

SOTERIOLOGY: DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

PART 28

KEY TERMS: SATAN, PART 2

A number of other names are used to describe Satan. These names serve to identify Satan as a malevolent, evil being who, to the extent God allows, has the entire world system under his control. This includes government, economics, and religion. He is in full scale rebellion against God because he fancies himself capable of being God and he is dragging the vast majority of the world's people with him although it must also be said those people are willingly being dragged along. Satan is the personification of pure evil. The fact that so many people believe the lies of this evil being and join in his rebellion against God should be a sober reminder to all of us that we are Christ's ambassadors and we are immersed in this spiritual battle that is raging for the very souls of not only the somewhat impersonal population of the earth but people we know and love and care about. We need to be beacons of truth to the lost and dying people of the world who have been deceived by this lying being and his deceitful world system. Christians are in this battle whether they know or not and whether they like it or not. Even if the individual Christian fails to recognize that he is in this spiritual war, Satan knows it and Satan isn't about to let any believer escape his attacks. Don't ever think you are living life unnoticed by this evil being and his servants. He couldn't keep you from being saved, but he can certainly try to keep you from being an effective ambassador for Christ. He can entice you and trap you and lead you away from living a holy, sanctified life into a life of carnality, that is, a life of the flesh and of unfruitfulness.

Paul told the Corinthians that Eve was deceived by the serpent's treachery (2 Cor. 11:3); Satan is a deceiver. Obviously, that reminds us of the Fall in Genesis 3:1-6. John called Satan a deceiver (Rev. 20:3) when he informed us that Satan will no longer be able to deceive the nations during the time he is shut in the abyss during the Millennial Kingdom. As the preeminent deceiver, Satan is a liar and the father of lies. Deceive, *πλανάω*, means to stray from the truth; to deceive. It is to cause someone to hold a wrong view and thus be mistaken. Satan's deception is a deliberate act; it is not about being mistaken; he deceives people into being mistaken but he is not mistaken, he is a liar. He knows exactly what he is doing. This word is actually a figurative use from the original meaning which was to cause to wander off the path. Deceived, *ἐξαπατάω*, means to deceive or beguile; it is to cause someone to have misleading or erroneous views concerning the truth. This word is used whenever prevalent, intentional, and massive deception is involved. A lie, *ψεῦδος*, is a lie, a falsehood, and a deception. A liar, *ψεύστης*, is one who utters falsehoods and lies. Satan was also called a murderer, *ἀνθρωποκτόνος*.

2 Corinthians 11:3 ³But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived [ἐξαπατάω] Eve by his craftiness [πανουργία], your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

Genesis 3:1 ¹Now the serpent was more crafty [עָרוּם; Septuagint: φρόνιμος] than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?”

In connection with being a deceiver and a liar, Satan is also called crafty (Gen. 3:1; 2 Cor. 11:3). The Hebrew word, עָרוּם, means crafty or clever; it is pertaining to being tricky and cunning with a focus on evil treachery. In a theological sense, it means to be opposed to the will of God. Interestingly, the Septuagint translators focused on the intelligence quotient aspects of Satan and used the Greek word φρόνιμος for “crafty” and that word means intelligent, discerning, sensible, thoughtful, and prudent. While Satan is certainly a highly intelligent being, in total, these are hardly characteristics of Satan; therefore, this word really doesn’t convey the meaning intended in the context of Genesis 3:1 and it doesn’t accurately reflect the definition of the Hebrew word עָרוּם. I hardly think it was God’s intention for Moses to emphasize Satan’s intelligence in this context rather than his evil treachery which is what the Hebrew word means in this context. The Hebrew word can have a positive meaning but that is generally only in Proverbs. In 2 Corinthians 11:3, Paul used πανουργία, which means treachery, cunning, and duplicity; it is trickery involving evil cunning. The word Paul used seems to be more in keeping with the true identity of Satan and with the context of Genesis 3:1. “Many scholars propose that the use of *arum* in Gen. 3:1 is based on the Wisdom tradition and therefore it is a neutral word without moral connotations. [That is apparently how the Septuagint translators viewed it.] The context of Gen 1-3, however, suggests that it portrays a cleverness that is opposed to the works of God. The same term is used in the book of Job, which is also part of the Wisdom tradition, to depict pejoratively people whom God rejects (Job 5:12; 15:5)” [New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis, s. v. “עָרוּם”]. Keil and Delitzsch also question the Septuagint on this issue. “...the predicate עָרוּם is not used here in the good sense of φρόνιμος (LXX),...but in the bad sense of πανουργος...” [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, p.1:59].

John 8:44 ⁴⁴“You are of your father the devil [διάβολος], and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer [ἀνθρωποκτόνος] from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie [ψεῦδος], he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar [ψεῦδος] and the father of lies.

“Lying and death stand opposed to the truth and life of the Revealer. Lying, here [John 8:44], does not simply mean telling untruths; rather, it connotes the will that is directed

against God, the hatred of unbelief, and the resulting futility" [*New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, s. v. "ψεύδομαι"].

In Revelation 12:9, John called this evil being the dragon, the serpent of old, the devil, and Satan all in this one verse. John called Satan a dragon fourteen times in Revelation.

Revelation 12:9 ⁹And the great dragon [δράκων] was thrown down, the serpent [ὄφις] of old who is called the devil [Διάβολος] and Satan [Σατανᾶς], who deceives [πλανᾷ] the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Dragon, δράκων, means a dragon which is considered to be a hideous serpent like monster. The Louw-Nida lexicon defines it as a legendary animal usually regarded as being a kind of monstrous winged serpent or lizard. In the New Testament, it is used only of Satan and that in the book of Revelation. In Hebrew, it has a wider range of translation values that have no bearing on Soteriology. In the New Testament, the word is used as a figurative reference to Satan.

Serpent, ὄφις, refers to a snake or a serpent. Figuratively, it can refer to an evil person. In Hebrew, שָׂפָן, means a serpent, snake, or viper of an unspecified species. It can also refer to a sea serpent or monster. Finally, it can mean a dragon. Fruchtenbaum believes the serpent in the Garden of Eden was a literal serpent of some sort that was indwelt by Satan. "The *serpent* is a reference to both a literal *serpent* and to Satan, for Satan used a literal *serpent* by indwelling *the serpent* for the purpose of communicating with the woman. The fact that the *serpent* and Satan are one is borne out in the New Testament in three places: II Corinthians 11:3 and Revelation 12:9 and 20:2. Satan did not merely take the form of a *serpent*, but indwelt a *serpent* and communicated with the woman through *the serpent*....Both the rabbis and the New Testament agree that this was Satan using a snake or the *serpent* for the purpose of tempting Eve" [Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Ariel's Bible Commentary: The Book of Genesis*, pp. 91-92]. Dr. Morris concurs with Fruchtenbaum's analysis with some variation in his explanation [Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*, pp. 106-110]. Keil and Delitzsch also understand the Scripture to be saying Satan indwelt the serpent [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, p. 1:59]. This position is not without critics, however. Dr. Stigers goes to considerable lengths to refute it. His position is that Satan actually appeared to Eve. Satan is the serpent and he actually appeared to Eve [Harold G. Stigers, *A Commentary on Genesis*, pp. 73-74].

Beelzebul [Βεελζεβούλ] was a name the Pharisees used for the ruler of the demons who is, of course, Satan. The Pharisees made the accusation that the Lord was casting out demons in the power of Beelzebul rather than recognizing the truth He was performing

the work of the Messiah and casting out demons in the power of the Spirit (Mt. 12:24). Christ acknowledged the fact they were accusing him of least operating in the power of Satan (Mt. 12:26) and not the power of God. The Lord called this accusation blasphemy against the Spirit and He pronounced this to be the unpardonable sin (Mt. 12:30-32) which marked the rejection of the Messiah and sealed the fate of the Jewish nation at that time. This wasn't the first time the Pharisees made this accusation (see Mt. 9:34) but it is the only recorded instance when the Lord responded to the charge. "The crowds believe God may be behind Jesus, while the Pharisees see only Satan. This is Satan himself. Their logic is impeccable—they cannot deny that Jesus can heal the sick and cast out demons, and at the same time they cannot admit that God might be behind him. There is only one recourse: it is black magic. By making this charge, they have taken away the last possibility of reconciliation. They are now beyond the pale of redemption, as vv. 31-32 will make clear" [Grant R. Osborne, *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Matthew*, p. 473].

Matthew 12:24–28 ²⁴But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul [Βεελλζεβούλ] the ruler of the demons." ²⁵And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand. ²⁶"If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷"If I by Beelzebul [Βεελλζεβούλ] cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges. ²⁸"But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Matthew 12:30–32 ³⁰"He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters. ³¹"Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. ³²"Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

Satan is called the ruler of this world three times by the Lord (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11), a prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2), and the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4).

John 12:31 ³¹"Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler [ἄρχων] of this world will be cast out.

John 16:11 ¹¹and concerning judgment, because the ruler [ἄρχων] of this world has been judged.

Ruler, ἄρχων, means ruler or leader whether natural or supernatural. The Lord said on more than one occasion that Satan is the current ruler of this world system. That will not change until Satan is defeated and the Millennial Kingdom is inaugurated. That does

not mean Satan has free rein to do all the evil he wishes to do; he is free to operate only within the parameters set by God. These parameters do seem to be quite broad.

Ephesians 2:2 ²in 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.

The course of this world is not the course the Christian should be walking and the course of this world is engineered, guided, and empowered by the prince of the power of the air. He is the controlling spirit energizing those who are in rebellion against God. Those who walk according to the course of this world are immersed in the world system and their lives are lived according to its world value system which is a system antithetical to a life lived according to a biblical worldview.

2 Corinthians 4:4 ⁴in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Clearly, Satan is the ruler, prince, or god of the current world system and, in the practical outworking of this fact, he wields a great deal of power and influence in world affairs. He is the power that fuels the world rebellion against God in government, economics, and religion. All those people who are not in Christ are in league with Satan in this world system whether they know it or not. Satan has blinded the minds of the people who constitute the unbelieving populace of the world system. It takes the supernatural power of God (John 6:44, 12:32, 16:8) and the preaching of the Word of God (Rom. 10:17) to overcome this blindness and move people from unbelief and the domain of Satan to faith in Christ Jesus.

Matthew called Satan the tempter (Mt. 4:3) which seems quite appropriate considering his work in the Garden and His interaction with the Lord in the wilderness. Paul also called him the tempter (1 Thess. 3:5). A tempter examines a person; it is to submit another person to a test to learn the true nature or character of that person. It can also refer to a person who tries to trap or attempts to catch another person in a mistake. In terms of Satan, it means to test a person for purposes of making that person sin. All of these nuances of meaning are applicable to Satan and to his activities in relation to mankind. This name seems to be the most descriptive name for Satan given the nature of his activities in this age. He is continually tempting people to sin and remain in rebellion against God.

Matthew 4:3 ³And the tempter [πειράζω] came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

1 Thessalonians 3:5 ⁵For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter [πειράζω] might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain.

Satan is called “the evil one” ten times in the New Testament by Christ Jesus (Mt. 13:19, 38; John 17:15), John (1 John 2:13-14, 3:12, 5:18-19), and Paul (Eph. 6:16, 2 Thess. 3:3). Evil, πονηρός, means wicked, evil, bad, morally corrupt, and worthless. It is to be of serious fault so as to have no value. As a description of Satan, it refers to the one who is essentially evil or in a sense personifies evil.

John 17:15 ¹⁵“I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil [πονηρός] one.

2 Thessalonians 3:3 ³But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil [πονηρός] one.

1 John 5:19 ¹⁹We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil [πονηρός] one.

Satan is also called an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14) but that appearance is fake; he must disguise himself in order to appear to be this angel of light. Disguise, μετασηματίζω, means to change appearance, transform, masquerade, or to disguise oneself. It means to cause a change in the form of something. The Bible frequently contrasts good and evil by metaphorically referring to them as light and darkness. As a fallen creature in complete rebellion against God, Satan normally operates in darkness mode but he has the ability to masquerade as an angel of light and as such he has fooled billions of people throughout history into thinking that he represents righteousness. Of course, he represents the exact opposite of righteousness; he is thoroughly evil. As we have already noted, Satan is a liar and he has the skills to counterfeit everything that is godly and make it seem good and godly and biblical when he is actually leading people away from God and right into hell. He counterfeits the Word of God by adding to it and taking away from it and he counterfeits the men of God who are supposed to be teaching the Word of God. He has been very successful at placing his emissaries into seminaries and pulpits which, subtlety and over time, has seriously eroded and even changed the Word of God and it has been accepted in much of professing Christianity as truth. Many people it seems would rather believe the lie rather than believe the truth. He sends out false apostles [ψευδοπόστολος] who also, just as Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light, pretend to be righteous servants of Christ and hide their true identity as ministers of evil. It is interesting to note that Satan has not mounted a revolt such that he appears to be operating in direct opposition to God. Instead, through the world system of government, economics, and especially religion, he makes himself look

like the God he is trying to subvert. An overt attack may not convince a lot of people to rebel against God, but a subversive attack that makes people think they are serving the one true God but are not has been a much more successful method of operation. While engaging in spiritual warfare, we are often fighting an enemy who is desperately trying to look just like true believers look. We must be wise, biblically knowledgeable, and discerning in order to successfully engage in spiritual combat. Many believers in this day lack the discernment skills, the knowledge, and even the will to engage in this spiritual battle. They have surrendered and submit to the lies Satan has introduced into the church.

2 Corinthians 11:13–15 ¹³For such men are false apostles [ψευδοπόστολος], deceitful [δόλοις] workers, disguising [μετασχηματίζω] themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴No wonder, for even Satan disguises [μετασχηματίζω] himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵Therefore it is not surprising if his servants [διάκονος] also disguise [μετασχηματίζω] themselves as servants [διάκονος] of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

Paul is not sounding a warning here to the Corinthians and the church against false pagan religions; that warning is issued elsewhere in many places in the Scriptures. He is warning us against those who infiltrate the body by pretending to be believers in Christ Jesus. These people are Satan's servants; they are not messengers of Christ Jesus. The only reliable way to spot them is to listen to their teaching; false teachers must teach false doctrine in order to seduce people away from the truth. But beware! They cloak their false doctrine in a mantle of biblical truth; often it is significant and substantial biblical truth. They will seemingly use the Bible a lot but they are actually misusing and abusing the Word of God. However, any deviations from biblical truth have deadly, eternal consequences. We must know the Word of God and sound doctrine well enough to be able to separate the truth from the lie and thereby protect ourselves and our families from these wolves in sheep's clothing Jesus warned about. Obviously, Jesus was warning the Jewish people about these wolves but that warning is no less applicable to the church today. The nature of these evil attacks is still the same.

Matthew 7:15–16 ¹⁵“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶“You will know them by their fruits....