantly, Christ also affirmed the fact of Satan and his activity as a personal being.

In twenty-five of the twenty-nine passages in the Gospels which speak of Satan, our Lord is speaking. In some of those passages there can be no question of Christ's accommodating His teaching to the crowd's supposed ignorances or faulty concepts of Satan due to Persian dualism. Notice especially passages like Matthew 13:39; Luke 10:18; and 11:18.³

Some have sought to demythologize our understanding of Satan and demons by appealing to the influence of Persian mythology and its system of dualism as the source of the Bible's concept of Satan and demons, but the Scripture contains nothing of the dualism found in Persian thought. The devil and demons are never presented as independent forces in opposition to God, but as beings created by God who fell from their original place of glory.

The Nature of Satan

As a fallen angel, all that is true of angels in general is true of Satan and his fallen angels (demons).

(1) *He is a Creature*: like all angels, Satan is a creature, created by Christ, the Creator of all things (cf. John 1:1 with Psa. 148:1-5; Col. 1:16; Ezek. 28:13).

(2) *He is a Spirit Being*: Hebrews 1:14 describes angels as spirits and demons are called unclean spirits (Matt. 8:16; 12:45; Luke 7:21; 8:2; 11:26; Acts 19:12; Rev. 16:14). Further, the fact we are told that "we do not wrestle with flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12) also suggest that Satan and his demons are spirit beings. Finally, the fact that Paul describes them as invisible also shows they are spirit beings (Col. 1:16).

(3) *He Has Limitations*: Though extremely powerful, Satan is neither omnipotent, omniscient, nor omnipresent. He simply cannot be everywhere at once. Angels, though spirit beings and very powerful, are not omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent. They

cannot be everywhere at once and this is true of Satan. However, as the chief of his demons forces or as the “prince of the power of the air” (Eph 2:2), he is chief of a vast host of demons who are so numerous as to make Satan’s power and presence seem to be practically ubiquitous or everywhere at once (cf. Mark 5:9).

Because of this limitation, many references to Satan or the devil include his whole kingdom. The person of Satan does not personally tempt each of us for he simply cannot do that. He is only able to do so through his world system and demon hosts. In his appearance when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord (Job 1:6), in the temptation of Christ (Matt. 4:10f), and the entrance into Judas (Luke 22:3) we surely have clear references to the person of Satan himself, but in many other passages, Satan or the devil seems to stand for Satan’s kingdom (see Mark 3:23; 4:15; Luke 13:16; 1 Pet. 5:8-9; Jam. 4:7). It is also comforting to know that Satan is limited. The promise of Scripture is that “greater is He who is in us, than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). For all his power and hatred against God and man, he could do nothing against Job that God did not expressly allow. Therefore, he can be resisted and made to flee (Jam. 4:7), but only by the strength of God made available to believers in Christ (Eph. 6:10-18).

The Personality of Satan

Ryrie gives the following evidence in support of the fact of Satan’s personality:

A. The Traits of Personality

Like the angels, Satan also is said to possess the traits of personality. He shows intelligence (2 Cor. 11:3); he exhibits emotions (Rev. 12:17, anger; Luke 22:31, desire); he demonstrates that he has a will (Isa. 14:12-14; 2 Tim. 2:26).

B. The Pronouns of Personality

Satan is referred to as a person in both Old and New Testaments (Job 1; Matt. 4:1-12). Notice that the information in this latter passage (the temptation of Christ) had to come from the Lord; thus He, by using personal pronouns, attributes personality to Satan.

C. The Moral Responsibility of Personality

If Satan were merely a personification that people have devised to express their ideas of evil, then such a personification could scarcely be held morally responsible for his actions, since, in reality, there is no being who can be held accountable. But Satan is held accountable by the Lord (Matt. 25:41), and this passage reminds us that to deny the reality of Satan requires denying the veracity of Christ’s words.⁴

There is a sobering lesson to this—or should be. If angels like Satan who were so close to God gave way to the pride of seeking to be independent of God and fell in sin, we certainly should learn from this that we might be more careful “to take heed lest we fall” (cf. 1 Cor. 10:12 with 1 Tim. 3:6-7). We should know full well, as with the temptation of Eve, Satan will seek to reduplicate his sin in us by seeking to get us to attempt to live life independently of God as though we were gods ourselves.

The Designations of Satan

Specific Names Applied to Satan

Satan (Job 1:6-9; Matt. 4:10)

The title “Satan” occurs 53 times in 47 verses in the Bible. The Greek word is *satanas* and the Hebrew is *sāʾān*. The primary idea is ‘adversary, one who withstands.’ It points to Satan as the opponent of God, of believers, and all that is right and good. We should note, however, that Satan often appears as an angel of light promising what is supposed to be good (Gen. 3:1f; 2 Cor 11:14), but it is only a sham to further aid him in his work as the arch enemy and adversary in opposition to God and what is truly good.

The Devil (Matt. 4:1, 5, 9; Eph. 4:27; Rev. 12:9; 20:2)

“Devil” is the Greek word *diabollos* which means “slanderer, defamer.” This accentuates his goal and work to impugn the character of God. This is clearly spelled out in 1 Peter 5:8 where he is called “our adversary.” This is not *satanas*, but *o antikos* meaning

“the adversary.” While similar in meaning, it is more explicit from the standpoint of Satan’s adversarial activity as the defamer and maligner of God and believers. Antidikos refers to ‘an opponent in a lawsuit’ often used of a courtroom scene where accusations are made. God indicted Satan, found him guilty, and sentenced him to the Lake of Fire. As will be discussed below, it appears Satan appealed the sentence by calling God unfair, unjust, and unloving. So, as God’s opponent and ours, he is the slanderer.

The Serpent (Rev. 12:9)

This name for Satan looks back to the account in Genesis 3 and the temptation in the Garden. It is designed to remind us of his crafty deception and guile (cf. 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 12:9).

Lucifer, Son of the Morning (Isa. 14:12)

These two names mean “morning star or shining one and son of the dawn (Isa. 14:12). The Hebrew word for Lucifer (KJV translation) is *he,le,l*, literally “the shining one.” It comes from a Hebrew form, *ha,,lal*. Significantly, the form has two meaning: (1) it means “to shine,” or it can mean, depending on the context, (2) “to boast or praise.” Ironically, as the shining one he got his eyes off the Lord, the source of his brilliance, became proud and boastful instead of full of praise to God’s glory. This name draws our attention to his pre-fall condition and to the nature of the cause of his fall—pride.

The Evil One (John 17:15; 1 John 5:9)

In these two passages, Satan is described of as “the evil one.” The Greek adjective, *ponhros*, means “wicked, evil, bad, base, worthless, vicious, degenerate.” In both passages it has the article and in either case it may be either masculine, “the evil one,” or neuter, “the wickedness or evil.” Though the KJV translates John 17:15 as “the evil” and 1 John 5:9 as “lieth in wickedness,” nearly all other translations including the NKJV have “the evil one.” It is thus seen as a reference to the devil. *Ponhros* points to Satan’s character as active and malignant. It denotes what is not only ugly and useless, but what is injurious and destructive. Satan, as the *ponhros* one is actively engaged in destruction, in causing pain, injury, and death. He is a cancer to the human race. John’s statement also shows how the world lies under his evil and sinister grasp.

The Dragon (Rev. 12:7)

In this passage Satan is called “the dragon.” The Greek word is *drakwn* and refers to a “hideous monster, a dragon, or large serpent.” This word stresses the cruel, vicious, and blood thirsty character and power of Satan. This name is especially related to his end-time character and world system when God removes all restraints and allows him to go his natural way, to become what he naturally is.

The Prince or Ruler (John 12:31)

Some translation have “prince” and others “ruler” as in John 12:31. The Greek *@o arcwn tou kosmou toutou* literally means, “the ruler of this world system.” This points to Satan as the head and energy behind the arrangements of things as they are in the world today in their opposition against God, His plan, and people.

The God of This World or Age (2 Cor. 4:4)

The fact Satan is called, the god of this world (Greek, *aiwnos*, “age, course”) may emphasize Satan’s rulership over this final period or economy which is so marked by a growing increase in apostasy, deception, and moral decay. In Galatians 1:4, Paul calls this “the present evil age.” The point is, Satan is the reason this age will never improve. Because it gets its character from Satan, the evil one, it is an evil age that grows worse because of his presence and activity to both undermine the plan of God and set up his own rule and worship as seen in Revelation 13.

The Prince of the Power of the Air (Eph. 2:2a)

This designation points to Satan as the head of the demonic hosts (Eph. 2:2) which includes all the fallen angelic beings who operate night and day in our immediate atmosphere filling the world with Satan’s propaganda, deception, viewpoint, doubts and temptations. Though the word “power” is singular, many commentaries believe it refers to the demonic forces as a corporate body, all of whom operate as one organized body under Satan, their ruler (see Eph 6:12). The NIV even translates it “kingdom.” “Air” is the Greek word *ahr* and may refer to the immediate atmosphere⁵ above the earth which is their base of operations—the domain of

their power, authority, and influence. It is also the vehicle or medium of their evil influence. As spirit beings they operate in the realm of the air. However, it not only looks at the locality of their operations, but emblematically portrays the prevailing influence or spiritual atmosphere in which every individual and the world moves—an atmosphere of demonic influence controlled by Satan.

The Spirit Who Works in the Sons of Disobedience (Eph. 2:2b)

This is a somewhat debated clause. Many take this to be another title for Satan. It is understood as a further description of “the prince of the power.” He is also “the spirit who is now working ...” The Wycliffe Bible Commentary has, “This obviously refers to Satan.⁶ Similarly, Expositors Bible Commentary has:

Satan is the unholy spirit (1Cor 2:12) who apes the operations of his divine counterpart by being constantly at work.⁷

And Ryrie’s Study Bible has, “Both words refer to Satan.”⁸

Others take the position that it cannot refer to Satan on grammatical grounds. Instead, it is much like our own “the spirit of the age” and refers to the disposition, the outlook, the way of thinking and acting which one finds in the children of disobedience.

Some (e.g., niv) suggest that it refers to “the ruler,” meaning that Satan personally works in sons of disobedience. However, it seems that “the spirit” is the same as “the kingdom (exousias, lit., authority) of the air.” This is the nearest antecedent and makes sense grammatically. This “spirit” then refers to the impersonal force or atmosphere, which is controlled and directed by Satan (1 John 5:19).⁹

The Accuser of the Brethren (Rev. 12:10)

While some might list this as simply one of the characterizations of Satan, it is so much a part of his behavior, it seems fitting to list it under his names. Satan is thus called “the Accuser,” a fitting title because night and day he is at work accusing believers when they sin. The Greek word for “accuser” is *kathgwr*, which refers to one who brings condemning accusations against others. One of Satan’s daily activities is to accuse believers before God, but in view of Job 1 and 2, this is also an attempt to malign the character of God and His plan. Thankfully, since none of us are sinless (1 John 1:9-10), we have the Lord Jesus as our continuous Advocate to plead our case (Rom. 8:33-34; 1 John 2:1-2).

The Tempter (Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5)

The Actuality: In the above two passages, Satan is specifically called “the Tempter.” Again, while we might simply list this among his characterizations, it seems fitting to see this as a name for the devil. This title reveals him in another of his primary activities as seen from the very beginning with Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3).

His Agents: In two of the classic passages on his work of temptation, we see Satan personally involved (Gen. 3; and Matt. 4), but we must remember that as a creature, Satan is not omnipresent. Thus, in passages like, 1 Thessalonians 3:5 and 1 Corinthians 7:5, the references to Satan simply point him out as the ultimate source, but he must rely on the following agents to carry out his temptation: (1) his network of demons, (2) the world system which lies under his control (1 John 5:19), (3) carnal or ignorant Christians he is able to use as he did Peter (Matt. 16:22-23), (4) unbelievers under his influence or domination (Luke 22:1-6; Eph. 2:2; Rev. 13).

His Avenues: The three primary avenues of his temptation are: the lusts of the flesh, of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16).

The Applied Process Satan Uses: As with Eve in Genesis 3, Satan uses the mind and emotions to get people to make negative choices against God. Temptation itself is never sin. Though we can be foolish and set ourselves up for temptation (cf. Prov. 7:6-10), it is our *response* to temptation that leads to sin (see Prov. 4:23; 2 Cor. 10:5; Phil. 4:8; Jam 1:12-15).

The Armor of the Believer: (1) Resist the devil by drawing near and putting on the full armor of God (Jam. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9; Eph. 6:13f), (2) Run or flee temptation; avoid unnecessary places or conditions (2 Tim. 12:22; Prov. 5:8; 7:6-10; Gen. 39:1-12), (3) Render marital rights in marriage (1 Cor. 7:1f), (4) Renewal of the mind or a Word-filled life. The Lord Jesus is naturally the perfect example of how God’s Word enables us to meet temptation head on and cause Satan to flee (Matt. 4:1-11).

Belial (2 Cor 6:15)

This name means “worthless” or “hopeless ruin.” In 2 Corinthians, Paul uses it as a name for Satan as the epitome of worthlessness, hopeless ruin and the source of all idolatry and religion which is also hopeless or futile.

Beelzebul (Matt. 12:24; Mark 3:22)

There are three possible spellings of this word and each has a different meaning: (1) *Beelzebul* means “lord of the dung,” a name of reproach. (2) *Beelzebub* means “lord of the flies.” Either one of these are names of reproach and are names of uncleanness applied to Satan, the prince of the demons and uncleanness. (3) *Beelzeboul*, means, “the lord of the dwelling.” This would identify Satan as the god of unclean spirit of demon possession. Some believe this spelling and meaning fits better with Matthew 10:25 and 12:29. This spelling also has the best manuscript evidence behind it. Note that Matthew, Mark, and Luke all define Beelzeboul as the prince of demons. So this name epitomizes Satan as the leader of the demon hosts and the cause of the demon possession.

Abaddon, Apollyon (Rev 9:11)

Abaddon is the Greek form and *Apollyon* is the Hebrew equivalent. These words mean ‘destroyer,’ ‘destruction.’ The name connects Satan as the head over the demons of the abyss and their work of destruction that will occur when he is given the key to the abyss in the Tribulation and releases these demon hordes on the people of the earth. Primarily, however, this title stresses his work of destruction; he works to destroy the glory of God and God’s purpose with man. He further works to destroy societies and mankind.

Special Characterizations of Satan

The various characterizations by which Satan may be described also reveal his many and varied activities. Since these will be covered below under his activities, the purpose here is simply to note these varied characteristics to give a summary portrait of Satan as a warning for what he is and what he seeks to promote. When some people have their picture taken want the photographer to take only their good side because they are convinced they do have good side. Or they will ask him to touch up their photos to remove a mole or some other blemish. But no matter how we look at Satan, who was once the most beautiful creature created by God, he now has no good sides. He can put on a facade and masquerade as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14), but the reality is, he is hideous and grotesque from all angles.

Through the biblical revelation of this sinister character, we can describe him as:

The Proud One

With pride or arrogance over his created beauty becoming the cause of his downfall, Satan is one who can be characterized by arrogance and pride and the promoter of arrogance among men (Ezek. 28:17; 1 Tim. 3:6-7).

The Rebel and Lawless One

This is seen most clearly in his five “I wills” in Isaiah 14:12-14 where he acted against God’s will and purpose for him as the anointed cherub. It is noteworthy to hear Samuel’s rebuke to Saul when faced with his disobedience. The Prophet said, “For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king.”

The Slanderer/Accuser

As has been pointed out, this is seen in both his name as the devil and in his activities as spelled out in his temptation of Eve (Gen. 3), in claims about Job (Job 1-2) and in his daily work to accuse believers (Rev. 12:10).

A Liar and Deceiver

The Lord once called the religious Pharisees, “blind leaders of the blind” because they were leading others astray. In John 8:44 He pointed out the reason when He said to them,

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not

holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.⁴⁵ Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!

We must understand that Satan never stands in the truth, never. He may use the truth, but only to eventually propagate a lie. It is always a subterfuge for promoting his deceptions. Using his network of deception through demonic forces and duped people, he promotes false doctrines in the name of God (2 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 4:14; 1 Tim. 4:1-4; 2 Tim. 3:13; 2 Thess. 2:10).

A Perverter and Distorter

This is obviously related to his work of deception and falsification, but it is such a part of his character and work that it deserves special notice. What does it mean to pervert? It means to change something from its original and intended use and purpose, to distort or twist from its true meaning and use. Thus, anything that God may give to man for his protection, blessing, and happiness, Satan seek to pervert and twist in some way whether it is grace, God's plan of salvation, sex and marriage, the home, government, food, worship, Bible study; you name it, and he can find a way to distort it. This is one reason it is so important for us to know and properly use God's Word because it is our index and the means by which we can discern Satan's deceptions and perversions.

An Imitator

This too, of course, is related to Satan's deception, but it also points out a special method by which he seeks to deceive us. He is the imitator of imitators. The key passage on this is 2 Corinthians 11:3-15. To imitate means "to be or act like, to appear like, to follow a certain pattern or example," but in Satan's case, the goal is to deceive, lead astray. Believers are commanded to imitate their heavenly Father (Eph. 5:1) and to follow the example of the Savior (1 Pet. 2:21), but this can only be done through following God's truth and through the power of the Spirit of God, never by following Satan's false doctrines and by listening to his evil spirits. Satan, remember, wanted to be like God and one of his purposes is to make men as much like God as he can, but always without God. So, he will copy as much of God and His plan as he can, but he will always either distort, pervert, substitute or leave out those key ingredients of truth that are vital to the plan of salvation and sanctification through Christ. Many of the epistles are written, at least in part, as arguments against Satan's devices. Note some illustrations of Satan's imitation (Ex. 7:8-13, 20-23; 8:4-7, 16-19; Matt. 7:15-23; Rev. 13:1-18; 2 Cor. 11:3-15; Col. 2).

The History of Satan

His Creation and Origin

Though the Bible reveals a great deal about the fact, nature, program, purposes, and schemes of Satan, it does not give all the facts about his origin and fall or the cause of his existence as the great adversary of God and His people. The Scripture teaches us that there is only one eternal and self-existent God who is the Creator of all things. If Satan were not a created being then he must be eternal or self-existent, a dualism which is incompatible with what the Bible teaches about God and the world in which we live. The Bible emphatically declares all things were created by God through Christ, and there is nothing that was not made by Him (John 1:3; Col. 1:16-17).

As demonstrated under the doctrine of angels, Satan is a fallen angel and a created being. Colossians 1:16 states, "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him." The words, "thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities" describe angelic beings and shows us two things about them: they were created by Christ and they are invisible. In addition, Revelation 12:7-9 not only identifies Satan as the chief of the fallen angels, but by the parallel association described there, it identifies him as an angel. Just as Michael, also an angel, is described as the leader of good angels, so Satan, an angel, has his own fallen angels under his command.

A considerable debate exists whether two passages in the Old Testament, Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:11-19, have Satan in view, but if they look beyond the human kings to Satan, they provide us with some detail on the origin and existence of Satan as to his creatureliness, fall, and present character. If so, Ezekiel 28:12-19 describes Satan's original state as the anointed cherub who was not only a created being, but created perfect (vss. 12-13). He enjoyed the highest position and honor in the presence of God (28:14, 16). Further, Isaiah spoke of him as "star of the morning (KJV *Lucifer*; NIV *morning star*), son of the dawn" (14:12). But because of his pride and aspirations to be like God, he became God's chief adversary (Heb. *Satan*). After this, he is never again called by any of these prestigious titles. Instead, he is called by terms that reflect his fallen character and hostility to God and men, like liar, murderer, adversary, the evil one, Abaddon (destruction), Apollyon (destroyer), Belial (worthless), serpent, and dragon.

As with the rest of the angels, the time of his creation is not specified. If Ezekiel 28:13 refers to Satan and to the earthly Garden in Eden, then, of course, he had to have been created before God planted the Garden in Eden (Gen. 2:8).¹⁰

But can we legitimately understand Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:12-19 to refer to Satan? Many believe that the very nature of the wording of these passages which describe someone with superhuman powers and aspirations must go beyond the kings of Tyre and Babylon. If these passages do not extend beyond the human counterparts to Satan himself as the invisible enemy behind the scenes, then the Bible is silent regarding the origin of why and how God's and man's greatest adversary came into existence. While it explains the origin of man and his sin and fall (Gen. 3), it is silent regarding Satan's origin and fall. It mysteriously simply presents us with the fact, but not the how and why. In keeping with his ability to carefully and succinctly explain the issue, Dr. Ryrie has an excellent discussion on Ezekiel 28:11-19.

Many debate whether or not Ezekiel 28:11-19 has Satan in view, but if it does, then it provides us with a number of descriptive details as to the characteristics of Satan's original condition at his creation. All agree that the subject of verses 1-19 is judgment on Tyre and its leader. But the question is, do verses 11-19 go beyond the human leader to reveal things about something or someone else? The candidates for that something or someone else called the king of Tyre are: (a) a symbol drawn from pagan mythology; (b) a primal being who lived in the Garden of Eden and was driven out through pride; (c) a mythological, unreal being presented in Phoenician mythology and incorporated and applied in this story to the king of Tyre, (d) an ideal though unreal person, (e) the ideal man, the same as the historical first man, Adam, whose histories (initial privileges and subsequent sin) are analogous; (f) the sinister being Satan; (g) Satan's masterpiece, Antichrist.

Views (a) through (d) are incompatible with the principles of normal interpretation, for there is no justification for introducing such mythology into the text. View (e) though possible, seems to fall short of fulfilling the totality of the sinister nature of the figure behind the king of Tyre. Views (f) and (g) can be combined; i.e., Satan is the one behind it all including being behind Antichrist who will be the climax of all people whom Satan has indwelt throughout history. The king of Tyre was one whom he indwelt in the past, as Antichrist will be the final one he will indwell in the future.

To understand the prophecy as including references to Satan does not mean that Ezekiel did not also have a historical leader of Tyre in mind in his denunciations. The question is, did he only have the historical human leader in view or did he also have a greater being, Satan, in mind? The flowery and highly figurative language can argue for either conclusion. Those who feel that only the human leader is in view understand the language as a typical, exaggerated way an oriental ruler might be referred to. Those who also see Satan in the passage argue that such language includes too many superlatives and figures to be true of only an earthly king no matter how great he was. It would seem difficult to apply verses 14 and 15, for example, to any earthly king (see a full discussion in Charles L. Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel* (Chicago: Moody, 1969), pp. 158-63).

It would, of course, not be unusual for a prophetic passage to refer both to a local personage and also to someone else who fully fulfills it. This is true of many passages that relate both to King David and Jesus Christ. It is also true of the reference to the prince of the kingdom of Persia in Daniel 10:13, a reference that must include a superhuman being related to the kingdom of Persia. So for Ezekiel 28 to refer both to the then-reigning king of Tyre as well as to Satan would not be a unique interpretive conclusion. Indeed, it seems the right conclusion: The historic king of Tyre was simply a tool of Satan, possibly indwelt by him. And in describing this king, Ezekiel also gives us glimpses of the superhuman creature, Satan, who was using, if not indwelling, him.¹¹

The nature of Satan's character and work in opposition to God is clearly seen in the temptation he placed before Adam and Eve. He tempted them to act independently of God that they might become like God knowing good and evil and the same temptation continues today. Man wants to leave his proper abode as a creature and become like a god. The source of this is found in the temptation of the serpent, identified in the New Testament as the devil (2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9, 11). But where is the reason and source of this in the character of Satan? If Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 do not go beyond the human kings of Babylon and Tyre to describe the devil, then the Bible gives us no clue as to how and why Satan became what he is. However, if the biblical depiction of Lucifer's sin as seen in his condemnation in Isaiah 14:12-15 and again in Ezekiel 28:1f do refer to Satan, then we have a definite revelation of not only the origin of Satan's sin and fall, but of the problem of sin. Lucifer's sin lay in his ambition to ascend into heaven and set his throne above the stars of God and to become equal with God. Beholding his own beauty, a created beauty, and being lifted up in pride, he aspired to leave the bounds of his proper position as a created being and fell into sin. Such was precisely the case with the temptation and the fall of man.

In his commentary on Ezekiel, Feinberg writes:

The author cannot follow those views which inject without support a foreign and false mythology, a legendary atmosphere or a hypothetical ideal personality. It cannot be conceded that Ezekiel was following a free imagination which admittedly was not usual

with him. Instead, he appeared to have the situation of his day in mind with his attention riveted upon the ruler of Tyre, the embodiment of the people's pride and godlessness. But as he viewed the thoughts and ways of that monarch, he clearly discerned behind him the motivating force and personality who was impelling him in his opposition to God. In short, he saw the work and activity of Satan, whom the king of Tyre was emulating in so many ways. Recall the incident in Matthew 16:21-23 where Peter was rebuked by our Lord Jesus. No sterner words were spoken to anyone in Christ's earthly ministry. But He did not mean that Peter had somehow become Satan himself; He was indicating that the motivation behind Peter's opposition to His going to Calvary was none other than the prince of demons. This appears to be a similar situation....

... It must be repeated that the one addressed was not an ideal man expelled from Eden, some mythological figure popularly known or other individual, but the same monarch with whom the chapter began. But behind him stood one with whom he was compared. If Satan, who was far superior to Ithobal of Tyre, received just punishment for arrogating to himself divine prerogatives in the dateless past, then the ruler of Tyre could not escape the outcome of his defiance of the Lord. Because some interpreters are so willing to place this entire description on the human plane, they must surmise that the passage is full of Oriental exaggeration. If these be taken to refer ultimately to Satan, they are eminently intelligible and in place.¹²

His Original Position

In this prophecy given against Satan, the sinister figure who stands behind the human king of Tyre, what do we then learn about Satan's original condition and characteristics?

... Whatever specifics these verses teach they convey the clear idea that Satan was highly privileged, the epitome of God's Creation, who had an unparalleled position in the universe.

1. *Satan had unparalleled wisdom and beauty (v. 12).* Satan stood at the zenith of God's creatures, filled with wisdom and perfect in beauty.
2. *Satan had an unparalleled habitation (v. 13).* This may refer to a heavenly Eden, or to the earthly Eden. In either case, it was, before sin entered, a unique place.
3. *Satan had an unparalleled covering (v. 13).* The dazzling description of his dress or robe indicates something of the glory bestowed on him.
4. *Satan had an unparalleled function (v. 14).* He belonged to the order of angelic creature designated cherubim. They are associated with guarding the holiness of God (Gen. 3:24), with the throne of God (Ezek. 1:5), and here apparently with the actual presence of God. Satan was on the holy mountain of God and he walked in the midst of the stones of fire, likely references to the presence of God Himself. Apparently Satan was the chief guardian of God's holiness and majesty.
5. *Satan had unparalleled perfection (Ezek. 28:15).* He was perfect in the sense of being completely sound and of having total moral integrity. Here as well as in verse 13 we are reminded that Satan was created, and as a creature, he must someday answer to his Creator.

In every way Satan was the epitome of God's Creation. "He awoke in the first moment of his existence in the full-orbed beauty and power of his exalted position; surrounded by all the magnificence which God gave him. He saw himself as above all the hosts in power, wisdom, and beauty. Only at the throne of God itself did he see more than he himself possessed, and it is possible that even that was in some sense not fully visible to the eyes of the creature.... Before his fall he may be said to have occupied the role of prime minister for God, ruling possibly over the universe but certainly over this world" (Donald Grey Barnhouse, *The Invisible War* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1965], pp. 26-7).¹³

His Sin and Fall

The Source of His Sin

Ezekiel 28 also shows us that from this blameless and glorious estate he became unrighteous or wicked, became filled with violence, and sinned. But what exactly was the nature of his sin. Barnhouse stated:

What this iniquity was is revealed to us in some detail in the prophecy of Isaiah, but here are already interesting indications in our

passage that we may not pass by. The fact given here is that iniquity came by what we might term spontaneous generation in the heart of this being in whom such magnificence of power and beauty had been combined and to whom such authority and privilege had been given. Here is the beginning of sin. Iniquity was found in the heart of Lucifer. So far as we know, here is the only verse in the Bible which states clearly the exact origin of sin. Other passages only amplify this one....

Thus, Satan sinned and was driven out in disgrace, expelled from his high position (Ezek. 28:15-17). Sin, then, was found in this perfect creature who was created blameless. Was God the blameworthy cause of sin?

This sin must have been included in the eternal plan of God. Yet God never assumes the responsibility for the commission of any sin, including Satan's. J.O. Buswell steers a careful course in this matter. "According to the Bible, then, sin originated in an act of free will in which the creature deliberately, responsibly, and with adequate understanding of the issues chose to corrupt the holy character of godliness with which God had endowed His creation.... Satan sinned necessarily. God is rightly angry with all sin.... The denial of free will seems to be purely arbitrary philosophical dogmatism, contrary to the biblical view. If God is rightly angry with sin, then it follows that the sinner is blameworthy—cosmically, ultimately, absolutely.... Sin must be within God's eternal decrees in some sense in which He is not the author of it.... Within the decrees of God, there are decrees of the permission of those things of which God Himself is not the author. This is not mere permission of the unavoidable" ("The Origin and Nature of Sin," *Basic Christian Doctrines*, Carl F.H. Henry, ed. [New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962], pp. 107-9).¹⁴

The Character of His Sin

But what exactly was the character or nature of Satan's sin? As suggested by 1 Timothy 3:6-7 and Ezekiel 28:17, though created perfect by God (Ezek. 28:13-15), it was conceit or pride that welled up in his heart because of his beauty and high position that led to arrogant aspirations and to his sin and fall. These arrogant aspirations are described for us in Isaiah 14:12-17. Here Satan is not only described as one who fell from heaven and was cut down to the earth (vs. 12), but it also describes the character of his sin as a rebellious ambition, an ambition which was totally contrary to a creature who owed all that he was and had to the Creator.

As with Ezekiel 28:11-19 some question whether this passage may refer to Satan. Several views are taken: (1) Some interpret Isaiah 14 as applicable only to the fall of the historical king of Babylon mentioned in verse 4. (2) Still others interpret the passage as pertaining only the fall of Satan. (3) Many hold to both views and see the passage as referring to the king of Babylon and to Satan as the invisible force behind the human king. Taking a clue from the heightened nature of the language in this passage and from Christ's statement in Luke 10:18, the passage points to Satan indirectly, much like the way the kings of the line of David point to Christ. The *Scofield Reference Bible* is an illustration of this position:

Verses 12-14 evidently refer to Satan who, as prince of this world system (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; see Rev 13:8, note), is the real though unseen ruler of the successive world powers, Tyre, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, etc. (cp. Ezek 28:12 - 14). Lucifer, "day star," can be none other than Satan. This significant passage points back to the beginning of sin in the universe. When Satan said, "I will," sin began. See Rev 20:10, note. For other instances of addressing Satan through another, cp. Gen 3:15; Mat 16:22 - 23.¹⁵

(4) Those holding either of the first three views, may also understand the passage to prefigure the fall of the coming Antichrist.

Evaluating these various views, Ryrie writes:

Likely the truth includes all of these references; i.e., the fall of the king of Babylon is an antitype of the previous fall of Satan and a type of the future fall of Antichrist. Delitzsch says it concisely: "A retrospective glance is now cast at the self-deification of the king of Babylon, in which he was the antitype of the devil and the type of Antichrist . . ." (Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1875], 1:312). The passage transcends anything that can be said of an earthly king and has been understood from earliest times to also refer to Satan's fall as described in Luke 10:18.¹⁶

The Rhetorical Question of Amazement

So what is it that Satan aspired to become? Before describing Satan's aspiration, Isaiah introduces the subject in verse 12 with, "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn!" "How" (Hebrew áyye,,h) is an interrogative pronoun usually used in rhetorical questions to indicate reproach or despair or amazement. Here, because of Satan's high place in heaven as "star of the morning," it draws our attention to the heinous nature of Satan's sin with perhaps also a note of amazement that he, such an exalted creature who was so close to God and designed, like a star, to bring glory to God (see Ps. 19:1f), could do what he did.

But there is more here. Ryrie suggests:

The Latin equivalent is Lucifer which, on the basis of this passage, became a name for Satan. However, the use of morning star with reference to Satan gives us an indication of the basic character of his plot against God. Since the same title is used in Revelation 22:16 of Christ, we are alerted to the fact that Satan's plan was to counterfeit the plan of God, and indeed it was and is. How he initiated that plan is detailed in the five "I will" phrases in Isaiah 14:13-14).¹⁷

"O star of the morning" is literally "O shining one, star of the morning." The Hebrew, he,,le,,l, is from the verb, ha,,lal, "I shine," but another word with the same spelling, ha,,lal means in one stem, "I praise" or in another stem, "I boast." Surely, there is an important play on words going on here. (1) As the stars shining in heaven declare the glory of God as the Creator (Ps. 19:1), so Satan, the shining one was designed to bring glory, not to himself, but to his Creator. (2) But Satan, the creature, rebelled and tried to bring glory to himself and as such became blackened with sin. (3) This still could not thwart the purposes of God in His creatures. To reveal God's glory, Satan was created as the shining one, the morning star, and, having foreknowledge of what Satan would do, God elected to create Satan and to use the blackness of his sin to reveal His divine essence only more emphatically. What is it that makes the stars shine at night? It is the darkness. In fact, to see their beauty in the clearest fashion, one needs to get away from the man made lights of the city. It is the darkness that allows them to shine. We can compare a diamond. Place it in your hand and some of its brilliance with shine, but place it on black velvet and it will leap to brilliance because it can then perfectly reflect the light.

So two final points to consider: (1) Through Satan's sin the character of God becomes more perfectly evident in many more ways. It is Satan's and man's sin that causes God's holiness, righteousness, justice, goodness, love, mercy, and grace to shine even more clearly. (2) God is sovereign and even though the creature rebels, He can still use this to his own glory and purposes. No one, neither Satan nor man, can thwart the purposes of God. In the outworking of God's wisdom and power, having given all the angels volition, He allowed Satan to sin and uses him as a catalyst to promote His glory.

The Five "I Wills" of Rebellion

Isaiah points us to five "I wills" coming from the proud and boastful heart of Satan that describe the nature of his aspiration (Isa. 14:13-14). In each of these "I wills" Satan pitted his will against the will of God. He substituted his will for God's will and, significantly, these five statements reveal not only his intentions, but Satan's program for as long as he is free to walk about in the universe.

1. I will ascend to heaven. As used in Scripture, there are three different spheres of heaven: (1) the atmospheric heaven around the earth, (2) the stellar heavens, and (3) heaven of heavens, which represents God's abode, God's throne or the seat of God's sovereign authority, the place of God's rule. As the "anointed cherub" and the guardian of God's holiness, Satan had access to this third heaven, so his desire here was not simply to be able to visit there like a tourist, but to occupy heaven as one who was equal with God. The creature wanted to expel the Creator. The servant wanted to become the served.

2. I will raise my throne above the stars of God. From Job 38:7 we have a clue to the meaning of the phrase, "the stars of God." While this could refer to the heavenly bodies that illuminate the night, this mostly likely refers to Satan's desire to exalt himself to rule over the angelic kingdom as God.

3. I will sit on the mount of the assembly in the recesses of the north. This describes Satan's ambition to control all the affairs of the universe as the assembly of Babylonian gods supposedly did. Often in Scripture, mountain and hills refer to *authority* or *the right to rule*. Isaiah 2:2 reads, "Now it will come about that in the last days, the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it." This anticipates Messiah's rule or kingdom, called here "the mountain of the house of the Lord," and all the other kingdoms, mountains and hills, will be under His kingdom (see also Ps. 48:2). So this third "I will" of Satan expressed his determination to rule over the affairs of the entire created universe.

4. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. According to Exodus 16:10 and Revelation 19:1, clouds are often associated with God's glory and presence. This "I will" expressed Satan's desire to usurp the glory that belonged to God. Pentecost writes:

When Lucifer said, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds," he was saying, "I will take to myself a greater glory than belongs to God Himself." You will remember that Ezekiel described the beauty and the glory that belonged to Lucifer in terms of the sun shining on polished gems. But the glory that belonged to Lucifer was not inherently his; it was a reflected glory. God, who

is the author of glory, God, who is the all glorious One, revealed his glory through the work that came from His hand.... How insane the thinking of this one that he could add glory to the infinite glory of God. It suggests that there was a deficiency in the glory of God and that Lucifer could complete that which was lacking....¹⁸

5. *I will make myself like the Most High.* Note the contradiction in Satan's own thinking here. To become like God was first of all to admit that he was not God. He was only a created being, one created by the Creator. As one who was a creature who had a beginning,

In what way then could a creature be like the Creator? In what way could he be like the most High? He was the wisest of God's beings but he was not omniscient; he did not know all things. He was the most powerful of all of God's created being, but he was not omnipotent. He could go from one end of the created universe to another, but he was not omnipresent. In what way could he be like the most High? There was only one way. That was to be totally and completely independent of any authority outside of himself. He could be like God only in being responsible to no one but himself. The desire of Satan was move in and occupy the throne of God, exercise absolute independent authority over the angelic creation, bring the earth and all the universe under his authority, cover himself with the glory that belongs to God alone, and then be responsible to no one but himself.¹⁹

Ryrie writes,

Here his counterfeit is crystal clear. Satan wanted to be like, not unlike, God. The name Elyon for God stresses God's strength and sovereignty (Gen. 14:18). Satan wanted to be as powerful as God. He wanted to exercise the authority and control in this world that rightfully belongs only to God. His sin was a direct challenge to the power and authority of God.²⁰

And what was the first temptation? To get man to eat of the tree of good and evil that man, in independent rebellion, might be like God. Satan is constantly seeking to reproduce this mentality today in the saved and the unsaved alike. And unfortunately, he finds willing targets. Perhaps there is nothing that demonstrates man's fallen condition like his natural penchant to live independently, to do his own thing and to be responsible to no one but himself. How easy it is for us to look at the gifts and abilities and opportunities God has given us, and then, like Satan, to use that to glorify ourselves.

This is why one of the godly marks of maturity is think of ourselves according to the grace of God. Whatever we have, it is God given. So Paul warned that in selecting elders that they should not select a novice, one recently come to the faith lest, being lifted up in pride, he fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil (1 Tim. 1:6).

The Angelic Conflict and the Conquest of the Planet Earth

The Reality of the Conflict

Daniel 10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the **message was true and one of great conflict**, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision (emphasis mine).

In Daniel 10:1 the message or revelation from God and its reception was endangered by a great and invisible conflict or warfare going on behind the scenes. As the passage shows, the conflict in mind is an angelic struggle—Satan and his angels against the Lord and His angels and the people of God on earth. "Great conflict" (Hebrew, *sə,ba,á*, "army, war, warfare") as translated in the NASV has been variously translated: 'the time appointed was long,' 'great warfare,' or 'great task.' The KJV translated it "but the time appointed was long." The point is the vision involved a strenuous, long, and enduring conflict. Interestingly, *sə,ba,á* is used of the service of the Levites.

... four uses have to do with the work of the Levites in the tent of meeting (Num 4:23; 8:24). No doubt service for Yahweh is seen as involving total dedication and careful regimentation, and since God is Yahweh of hosts, enthroned between the cherubim housed inside the tent of meeting, work associated with the ten may be considered spiritual war.²¹

Verses 2-17 explain the sequence of events which lead to the understanding of the vision, but they also explain the nature of the conflict as that of angelic warfare, the forces of Satan attempting to hinder the understanding and communication of divine revelation or Bible doctrine. Notice, particularly verses 10-14. The Prince of Persia refers to the demonic principality in charge of this area of Satan's domain. He was one of the leader's of Satan's hierarchy. Michael the Archangel and one of the chief princes of God's angelic army had to be summoned to deal with the foe.

The prince of the kingdom of Persia cannot be a human ruler because the conflict referred to here is the spiritual, heavenly realm as the allusion to Michael makes clear. The prince, therefore, must be understood as a satanic figure who was to supervise the affairs of Persia, inspiring its religious, social, and political structures to works of evil. The apostle Paul refers to principalities, power, rulers of the darkness of this age, and “spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (see Eph. 6:12).²²

Ryrie agrees and writes concerning the prince of the kingdom of Persia:

A supernatural creature who tried to direct the human rulers of Persia to oppose God’s plan. Evil angels seek to influence the affairs of nations. Michael, which means “who is like God?” (v. 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7), is the special guardian of the affairs of Israel (12:1) and is designated the archangel (Jude 9). *One of the chief princes* shows a hierarchy among the angels (cf. Eph. 1:21). I had been left there with the kings of Persia. The good angel (cf. vv. 5-6), with Michael’s help, was left in a place of preeminence in influencing Persia. But the battle between good and evil angels over the control of nations continues (see v. 20 and Rev. 20:3).

Daniel 10:18-11:1 gives more specifics regarding the nature of this angelic conflict which exists daily among the angelic forces, the holy angels in conflict with the fallen angels on behalf of God and believers. Verse 20 shows another demonic and satanic principality, the prince of Greece, is being sent in to do warfare. The battle goes on daily. Satan our adversary through his vast network of demonic forces walks about as a roaring lion looking for a kill, an opponent to attack in his endless battle to hinder the plan of God, especially the message of the Word of God. But why? If our Lord Jesus Christ defeated Satan on the cross, if Satan is a defeated foe, then why are he and his evil forces allowed to run loose in the world?

The Reason for the Conflict

As indicated previously in the doctrine of angelology, a number of passages show us that angels are observers who are keenly interested in God’s activities in the world and especially in the unfolding of His plan of redemption (Job 38:7; Luke 15:10; 1 Cor. 4:9; 11:10; Eph. 3:10; Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:12). In 1 Peter 1:12, referring back to our salvation (vs. 10), we find the statement, “things into which the angels long to look.” The word, “long to look,” is the same word used of the action John and Peter and Mary when they stooped down to peer into the empty tomb (Luke 24:12; John 20:5, 11). The verb, *parakuptw*, “to bend over,” conveys the idea of bending over to see something more clearly or to simply look intently (see also Jam. 1:24). Because of its relevance here to the history of Satan, let me repeat here the substance of the material presented under angelology.

The Two Kingdoms Conflict

A question that naturally arises is why are angels so deeply interested and observant of what is happening on this earth with the affairs of mankind? As the holy angels, they are concerned for the worship and glory of God that should be given to Him as the holy and infinite Creator. This is clearly evident in Isaiah 6:3 where, in antiphonal chorus, seraphim sing of God’s holiness, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.” John states that in their devotion to God’s worship the living creatures “never stop saying: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come” (NIV). Their devotion to God’s glory becomes exceedingly prominent and specific in Revelation. In Revelation 4:8-11, their continuous praise evokes the praise of the twenty-four elders which is directed at God’s worthiness as the sovereign creator. Then in chapter 5:8-14, angels, accompanied by the twenty four elders (representatives of the church), direct their praise toward God’s gracious work of salvation through the Lamb in view of His worthiness to open the seven seals, for He alone is found worthy to open the seven-sealed book and break it seals (cf. Rev. 5:1 with 5:9f).

Though we are not told the exact contents of the seven-sealed book, it undoubtedly contains the story of (1) man’s loss of his God-given rule over the earth (Gen. 1:26) to Satan, the usurper, and (2) its recovery through the God-man Savior, the Lion who is also the Lamb. This Lamb is alone able to accomplish what no one else in the universe is qualified and able to do. The following three truths form an important element of God’s revelation:

1. ***God’s Purpose Declared:*** It was God’s intention that man would rule over this earth under God’s authority (Gen. 1:26; Ps. 8:4-6; Heb. 2:5-8a).
2. ***God’s Purpose Delayed:*** Because of the fall as recorded in Genesis 3, Satan wrested the rule away from man (cf. Heb. 2:5 with 2:8b). God’s intention was for man to rule over this earth, never angels, much less the fallen angels.
3. ***God’s Purpose Fulfilled:*** But as promised in Genesis 3:15, the Lamb breaks Satan’s hold by means of His incarnation, sinless life, death, resurrection, ascension (see Heb. 2:9-14) and will one day recover that which was lost through the

judgments of the seven seals as described in Revelation 6-19.

One of the key features of Revelation concerns the two kingdoms: the kingdom of the world, Satan's kingdom, and the kingdom of God. The words "king, kings, kingdom," etc., occur thirty times in twenty-five verses in this book. In view of the struggle between the two kingdoms, there is a joyous celebration of voices raised in heaven at the sounding of the seventh trumpet in anticipation of what the seventh trumpet would accomplish.²³ This surely includes the holy angels:

Revelation 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

The issue of Satan's rebellion to God's authority may well explain Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 11:10 that a woman is to have a symbol of authority on her head because of the angels. This suggests that one of the areas angels observe is that of submission to authority. Submission glorifies God while rebellion dishonors God and promotes the goals of Satan, the rebel of rebels. At the root of the angels' keen interest in what God is doing today is the rebellion and fall of Satan. As observers, all the angels were present when Satan, in his quest to be like the Most High, sought to usurp God's sovereign rule (see Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:11-19 and the explanations above). This was an offense to the glory of God.

Furthermore, it appears from Revelation 12:3-4 that one third of the angelic hosts chose to follow Satan. Because of Satan's sin, he was thrust out of his exalted place and became the great adversary of God and His people (see Ezek. 28:11-19). In addition, the Lord also explicitly tells us that the lake of fire was prepared for Satan and his angels (Matt. 25:41). Though a defeated foe (cf. Col. 2:15), Satan is not now confined to the lake of fire, but he and his fallen angels will be and this is a great point of anticipation in the Bible (see Rom. 16:20; Rev. 20:10).

Satan's Characterization as the Slanderer

An understanding of one of Satan's names is helpful here and is loaded with implications. The term, *devil*, as used so often of Satan, means, "slanderer, defamer, one who accuses falsely."²⁴ This name reveals him in one of his key characterizations in Scripture. As "the slanderer," he is one who defames the character of God and one of the ways he seeks to do this is by accusing believers (Rev. 12:10). The book of Job gives us a good illustration of his defaming accusations and how, at the same time, he seeks to malign the character of God. When you read the first two chapters of Job, the true purpose of Satan's accusations become quickly evident. Satan's claim was that Job only worshipped God because of all God had given to Job; it was not because Job loved God for who He was or because God deserved to be worshipped as the Holy and Sovereign Creator. The essence of Satan's accusation was, "Just take away all that Job has and he will curse you" (see Job 1:6-11; 2:1-6).

Satan's Characterization of God

From the Bible's characterization of Satan as "adversary" (1 Pet. 5:8)²⁵ and "the devil,"²⁶ and from his activities as seen in Scripture, it seems only logical that Satan may have argued that God was unloving and that His judgment of Satan and his angels to the lake of fire was unfair and unjust. Shortly after the creation of Adam and Eve, the devil's attack on the character of God as unfair becomes immediately evident in the slanderous nature of his questions and statements to Eve in the temptation (Gen. 3:1-5). So today, from a world that lies under his deception (see John 12:31; 16:11; Eph. 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:3-4), there is a common sentiment echoed among many who, rejecting God's Word, may say something like, "The God of the Bible is vengeful. How could a loving God send people to hell? I refuse to believe in a God like that."

A Reason for Man

Though the Bible only partially gives us God's motives in man's creation, it would seem that part of the reason for man's creation and for God's plan of salvation in Christ is to demonstrate the truth of God's character as wise, holy, just, loving, gracious, merciful, and good. In His holiness and justice, God had no other choice but to judge Satan and his angels to the lake of fire and the same is true with sinful man. But being also merciful, gracious, and loving, He provided a solution through the cross so that man could have eternal life. This gracious plan of love was not only anticipated in the Old Testament, but was actually first announced to the serpent (the devil in disguise) in Genesis 3:16, which is significant in view of the angelic conflict and the slanderous accusations of Satan. Man's redemption and the recovery of paradise lost has always been based on what God would do through the seed of the woman, the Messiah Savior who would die as man's substitute, but also defeat Satan and, by implication, demonstrate Satan's slander as false (cf. Isa. 53; Rom. 3:21-26; Col. 2:10-15; Heb. 2:14-16). Thus, through man, Satan's claims are confounded, refuted, and destroyed.

The Scriptures disclose the truth that the angels learn much about God from His activities through the person and work of Christ and through the church, especially in the unfolding of God's plan of redemption which includes the defeat of Satan and his death hold on man (cf. Heb. 2:14-15).²⁷ It is for this reason—our salvation and the devil's defeat—that the angels have such a keen interest in the sufferings of Christ, the glories that will follow, and the things announced to believers through those who preached the gospel by the Holy Spirit (1 Pet. 1:11-12). Along a similar line Paul wrote,

Ephesians 3:18-11. To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, 9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; 10 in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. 11 This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Consequently, the church becomes a means of unveiling both the manifold wisdom and grace of God to angels for in Ephesians 2:4-7 Paul wrote:

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Chafer quotes Otto Von Gerlach who pointed out:

By the revelation of Himself in Christ, by the institution of the Christian Church on earth, God after a manner hitherto unknown glorifies Himself before the heavenly principalities. They who until now had, filled with awe, been praising Him for the wonder of creation, now see His wisdom glorified in a new form in the Christian communion through the manifold ways by which lost men are saved. Entirely new and inexhaustible wealth of divine wisdom was manifested in redemption.²⁸

Victory Anticipated

Revelation 4 and 5 set forth heaven's perspective in preparation for the judgments that will follow on earth as described in 6-19. It is these judgments that defeat Satan and his world system and establish God's Son on His throne on earth. The paradise lost by the first man, Adam, is recovered by the Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45). In these two chapters, however, there is a strong emphasis on the holiness and worthiness of God to receive glory and honor, and on the worthiness of the Lamb to open and pour out the seals that He might reign and receive glory and honor. And who are also very prominent in these two chapters? The angels!!

In view of this scenario, we can see why God's holy angels are so keenly interested in our salvation because in it they observe the manifold wisdom, love, grace, and holiness of God (Eph. 3:10; 1 Pet. 1:12). This becomes even more of an issue when one considers the rebellion and accusations of Satan in the light of the condescension of Christ whose entire life they witnessed (1 Tim. 3:16). To witness the submission and condescension of God incarnate, even to the death of the cross, was an awesome declaration of God's character as holy and immutable.

What amazing condescension! *Obeying his own law as if he were a mere creature, and in the attitude of a servant!* This was new. They had seen him as the governor of the universe; but never till now as a subject! *Encountering Satan in conflict and prolonged temptation!* This was new.²⁹

Think of this! They had seen Satan cast down from his exalted position and sentenced to the lake of fire because of his pride and rebellion, but in Christ's incarnation and submissive life, even to the cross, they have the ultimate example of God's holiness, love, grace, and mercy and the justness of Satan's sentence.

Evidently, there was a time of grace and testing for the angels before Satan's fall, but Satan and his angels now remain confirmed in their fallen state just as those who die without Christ will remain in their fallen state to face the Great White Throne Judgment and eternal separation from God.

The Objectives of Satan in His Conquest of Planet Earth

In keeping with Satan's objective to make himself like the Most High (Isa. 14:14), he quickly sought to extend his rule or authority to the earthly realm of God's creation where man, created in the image of God, was placed to glorify and fellowship with God. So,

when God created man and placed him upon the earth, He gave man authority and commissioned him to rule over the earth, not independently, but dependently through fellowship with God by the exercise of his God-given image. Adam and Eve were to know God with their minds, love God with their hearts, and choose for God with their wills. They were to enjoy fellowship with God in the Garden as they served Him and carried out the creation mandate to fill the earth, care for the Garden, and rule over the dominion God had given them. Their obedience and fellowship with God would thus glorify God and demonstrate His grace and goodness.

Evidently very soon after their creation, Satan appeared on the scene to conquer planet earth and make it his domain and rule and thwart the plan of God. Thus, in Genesis 3, we have the event of Satan's invasion and temptation of Eve in the Garden.

In the temptation in Genesis 3, Satan sought to do two things. First, he offered Eve the possibility of being "like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5).

Here he transferred his own goal to the human race. The whole program of Satan in the cosmos is to make men feel that they are independent of God, and by taking this action to recognize Satan instead. His suggestion that Adam and Eve could be like God was a lie because he did not explain that they would know good and evil but would not have the power to accomplish the good or to avoid the evil apart from divine grace.³⁰

Secondly, in the process of this temptation we also see his slanderous character at work, for he also sought to impugn the character of God by getting Eve to question the goodness of God. This he did by suggesting God was not good and fair since He had restricted Adam and Eve from eating of the fruit of one of the trees and by blatantly denying God's warning about death for eating of the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:1-4).

Satan's goal to be worshipped as God is also seen in his temptation of Christ who is called by Paul, "the last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45). Since Christ was already God, he could not tempt the Lord by offering Him the possibility of becoming like God, but he did seek to get Christ in His humanity to act independently of the Father and to get Christ to worship him.

In offering Christ the kingdoms of the world Satan's motive was to tempt Christ with the role of becoming the King of kings without going to the cross. It was audacious beyond measure for Satan to suggest that God the Creator should be a worshiper at his feet.³¹

Satan's greatest bid to be worshipped as God will occur in the future in the time of the man of lawlessness as described in 2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 13.

The final manifestation of Satan's lie will be to exalt the man of lawlessness as a world ruler who will oppose God and attempt to exalt himself above God ... Though the lawless one is given great power (Rev. 13:3-8), his destruction is certain and with it the ultimate judgment on Satan. Until that day Satan will continue to deceive the world and will substitute anything except true faith in Christ. Cold formality, heartless arrogance, proud self-complacency, highly esteemed external respectability, and other deceptive symbols of human morality will be shown to be deceptions coming from Satan himself. Though religious, respectable, and decent, unsaved man because of his sin will end in death (Rom. 6:21).³²

The late Dr. Chafer wrote:

It is no greater mystery that God allows Satan to pursue his lie to its full consummation with his man of sin—the federator of nation—blaspheming to the extent that he claims to be God and requires, on the penalty of death, the worship of himself, which worship belongs to God alone, than that He allows the lie to have it beginning at all.

In pursuing the deeper aspects of all that may enter into Satan's motive, it is suggested that, as has been presented, he is moved, first, by pride which is the impelling cause of his unholy ambition. Second, Satan may be offended that a plan of salvation has been put into action by which his victims can be rescued and lifted to heights of glory to which no angel will ever attain ... And, third, Satan apparently cannot recognize any other basis of relationship on the part of the creature to God than that of personal merit, which basis was that upon which all creatures stood at the beginning. The issue of personal merit formed the very ground of Satan's authority in his defense of the throne of God. The whole operation of divine grace became an intrusion into, if not an encroachment upon, that principle upon which Satan was originally appointed to act. ... It is concerning this gospel of grace by which lost men may be saved, that Satan has cast a veil over the minds of all unregenerate human beings "lest the light of the glorious gospel ... should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4)...³³

His Judgments and Destiny

The judgments of Satan fall into two major spheres, those already accomplished and those that yet await future fulfillment.

The Judgments Anticipated and Accomplished

The First Judgment: Satan's first judgment is first described for us in Isaiah 14:12 and Ezekiel 28:16-17 in connection with his original sin and fall. Here it is stated he had fallen from heaven and was cast out of his original standing and position as the anointed cherub.

The Second Judgment: The loss of Satan's standing as the anointed cherub is followed by the sentence pronounced against him in the garden of Eden after the temptation (Gen. 3:14-15). This announced the sure fact of his ultimate defeat through the coming seed of the woman, the Messiah Savior who would suffer as our substitute for sin.

Genesis 3:15. And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.

Genesis 3:15 has been rightly called the *protevangelium*, the first flicker of the gospel. Though it is only a broad generalization without much detail, in embryo form, Genesis 3:15 is: (1) a prophecy, (2) a warning, (3) a promise, and (4) the foundation for the many prophecies of Messiah Savior to be found down the pathway of Scripture.

Some Important Observations About Genesis 3:15. Since this is the foundation of all the Messianic promises that follow, it is important to note a number of observations:

(1) The promise of Genesis 3:15 is addressed to the serpent, not to mankind. Begun in 3:14, it is part of a sentence of judgment passed on one who is the enemy of both God and man. Though it contains in seed form a promise for mankind, it is more directly a sentence of judgment on the serpent declaring his final doom (clearly a reference to Satan according to New Testament revelation [see Rom. 16:20; 2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9; 20:2]). Kidner points out that this teaches us that God's plan of redemption "is about God's rule as much as about man's need."³⁴

(2) Though Genesis 3:15 contains great hope for mankind as a promise, it is also a prophecy of hostility and struggle. "Enmity" comes from a Hebrew word which means "to hate." Therefore, prophetic sentence is cradled in a warning of great conflict and foreshadows the perpetual struggle and incessant activity of satanic powers that will oppose man and God's plan of salvation through the One who would come. To be sure, Satan is a hater of mankind and especially those linked with the promised Deliverer by grace.

(3) Enmity is a term not really applicable to dumb beasts. Its scriptural use limits it, like its verb root, to enmity between persons or morally responsible agents. As just mentioned, the New Testament reveals the figure of Satan behind the serpent and rules out the idea of mere hostility between mankind and snakes.

(4) We note that the struggle is between the serpent and the woman, between his seed and her seed, and between a single individual and the serpent. The text says, "And I will put enmity between you (the serpent) and the woman (Eve), ... he (the seed of the woman) shall bruise you (the serpent) on the head, And you (the serpent) shall bruise him (the seed of the woman) on the heel."

- The seed of the serpent is a collective noun meaning offspring and must refer to the children of the evil one, those who are in a spiritual sense the children of the devil, demons and the unbelieving world. In John 8:44 the Lord Jesus addressed the religious leaders of Israel who were rejecting Him and said, "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father ..."
- If "seed" must refer to a whole class and is used in the collective sense in the first half of the statement, then "seed" in the second half of the statement must be used collectively for the descendants or posterity of the woman, the godly line. The enmity, then, is one that will exist between two groups throughout history, the serpent's and the woman's.
- In the last part of verse 15, however, the seed is narrowed to the singular "he" and the singular "you," which anticipates a person—a particular seed who does battle with the serpent who is Satan. (Though Galatians 3:16 and 19 deals with the seed of Abraham, it is still applicable. Also compare Romans 16:20; Hebrews 2:9-14 and Revelation 5).

(5) Two things are stated about the seeds and their enmity: First, her seed would bruise, crush the serpent's head. This clearly portrays a mortal wound which means her seed would be victorious. So, a deliverance is anticipated. Second, the serpent would bruise her seed on the heel. Her seed would suffer, but it would *not* be a mortal wound or one that would lead to defeat. A deliverer who suffers, but who is ultimately victorious is promised. We anticipate, then, a continuous conflict, but also a deliverance by one who will suffer.

The Third Judgment: Besides providing redemption from sin for those who would believe in Christ's person and work on the Cross, the Cross was also the strategic place and basis for Satan's defeat and judgment. The death of the Savior not only provided a perfect sacrifice for sin, but as seen in several New Testament passages, it provided a complete victory over Satan and his evil forces (see Col. 1:15-22; 2:14-15; Heb. 2:14-15).

Colossians 2:13-15. And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us *and* which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

When the seventy returned, they were overjoyed with their experiences of victory over the demonic powers (Luke 10:17). Then Jesus said, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning" (vs. 18). Jesus saw in those victories the defeat of the devil that would come to final fulfillment through the cross and the future judgments that would occur (see also John 12:31-32; Rom. 16:20).

Similarly, speaking of the Holy Spirit's ministry of convincing men of the truth of the gospel, the Lord Jesus said, "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged." Christ's sure victory over Satan through the cross, serves clear notice on unbelievers of their judgment as well.

Though defeated at the Cross, Satan is still active and walking about like a lion on the prowl (1 Peter 5:8), but he is also like a condemned criminal waiting for his "execution" or sentence of judgment to be carried out as anticipate by the Apostle when he wrote:

Romans 16:20 And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

This naturally takes us to the future and final judgments of the devil as explained in Scripture.

The Future Judgments

1. Satan will be cast out of heaven (Rev. 12:9)

After showing His determination to go to the cross (John 12:27), where He would pay the penalty for sin and defeat Satan, He prayed, "Father, glorify Your Name" (vs. 28), we then read these verses:

John 12:28b-33. There came therefore a voice out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The multitude therefore, who stood by and heard it, were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him." Jesus answered and said, "This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes. "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.

In the statement, "now the ruler of this world shall be cast out," Christ was anticipating the future judgments of Satan based on the soon fact and accomplishments of the cross. Mid-way in the tribulation, Michael, the leader of the holy angels, will lead in a great battle with Satan and his angels and Satan and his angels will be cast out of heaven.

Revelation 12:7-9. And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

While Satan had already lost his exalted position as the anointed cherub, from what we learn in Job and Revelation 12:10 regarding Satan's accusations of believers, he evidently was allowed into God's presence for this purpose. After the victory of this battle, however, it is apparent that he is restricted to the domain of his kingdom of the earth as the ruler of the world, the Satanic cosmos system (John 12:31).

Because Satan will be cast out of heaven where he no longer can accuse the brethren (v. 10), he will be "filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short" (v. 12). Being cast out of heaven, Satan will then empower the future world ruler to carry out his wicked opposition to God and His people during the Great Tribulation (Rev. 13).³⁵

From this point on in the Tribulation, Satan's activity will be intensified against those who have been forgiven and justified by grace through faith in Christ. But it seems apparent that what antagonizes Satan, perhaps even more than sinners coming to know the Savior, is that they are able to overcome him by the cross, the very basis of his doom. Further, like pouring salt into a wound, they will be soon glorified with the Savior and will be able to reign with Him while Satan who wants preeminence more than anything will have no share whatsoever in this glory. Think about this. Satan wanted to be like God and rebelled against God seeking his own glory. In contrast Paul reminds us of the Savior, 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. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth. (Phil. 2:6-10).

2. Satan will be cast into the Abyss at the beginning of the Millennium (Rev. 20:1-3)

Scripture describes this present time in which we live as an evil age and Satan is called "the god of this world," (literally "age"; compare Eph. 5:16; 2 Cor. 4:4). As previously mentioned, Satan is free and walks about as a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (1 Pet. 5:8), but because of Christ's victory on the cross, Satan and his forces are even now a defeated lot, like criminals waiting for their sentence to be executed. Consequently, during the Millennium and Christ's reign on earth, Satan (and this must include his demon hosts) will be bound and put out of action until the very end of the thousand-year reign of our Lord.

In the future, at the end of the Tribulation, an angel will descend from heaven with the key of the abyss and with a great chain in his hand (Rev. 20:1). The fact he has the key and the chain shows he has been given authority and power from heaven to carry out this assignment. The word "abyss," the Greek *abussos*, means "boundless or bottomless." This is the bondage place of fallen angels (demons or unclean spirits). It is the same place called "tartaros" in 2 Peter 2:4. Literally, 2 Peter 2:4 reads, "and to pits of darkness (gloom), he committed them by casting them into tartaros" (the verb here is *tartaraw*, "to cast into tartaros"). This and other verses tell us: (1) that tartaros is an abyss of gloom or darkness, (2) that it is a prison of fallen angels, and (3) that the fallen angels who were bound there were those who sinned in the days of Noah in Genesis 6 (2 Pet. 2:5; Jude 6-7; Luke 8:31).

This angel will then lay hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan and will bind him for a thousand years (Rev. 20:2). The emphasis here is that this angel, operating under God's authority and with His power, will possess the strength necessary to seize, hold firmly, and restrain the devil and bind him in the abyss for a thousand years with no possibility of escape. During this period Satan will absolutely not be a problem to mankind in the Millennium, at least for the thousand years (vs. 3a).

The statement, "so that he should not deceive the nations any longer ..." (vs. 3b) states the purpose—to stop the deceptions of Satan, the master of deceit. Deceit or deception is one of the keys, if not *the* key characterization given to us in the Bible of Satan. Satan cannot operate in the realm of truth, but he operates in the realm of a lie. He is a liar and the father of lies. Why does he lie? To deceive and lead astray seeking his own following and worship (John 8:44; 2 Cor. 11:3; 2 Thess. 2:10; Rev. 12:9).

It is important to know that Satan's key deceptions concern the Word of God, which of course is the Word of truth. His greatest attack and deceptions concern the integrity of God, both the living Word (Jesus Christ and His person and work) and the written Word (the Holy Bible). It is in this way that he deceives the world (cf. 2 Thess. 2:10-12).

The Millennium, then, will be a time when the whole "earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9). For this to take place fully and completely, Satan will be removed so that the earth may be prepared for the kingdom of God, a time of truth and the knowledge of God.

We then read that "after these things (i.e., the one thousand years) he must be released for a short time" (Rev. 20:3c). It is

significant to note that Satan “*must* be released” (italics mine). “Must” is the Greek verb *dei* which points to a logical as well as a moral necessity. It looks at a constraint arising from the divine appointment or purpose of something. Why is he not permanently bound or cast directly into the lake of fire? Why is it necessary for him to once again be released to wreck his havoc? This is an important question, but since verses 7-9 and another judgment (vs. 10) are devoted to his release, we will save the answer and discuss it then. But let’s not miss the fact that his release is for a short time only.

3. Satan will be finally cast into the eternal lake of fire at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:7-10)

“And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison” (20:7). Previously, in verse 3, this release of Satan was anticipated and presented as a must, a moral necessity in the fulfillment of the plan and purposes of God for human history. This was followed by a brief mention of the reign of Christ and the reward of saints who will reign with Him for the thousand years. But nothing of the character and nature of the Millennium is given in Revelation 20. However, the nature of the Millennium is the subject of much Old Testament prophecy as in Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:7-9; and Psalm 72. Here in chapter 20 it is evidently assumed the reader knows and understands this so that aspect is not covered. So what is the thousand-year reign of Christ like? It is a time of unprecedented peace, prosperity, justice, righteousness and holiness—politically, physically, spiritually and morally. This is due to two important facts of the Millennium: (1) the removal of Satan and his demon hosts, and (2) to the presence and perfect reign of the Lord Jesus Christ as the glorified Son of God in all His perfect wisdom and power.

In Revelation 20:5, we have reference to the completion of the thousand years. “Completed” here is the aorist passive of the verb *teleo*. The passive voice brings out God’s activity and involvement in the outworking and accomplishment of this age of a thousand years. The aorist tense is a culminative aorist and looks at the results, i.e., what this period will prove or demonstrate. The verb *teleo* means not simply “completed,” but “brought to its goal and purpose.”

There are several biblical principles which can be gleaned here: (a) God has worked variously over history. These various workings are often spoken of as dispensations or economies. He has special purposes in the outworking of each economy and the culmination of that economy does not simply end it, but accomplishes and demonstrates certain goals and purposes that God has for history during that administration of His plan. (b) Each dispensation provides new conditions and opportunities to test man from every conceivable angle as well as new opportunities to reveal the character and nature of Satan and man under those different conditions. (c) It also provides new ways to demonstrate God’s glory, character, mercy and grace, and divine provision for man. The Millennium is the final test which accomplishes this effect. The purpose of the Millennium followed by the release of Satan will be explained below.

We then read that Satan will go out to deceive the nations (vs. 8a). This declares the immediate purpose for Satan’s release. As a fallen angel who is confirmed in his rebellion, the thousand-year prison term will have no effect on Satan. He will still be %o satanas, the adversary, the arch enemy of God and confirmed in his rebellion and perversity. Thus, immediately upon his release he will engage in his age-old schemes of deception, disruption, and warfare.

The statement, “the nations which are in the four corners of the earth” (Rev. 20:8b) shows his deceptions will reach out to the entire earth. But who will he be able to deceive? Walvoord says:

These who are tempted are the descendants of the Tribulation saints who survive the Tribulation and enter the Millennium in their natural bodies ... The children of those entering the Millennium far outnumber the parents, and undoubtedly the earth is teeming with inhabitants at the conclusion of the thousand-year reign of Christ. Outwardly they have been required to conform to the rule of the King and make a profession of obedience to Christ. In many cases, however, this was mere outward conformity without inward reality, and in their experience of real temptation they are easy victims of Satan’s wiles.³⁶

Walvoord quotes William Hoste in his book, *The Visions of John the Divine*:

The golden age of the kingdom will last a thousand years, during which righteousness will reign, and peace, prosperity, and the knowledge of God will be universally enjoyed. But this will not entail universal conversion, and all profession must be tested ... Will not a thousand years under the beneficent sway of Christ and the manifested glory of God suffice to render men immune to his [Satan’s] temptations, will they not have radically changed for the better, and become by the altered conditions of life and the absence of Satanic temptations, children of God and lovers of His will? Alas! It will be proved once more that man whatever his advantages and environment, apart from the grace of God and the new birth, remains at heart only evil and at enmity with God.³⁷

The great lesson in Satan’s short release and deception is this. Here ends the vain idea that man, if he just had a perfect environment, would be able to make the world a wonderful place without war and conquest. If man just had a perfect environment

he would willingly serve others and the God who created and redeemed him. But this is false because it fails to take into account the fallen nature of man and his desperate need of the redemptive work of Christ. So even in the perfect situation of the millennial reign of Christ, countless numbers immediately respond to the first temptation to rebel. However, they are quickly destroyed and this brings an end to the rebellion of the nations and to Satan's career.

Throughout the history of mankind, but especially in the last days of apostasy, mankind in his human ideas and satanic perspective has tried to believe that people are basically good, that within each person there is a divine spark which only needs fanning, i.e., good opportunities, the perfect environment, the great society, etc. In other words, take away all the inequalities, give everyone a fair shake, and we will have a wonderful world. Today we hear a great deal about reforming the criminal element. You have heard it said that they only went bad because of a bad environment, etc., which of course cannot change as long as Satan is around and Jesus Christ is absent. Mankind has also believed, especially today, that what we need is a one-world state with an international police force because this would bring world peace and an end to wars. But as we see in the book of Revelation, this will only pave the way for the beast and his godless system of tyranny and murder under the power of Satan.

In the Millennium, therefore, God gives man his great society, one which exceeds anything man could ever dream of—a society and world order with a perfect environment. Then at the end he releases Satan. Again we ask WHY? To the above reasons let me add the following for further reiteration:

- (1) To show the frightfully and totally bankrupt condition of mankind and that what he needs is not a great society with all evils removed (a perfect environment), but that any effective and lasting change must come from within through God's grace plan of salvation which regenerates and gives new life and spiritual capacity. Nothing else can permanently change mankind.
- (2) To further substantiate God's case against Satan, that Satan is the liar, the slanderer, and the deceiver, and to a large degree the cause of man's misery.
- (3) To show that God is absolutely just in His sentence of Satan to the lake of fire (vs. 10—his permanent, eternal prison); and that God is perfect holiness and His actions are always consistent with His character.

Finally, we are told Satan will be cast into the lake of fire (vs. 10). The lake of fire is literal. It is not just a figurative expression for hell on earth or for separation from God. It is a real, literal place. It is also everlasting. The Scripture does not teach that there will one day be a universal salvation of all mankind after they have suffered a while. This teaches the opposite; there will be no annihilation of the wicked. The lake of fire is not symbolic for annihilation. The word expressly teaches that there is a literal place in which there will be everlasting and constant torment.

Satan, who began his career as a holy angel, as the anointed cherub, will finally be brought to his eternal doom to never again be a threat or a cause of deception and pain.

The Activities of Satan

In General

In general, the activities of Satan are seen in the names and characterizations of Satan as defined previously—slander, temptation, perversion, accusation, deception, etc. However, it would be well to note these activities as they are related to the specific objects of his schemes in the world.

Specific Objects His Activities

In his usual concise and clear way, Dr. Ryrie has done an excellent job in describing the objects of Satan's activities. He divides this into Satan's activities in relation to Christ, to God, the nations, unbelievers, and believers.³⁸

In Relation to Christ

The animosity between Satan and Christ was first predicted after the sin of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:15). The enmity between spiritual descendants of Satan and the family of God was predicted here. Also an individual (Christ) from among the woman's seed would deal a fatal blow to Satan's head, while Satan would bruise Christ's heel (a nonfatal blow, but one that caused Him great suffering). This exchange of blows took place at the cross.

When our Lord did actually appear on this earth, Satan made concerted attempts to thwart His mission to die for the sins of the world. Undoubtedly Herod's killing of the children under two was Satan-inspired (Matt. 2:16). Christ clearly said that Peter aligned himself with Satan's plan when Peter wanted to dismiss the idea that Christ would have to die in Jerusalem (16:21-23). The sharpness of Christ's rebuke underscores the fact that His central purpose in coming to earth was to die. When Judas was about to betray the Lord Satan entered into him (John 13:27).

But the principal and most direct attack of Satan on our Lord was at His temptation (Matt. 4:1-11). The word "test" or "tempt" includes two ideas: proving and soliciting to evil. Satan's testing of Christ involved both facets. In the process of Satan's soliciting Him to commit evil, God would prove through the test that Christ was sinless. God and Satan were both involved in His test. The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness place in order that He might be tempted by the devil. For forty days Satan tempted Him with many temptations (Luke 4:2), and during that period our Lord fasted. This served to sensitize Him against all the tests, but especially against the three attacks which came at the end of those forty days. These three were the epitome of the areas in which a person can be tested: the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life (1 John 2:16).

These were tests particularly suited to the God-Man. Only He (not we) could turn stones to bread. Only He (not we) could jump off the pinnacle of the temple and land unharmed in the area below. Only He (not we) could expect to have all the kingdoms of this world.

The whole goal of Satan's temptation of Christ was to eliminate the suffering and death of the Cross. He offered the Lord glory without the Cross. This, then, would have made His substitutionary death unnecessary. Specifically, Satan tempted Christ to independence (Matt. 4:3-4), to indulgence (vv. 5-7) and idolatry (vv. 8-10).

There was no doubt in Satan's mind that Christ was the promised Deliverer. But he wanted the Lord to assert His independence from the Father by turning the stones to bread. Just as the manna given to Israel in the wilderness came from God, so Christ's food should come in the Father's time and way. To turn stones to bread would be to assert His independence of the will of the Father. "Though He was hungry, and it was right to eat, yet He would not eat independently of the Father's will. Satan had tempted Him not away from spiritual bread but away from the Father and toward literal bread, gained independently of the Father's will" (S. Craig Glickman, *Knowing Christ* [Chicago Moody, 1980], p. 41). Satan still tempts Christ's followers to take things into their own hands rather than yielding to the Father's will.

To have cast Himself off the pinnacle or wing or projection of the temple to the valley 450-600 feet below and to have landed unharmed would certainly have been a spectacular sign of the Messiah. But to have done so would have been to take a shortcut and show a lack of faith. Rashness, signs, or presumption never substitute for the constancy of faith, though Satan still tempts us to indulge in these.

Satan has temporarily been given authority over this world (cosmos), but ultimately Christ will rule it. Thus Satan had the right to offer the Lord the kingdoms of this world, but had Christ taken them He would have shortcut the plan of God and bypassed the atoning work of His death. Satan still tempts us with the immediate and visible.

Since Satan was unsuccessful in preventing the Cross, he attacks the Gospel, the followers of Christ, and what yet remains of the plan of God for this world.

In Relation to God

The principal tactic Satan uses to attack God and His program in general is to offer a counterfeit kingdom and program. This was evident when he originally sinned by wanting to be like, not unlike, God. The counterfeit was first attempted on mankind when Satan offered Eve the chance to be like God, knowing good and evil (Gen. 3:5).

The temptation of Christ was also an attempt at counterfeit. A counterfeit is as much like the genuine as possible, only without some vital feature. Satan's offer to our Lord was to have the glory due Him without the essential feature of His death.

Today Satan promotes a form of godliness while denying its power (2 Tim. 3:5). To do this, Satan disguises his servants as servants of righteousness (2 Cor 11:15). He promotes a doctrinal system through the demons who in turn use people who advocate both a false asceticism or unbridled license (1 Tim. 4:1-3; Rev. 2:24). The ultimate counterfeit will be the coming Antichrist whose activities will be in accord with Satan and who will pawn off on mankind "the lie" (2 Thes. 2:9, 11, NIV).

In Relation to the Nation

His principal activity in this arena is to deceive the nations (Rev. 20:3). Deceive them how? Apparently into thinking they can govern righteously and bring peace in the world apart from the presence and rule of Christ. Again, his tactic is to counterfeit.

He apparently employs demons in carrying out his deception (Dan. 10:13, 20), and he uses governments to hinder the progress of the Gospel (1 Thes. 2:18).

During the coming days of Great Tribulation Satan will deceive the nations into receiving the Antichrist as their savior. Satan, the dragon, will give the Antichrist his power, and the world will give allegiance to him (Rev. 13:2-4). At the conclusion of the Tribulation Satan and his demons will influence the armies of the nations to march to their doom at the war of Armageddon (16:13-16, NIV).

During the millennial kingdom Satan will be bound, but at the close of that period he will be released and will attempt to lead the world in a final revolt against Christ's kingdom. After this unsuccessful attempt, Satan will be cast forever into the lake of fire (20:7-10).

In Relation to the Unbelievers

In relation to unbelievers Satan blinds their minds so that they will not accept the Gospel (2 Cor. 4:4). He often does this by making them think that any way to heaven is as acceptable as the only way. Again, a counterfeit. This blindness attacks the minds of people, and while unbelievers may think and reason, a power greater than Satan must remove that blindness. Human reasoning and convincing arguments have a ministry, but only the power of God can remove satanic blindness. Sometimes the devil comes and takes away the Word people have heard in order to prevent their believing (Luke 8:12).

In promoting blindness Satan uses counterfeit religion as detailed in the preceding section. This may include everything from asceticism to license, from theism (for being a theist does not necessarily mean being saved) to occultism. In other words, Satan will use any aspect of the world system which he heads in order to keep people from thinking about or doing that which will bring them into the kingdom of God (Col. 1:13; 1 John 2:15-17).

In Relation to Christians

A. Satan, the Tempter

Just as Satan tried the Lord, he also tries believers. His aim is to get us to commit evil. God may sometimes use Satan in testing us to prove us in resisting his tests. Tests can have three beneficial purposes in the life of the believer: (a) to prove us (1 Peter 1:6-7); (b) to teach us (4:12-13; see also Heb. 5:8); and (c) to increase our love for God (James 1:12). But Satan's only purpose is to tempt the believer to commit evil.

There are at least three areas in which Satan tempts believers. The first is in the area of conforming to the pressures and structures of society (1 Thes. 3:5). Paul, you remember, had been forced to leave Thessalonica after probably only one month's ministry in that city (Acts 17:5-10). Further, Satan had used some governmental ban to keep him from returning (1 Thes. 2:18). So he sent Timothy, who was not under that ban, back to Thessalonica to see if they had succumbed to Satan's temptations. What temptations? It is too early in the first century for Paul to be referring to official persecution from the Roman Empire. These temptations must have been more of an unofficial, societal, personal nature. For instance, we know that women enjoyed more freedom in Macedonia than anywhere in the empire at that time, and we also know that a number of leading women in Thessalonica were converted under Paul's ministry. Perhaps Satan tempted them to continue to conform to the lifestyles they experienced before they were saved. It was a temptation to put status before sanctification. Also many of the converts were Gentiles, and Satan may have tempted them with the pride of intellect.

Second, Satan tempts believers to cover up selfishness. The story of Ananias and Sapphira serves as the classic illustration. This couple wanted to retain some of the money they received from the sale of their property, while at the same time receiving praise for their contribution. Peter discerned that it was Satan who had filled their hearts to lie (Acts 5:1-11). They had the right to own and sell property. They had no necessary obligation to give all the proceeds to the church. But they were obliged not to feign generosity and at the same time cater to their selfishness by keeping part of the money received.

Third, Satan tempts believers to immorality (1 Cor. 7:5). God provided marriage for proper expression of physical needs and

relationships and He expects husbands and wives to assume their respective and mutual responsibilities. When this is not done, Satan has opportunity to tempt believers to illicit or perverted sexual sins.

B. Satan, the Adversary

As adversary, Satan accuses and opposes believers in various areas of their lives. First, he opposes our witness to the Gospel. He does this by confusing us when he plants tares among the wheat (Matt. 13:38-39), by snatching away the Word that has been sown (Mark 4:15), by aligning governmental authorities against believers (1 Thes. 2:18), or by imprisoning believers, believing this will keep their testimony from spreading or make them fearful of witnessing (Rev. 2:10).

Second, Satan spotlights our sins (12:10). He accuses us before God when we sin, thinking he can cause us to lose our salvation. But Christ, our Advocate, takes our case and reminds the Father again and again that He paid for all our sins when He died on the cross (1 John 2:1-2).

Third, Satan opposes the believer by bringing pressure on him which he may not be able to bear. There are two examples of this in the New Testament. One concerned the man disciplined in 1 Corinthians 5. Apparently the discipline had had its desired effect, and he had confessed his sin of incest. Now the church should have received him back into fellowship. Seemingly, some wanted to do this and some did not. So Paul urged them to do so, not only to heal any division that might develop but also lest the brother involved be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. He needed to know the forgiveness of his brothers and sisters (2 Cor. 2:5-11). Not to restore him would give Satan an advantage.

The second example concerns women who are widowed at a young age (1 Tim. 5:14-15). Paul urged them to marry again and bear children and lead useful lives. Some, idle and gossiping, were following Satan.

In general we may say that Satan the adversary wants passionately to squelch the believer's testimony. To accomplish this he prowls the earth like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). The word "devour" is the same word used to describe the way the Red Sea swallowed up the Egyptians when they were pursuing the Hebrews (Heb. 11:29). It paints a vivid picture of Satan's ultimate goal—to completely drown the believer's testimony and usefulness.

As I mentioned earlier, Satan may prefer to do some things over others. But he will do whatever he has to in order to promote his plans and programs successfully. Remember too that he is powerful, he is experienced, and he has a host of demons to help him. Therefore, the believer can successfully fight him in the strength and power of God who dwells within him. Other aspects of the believer's defense will be discussed in another chapter.

Satan's World System, The Satanic Cosmos

On several occasions, Satan is revealed to be the ruler or god of this present age and the world system that dominates our present world.

John 12:31 Now judgment is upon this world (Greek, kosmos); now the ruler of this world shall be cast out.

John 14:30 I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world (Greek, kosmos) is coming, and he has nothing in Me.

John 16:11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world (Greek, kosmos) has been judged.

2 Corinthians 4:4 in whose case the god of this world (aiwn, "age") has blinded the minds of the unbelieving

Ephesians 2:2 in which you formerly walked according to the course (aiwn) of this world (kosmos), according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

What exactly is this world system or cosmos over which Satan rules?

The Meaning and Nature of this World

The primary word for "world" is the Greek kosmos (kosmos). Kosmos means "order, ornament, adornment, an orderly

arrangement. Our word “cosmetics” comes from this word. In the New Testament it has three main uses. It is used of: (1) the orderly arrangement of the heavens or the earth and all things in their complex order and composition as created by God, created in perfect order and subject to the laws God established to govern its operation.(Matt. 13:35; John 21:25; Acts 17:24). (2) The cosmos (Greek, kosmos) may also refer to the world in its arrangement of the inhabitants of the earth in tribes and nations or peoples (Acts 17:26; John 3:16; 1 Cor. 4:9; 1 John 2:2; 2 Pet. 2:5). (3) But most importantly, (3) kosmos is used of a vast system and arrangement of human affairs, earthly goods, godless governments, conflicts, riches, pleasures, culture, education, world religions, the cults and the occult dominated and negatively affected by Satan who is god of this satanic cosmos. This system is promoted by Satan, conformed to his ideals, aims, methods, and character, and stands perpetually in opposition to God the cause of Christ. This world system is used to seduce men away from God and the person of Christ. It is anti-God, anti-Christ, and anti-Bible, and very anti-humanity though it often appears as humanitarian as part of Satan’s masquerade as an angel of light.

Another word that sometimes refers to this world system is the Greek aiwn (aiwn), “age, period of time.” This word seems to serve as a synonym in certain contexts. It is used in some contexts of the age in which we live as marked by certain spiritual and moral characteristics as affected by Satan whom Paul identifies as “the god of this age.” A very interesting use occurs in Ephesians 2:2 where Paul combines both aiwn and kosmos, “the course (age) of the world (cosmos). This age is often contrasted in Scripture with the age to come because of the very different characteristics and conditions of the two ages (Eph. 1:21; Matt. 12:32; 13:22; 1 Tim. 6:17; Tit. 2:12-13; Heb. 6:5). Trench defines aiwn as

All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitutes a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale,—all this is included in the aiwn, which is, as Bengel has expressed it, ‘the subtle informing spirit of the kosmos, or world of men who are living alienated and apart from God.’³⁹

The world, then, instead of remaining a beautiful expression of God’s will and creative power as seen under the conditions of its creation, has become the seat of an angelic conflict and the very rival and antithesis of the plan of God.

Satan’s Authority Over This World

In his temptation of Christ, Satan declared, “I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish” (Luke 4:5). Of course, God is sovereign and omnipotent, but in accord with God’s eternal purposes, as discussed previously, the Bible does teach us that this present world is Satan’s domain and under his authority. Thus, the Lord frequently spoke of Satan as the ruler of this world (kosmos) (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), and Paul likewise asserts the same truth (2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; 6:12; 1 John 5:19).

Satan’s Purposes in this World

The nature of Satan’s aims in the world are quickly evident in his first appearance in the Garden of Eden when he tempted Eve to act independently of God that she might become like God knowing good and evil. He appeals to what is pleasant to the senses and desirable to gain wisdom, but always, the goal is a life that seeks to get by without God.

Satan’s aim is to create a system that rivals God’s kingdom but which leaves Him out. It is to promote a counterfeit order. Basically, the cosmos is evil because it is independent of God. It may contain good aspects as well as overtly evil aspects, but its inherent evil lies in its being independent of God and a rival to Him. This sharp rivalry surfaces in such verses as James 1:27 where the believer is told to keep himself unstained from the world; in 4:4 where friendship with the world is said to be hostility toward God; and in 1 John 2:16 where John declares that all that is in the world is not from the Father.

To achieve his aim, Satan must try to make the values of his godless system seem attractive. Thus he works to make people give top priority to self as number one and to the here and now as most important. When John wrote that all that is in the world is not of the Father he explained what he meant by “all” by three exegetical statements that follow in 1 John 2:16. All of them emphasize self as number one. Satisfy the lusts of the flesh, Satan counsels. Try to get what the inordinate desires of the eyes make you covet. And build a self-sufficient, arrogant attitude that arises from boasting about the possessions one has in life. This selfishness is, of course, the prevailing philosophy of the world, and it comes from Satan who promoted himself from the beginning.

Satan also seeks to focus people’s attention on the present rather than on eternity. That is why John reminds us in verse 17 that the world passes away but the one that does the will of God abides forever. Thus Satan seeks to achieve his purposes by trying to change our priorities (self first) and our perspective (here and now more important). In reality the truth is that God is first and

eternity most important.⁴⁰

The Christian's Relation to this World

The Scripture sets forth a number of importance truths regarding the believer's relation to this satanic cosmos in which we live. Though we are in it, we are not of it (John 17:14-16). We are of a different kingdom and, as sojourners and aliens, we are to be living for the age to come and eternal state that follows. Though in the world, we are to be both unstained by the world and separated from it and its way of life while also penetrating the world as ambassadors of Christ, as those holding forth the Word of life (cf. Jam. 1:27; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; with Phil. 2:12-18; Matt. 5:14-16; 2 Cor. 5:20-21). Our trust, therefore, is not to be in the uncertain riches of this age nor in the things in which men glory (1 Tim. 6:17-19; John 5:41; 1 Thess. 2:6); we are not to be friends with this world which amounts to hostility to God and His aims (Jam. 4:4); nor are we to love the world, for loving the world and its things chokes out our ability to love God (1 John 2:15-17; Matt. 6:19-24; Mark 4:18-19).

Rather, we are to find our purpose, peace, significance, and joy, not as the world seeks these things, but through the Savior's life and the eternal purpose He gives us (John 14:25-27; Phil. 2:1-5). We can enjoy the things God gives us in the world for He has given us all things freely to enjoy, but our security, significance, or basic satisfaction and contentment in life are to come from knowing, loving, trusting, and serving the Lord (1 Tim. 6:17; Phil. 4:11-13; Eccl. 2:24-26). So while we can use the things in the world, we must not abuse them as the worldling or earthdweller⁴¹ who seeks from the world what only the Lord can give (1 Cor. 7:29-35). As believers we can expect animosity from the world bridled with an attempt by the world to conform us to its ideal, ambitions or aims, and way of life (John 15:18-19; 17:14; 1 John 3:13; Rom. 12:1-2); it is God's truth as found in the Bible that protects from the world (John 17:17);

God's Attitude and Plan for This World

What, then, is God's plan for this world? God permits this world to run its natural course with the likes of Satan as its counterfeit god. This will demonstrate Satan and his system for what they are and at the same time demonstrated God's infinite grace, mercy, love, wisdom and holiness in contrast to Satan's accusation.

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 34 For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? 35 Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? 36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.

What then will happen to this world? It is a system that is even now passing away, "And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:17). Even now, all believers have been translated out of Satan's kingdom of darkness and into a new kingdom, the kingdom of light (Col. 1:13), but the day is coming when Satan's kingdom on earth will be replaced with the kingdom of the Lord Jesus and he will be bound and ultimately cast into the lake of fire. This is one of the great themes and the great anticipation of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

When our Lord returns the cosmos kingdom of Satan will be replaced by the kingdom of Christ who will rule on this earth. It is important to observe that the arena of Christ's victory will be the same as that of Satan's kingdom, the earth. In the same arena where Satan has reigned Christ will be victorious.⁴²

The Christian's Defense Against Satan and His World System

Overcoming the Enemy

The Principle Declared

An often repeated term or concept is that of victory or overcoming the conflict that rages. The term "overcomer" comes from the Greek *nikaw*, "to conquer, prevail, triumph, overcome." This verb is found 28 times in 24 verses in the New Testament. This presupposes and calls attention to the presence of war, contests, battles, and conflicts in our struggle with the satanic cosmos. As seen in this study, the New Testament clearly teaches us, as does life itself, that we are in a conflict, indeed, a holy war with specific adversaries. And after salvation the conflict only grows because we have changed kingdoms. This is everywhere evident in Scripture and so obvious in life that one has to deny reality to ignore or disclaim it. Two key passages that illustrate the nature of

our conflict with evil are Ephesians 2:1-2 and 6:12:

Ephesians 2:1-2 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

The Adversaries Defined

- (1) **Satan**, our chief adversary, the devil: (1 Pet. 5:8-9; Eph. 6:12; John 16:11; Col. 2:15; but note 1 John 2:13-14).
- (2) The **world**, a system and arrangement of the affairs of men and government under the control of the evil one and opposed to God and His purposes for man: (John 16:33; 1 John 5:4; Eph. 2:2).
- (3) Indwelling sin or the **flesh** and all its corrupting power and life-dominating patterns: (Rom. 7:15; 8:4-8, 13; Gal. 5:16-26).
- (4) Other forms stemming from the above three: darkness (Col. 1:13), blindness (2 Cor. 4:3-4), death (Rom. 8:4f; Rev. 2:11), evil (Eph. 5:16), disobedience (Eph. 2:1), rebellion in every conceivable form (2 Tim. 3:1f).

The Provision of Victory

The Means

(1) The Person and Work of Jesus Christ: That Christ is *the Overcomer*, that is, the ultimate source and means of victory is the great message of Scripture and everywhere evident in its pages. Note the following passages:

John 16:33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

Revelation 3:21 He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, *as I also overcame* and sat down with My Father on His throne. (emphasis mine)

Revelation 5:5 and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.

Revelation 17:14 These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him {are the} called and chosen and faithful.

Romans 8:37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

2 Corinthians 2:14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

Colossians 2:15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

Closely related to Christ's victory through His person and work on the cross is another aspect of the means of our victory, the work of the Spirit in regeneration and indwelling.

(2) The Ministry of the Spirit in Regeneration and Indwelling. Compare the following verses:

John 4:4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world (cf. 4:2).

1 John 5:4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world.

We should note the emphasis here. The text does not say, “He that overcomes,” as the NIV translates the Greek participle here which is neuter. Rather, it should be translated as “everything” or “whatever is born of God.” Overcoming is specifically non-personalized in order to stress a point: it is never the man that overcomes, but his birth from God and what that brings into his life; this is that which overcomes or gives capacity to overcome Satan’s world system.

So, 1 John 5:4-5 gives us some very insightful truths regarding who or what overcomes the world: (a) the *source of victory* is the new birth and the new life that it brings, “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world”; (b) the *method for appropriating victory* is faith, “and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith”; (c) the *object of faith* must be Jesus Christ because He is the real victor, “And who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”

The Method

The method too is clearly marked out for us in the Bible.

(1) Faith (1 John 5:5; 2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 2:20; 5:5; Eph. 3:17). 1 John 5:5 makes it abundantly clear. “And this is the victory that overcomes the world—our faith.” Since victory was accomplished by Christ and not by what we have done, victory always comes by faith in the work of God through Christ. Our victory is not a victory to be won, by one to be claimed by faith.

(2) The Filling of the Spirit: Appropriating the Manifold Ministries of the Spirit (John 14:16f; 1 John 4:2-4; Eph. 3:16; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Rom. 8:1f; Gal. 5:16f). Though saved and identified with Christ in His life and death, all believers would be helpless to overcome because of the presence of the flesh without the Holy Spirit who is God’s provision for strength and victory.

(3) Biblical Insight Through the Knowledge of the Word (Ps. 119:9, 11, 45; John 8:32; 17:17; Rom. 10:17; Eph. 6:17; 1 John 2:13-14; Heb. 4:12; Col. 1:9-12). Obviously, if I am going to believe God’s message of grace, trust God with my life, and deal with my inner man in the face of the many deceptive temptations, I must know the Word. Faith and the ministries of the Spirit do not exist independently of God’s precious Word. They are directly tied to knowing the Word. The Word builds my faith, directs it, and the Spirit speaks to us through the Word.

But there is another element of victory and one that is vital for victory and fruitfulness; it’s human responsibility as the next point shows.

(4) Diligence, Discipline (Rom. 13:14 [put on]; 1 Tim. 4:7 [discipline yourself]; 2 Pet. 1:3-10 [applying all diligence]; Gal. 5:16 [walk]; Eph. 5:18 [be filled]). There is a fine balance that must be observed in Scripture. Salvation and victory are completely of the Lord. We are to put no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3). We do not overcome by our works, by the energy of the flesh, or by our sincerity, or by our effort, or by our will power because we are powerless. Nevertheless, victory requires our *cooperation* with God’s *operation*. It means discipline, diligence, and a commitment to draw near to God and to act on His promises and provision by faith. Note also 1 Corinthians 15:10; Philippians 2:12-13. So James, in a passage warning us against worldliness and Satan’s opposition, he wrote:

James 4:7-8. Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

I am reminded of the story of the new Christian who, after reading the whole Bible through for the first time and after finishing the book of Revelation, jumped up and joyfully cried out, “We win! We win! We win!”

Satan is a powerful, powerful enemy. So powerful that when contending over the body of Moses, Jude tells us:

But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, so respected his power, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you” (Jude 9).

But thankfully, the power of God through His blessed Son is far greater. Satan is a defeated foe.

1 John 4:4 ... greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

1 In this verse, “faith” has the article and may well refer not one’s personal faith, but to “the faith,” that which is the object or

content of one's faith, the body of truth (G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1973, p. 362; Walter Bauer, F. Wilbur Gingrich, Fredrick W. Danker, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament And Other Early Christian Literature*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1979, electronic media).

2 Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, Victor Books, Wheaton, IL, 1987, p. 137.

3 Ryrie, p. 137.

4 Ryrie, pp. 137-138.

5 He is the "ruler" (*archon*) of a realm said to be "of the air" (*tou aeros*). Taken literally, this would signify the atmosphere around the earth, which, according to ancient cosmology, is the abode of demons (Frank E. Gaebelein, General Editor, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, New Testament*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1976-1992, electronic media).

6 Everett F. Harrison, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, New Testament*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1962, electronic media.

7 Frank E. Gaebelein, General Editor, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, New Testament*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1976-1992, electronic media.

8 Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible, Expanded Edition*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1995, p. 1878.

9 John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, Editors, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Victor Books, Wheaton, 1983, 1985, electronic media.

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13 Ryrie, pp. 142-143.

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18 J. Dwight Pentecost, *Your Adversary The Devil*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1969, p. 25.

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20 Ryrie, pp. 144-145.

21 R. Laird Harris, Editor, Gleason L. Archer, Jr. Bruce K. Waltke, Associate Editors, *Theological Word Book of the Old Testament*, Moody Press, Chicago, Vol. , 1980, p. 1865.

22 *The Nelson Study Bible*, New King James Vesion, Earl D. Radmacher, Th.D, General Editor, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1997, p.1438.

23 The seven trumpets proceed out of the seven seals and immediately following this final trumpet are the seven bowl judgments that result in Christ's return to earth, defeat of Satan's kingdom, and the establishment of Christ's rule on earth.

24 Greek, diabolos, “an accuser, a slanderer,” from diabolw, “to accuse, malign.”

25 “Adversary,” the Greek antidikos, was used of a legal adversary, “an opponent in a lawsuit.”

26 For more details on Satan, his origin, titles, etc., see the doctrine of Satanology on our web site.

27 Christ became the sinless God-man that He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil. The KJV has “destroy him that had the power . . .” The Greek word here is katargew, “make ineffective, powerless, inoperative or useless, but not annihilate. Satan will continue to roam this earth until Christ returns, will then be cast into the abyss, and ultimately cast into torment in the lake of fire forever (Rev. 20:10). This verse states the overriding purpose of Christ’s accepting the lower state of his humanity.

28 Chafer, p. 25.

29 Chafer, p. 22, cites Dr. William Cooke, *Christian Theology*, pp. 622-23.

30 Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Lewis Sperry Chafer Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, Abridged Edition, John F. Walvoord, Editor, Victor Books, Wheaton, Ill., 1988, p. 315).

31 Chafer/Walvoord, p. 315.

32 Chafer/Walvoord, p. 315.

33 Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, 1993, p. 97.

34 Derek Kidner, *Genesis, An Introduction and Commentary*, Inter-Varsity Press, 1967, p. 70,.

35 Chafer/Walvoord, p. 300.

36 John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1966, p. 302.

37 Walvoord, p. 302, quoting William Hoste, *The Visions of John the Divine*, pages 160-161.

38 Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, Victor Books, Wheaton, IL, 1987, pp. 146-150.

39 Richard Chenevix trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, James Clarke and Co., London, this edition, 1961, p. 205.

40 Ryrie, p. 152.

41 “And those who dwell on the earth” is a statement repeated often in the book of Revelation. Literally, “those dwelling settled down upon the earth, i.e., the earth dweller.” In John this is practically a technical term for unbelievers, for those totally at home on the earth because they are devoid of any heavenly hope, concerns, or desires (cf. 3:10, 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 14; 17:8). As the old hymn puts it, “This world is not my home, I’m just a passing through,” but for the earthdweller, this earth is truly his only home and he lives like. “Dwell” is katoikew from kata meaning “down” and oikew “to dwell.” It means “to settle down, be at home, live permanently.” It is used of the Lord living in the believer in Ephesians 3:17 and in some MSS of the Holy Spirit in James 4:5. (Other MSS have katoikizw, “to cause to dwell, be at home”).

42 Ryrie, p. 152.

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