

The Work of Satan

A. Satan's activities in relation to God

Satan is the accuser. He brought accusations about Job to God in Job 1, and the high priest Joshua in Zechariah 3. God never sides with Satan in his accusations of believers. God does not see or behold the wrong of which Satan accuses His children of because Christ has already removed the sin from us.

Satan opposes God in every respect, he hates the truth more than we love it. Satan is the opposite of what God is. God is love (1 John 4:8) but Satan is hate (1 John 3:7-15). God is life but Satan is death (Hebrews 2:14).

Some have speculated that one reason Satan opposes God's program is out of envy that redemption has been extended to men and not angels. Regardless of the reason, Satan has counterfeited philosophy — he has replaced creation with evolution, divine providence with human progress, and God's Kingdom with human utopia. More importantly, Satan has counterfeited religion. Satan's angels and men who buy into his lies are false ministers (2 Corinthians 11:13-15), they deceive with demonic doctrines (1 Timothy 4:1-3). In the last days, which are now, these deceivers will pretend to be Christ (1 John 2:18; 4:3) and will cause many to follow them and their false teachings.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15, "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds.

1 Timothy 4:1-3, "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, *men* who forbid marriage *and* advocate abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

1 John 2:18, "Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour."

1 John 4:3, "And every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. "

Satan's opposition of God is relentless. He opposed God at the Garden of Eden, he is opposing God in the world now, he will oppose God during the Tribulation period, and even after having been imprisoned for a thousand years he will oppose God after the Millennial Kingdom.

B. Satan's activities in relation to unbelievers

Satan's influence in the world order is seen in the way that world systems operate. Satan will find ways to take away the Word from those who do not cherish it in their hearts (Luke 8:5-8, 10-15). In addition to man's natural blinders (Romans 1-3), Satan blinds men so they can't understand the gospel. The blinding work of Satan is only overcome by God's work, by God's sovereign plan through which the Holy Spirit convicts the elect and brings them to repentance. We could say that every genuine profession of faith is a miracle, it is God acting supernaturally in the midst of men.

Satan promotes the denial of sin and wrong views of salvation. He nourishes the mind set that we should lead self-sufficient life styles. The idea that we deserve more, that we deserve to live better is a satanic idea. The world has embraced such thinking and the pursuit of riches is even seen as noble.

Satan distorts God's way of doing things. God wants us to be pleased and content with what we have (1 Timothy 6:8; Hebrews 13:5), but Satan wants us to think we need something other than Christ to be content. Satan wants us to indulge in our desires and for us to be driven by our desires to obtain the pleasures of life.

Satan is the great deceiver and clever in getting people to sin. He easily presents us with seemingly innocent ideas from which he can increasingly tempt us. For example, the phrase "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" sounds good to us, and even patriotic. By itself this is an innocent statement, but it can be twisted into the excuse for which we should seek the satisfaction of our own sinful pleasures. In the name of the pursuit of happiness we see families broken, lies expanded, rampant extortion, etc.

Often, by making things sound "politically correct," Satan deceives men into pursuing their pleasures (the lust of the flesh). Men always want what their neighbors have (the lust of the eyes), and then more. Men see themselves as the most important thing (the pride of life).

1 Timothy 6:8, "And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. "

Hebrews 13:5, "Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,""

1 John 2:16, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."

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C. Satan's activities in relation to believers

Satan wants believers to doubt God in every way. He wants believers to doubt God's person, His truthfulness, His faithfulness to His promises, His love, His grace, etc.

Satan seeks to prevent believers from sharing the gospel and from encouraging each other. Though we are not told how he does these things, Paul tells us that Satan did interfere with his plans to visit Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 2:18).

1 Thessalonians 2:18, "For we wanted to come to you —I, Paul, more than once —and *yet* Satan thwarted us."

Satan is actively seeking to tempt believers with the world system he has established. The world denies the truth of Scripture, the world denies that the Word of God is truth. Satan wants believers to doubt the authenticity of God's Word. Satan moves believers to lie (Acts 5:3) in order to improve their material wealth. He deceives believers into justifying unfaithfulness and promiscuity (1 Corinthians 7:5). He tempts believers into becoming prideful of their own righteousness (1 Timothy 3:6).

Acts 5:3, "But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back *some* of the price of the land?"

1 Corinthians 7:5, "Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

1 Timothy 3:6, "*And* not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil."

Satan has clearly penetrated the church. Not just in causing entire denominations to follow his line of thinking, but also in making it easier for unbelievers to look like believers, and fit into the social structure of the modern church. There are false disciples (Matthew 13:25-30) in the same way that there are false teachers (2 Corinthians 11:13-15) who have entered the church.

Matthew 13:25-30, "But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. But when the wheat sprang up and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. And the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' And the slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No; lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them. 'Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn."'"

2 Corinthians 11:13-15, "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds."