

SATANOLOGY (19)

The force that is motivating all of this is Satan's desire to still be like God. He wants people in religious worship services, worshipping anything but the true God of the Bible through Jesus Christ. As long as there are religious services not biblically based or doctrinally sound, he is accomplishing his objective. Satan is so involved in religion because he still desires to be "like the Most High." The primary sin of Satan is the sin of pride, but it was not just any pride. It was an extreme level of pride that desired the same position as God. It is no wonder that God hates pride and resists those who are proud, for such are, in fact, in a very real sense, satanic.

When we consider the privileged position that Satan originally had, which is carefully described in Ezekiel 28 and when we consider his evil proud desires which are carefully described in Isaiah 14, there is no question that God was perfectly just in immediately casting Satan and all angels associated with him out of the realm of His holy throne. Eventually, this rebellion will cause Satan to be cast into hell, where he and all those associated with him will burn forever (Is. 14:15; Mt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10). Satan's specific sin was pride and in eternity that sin will be the main reason people will end up in hell and end up losing rewards.

QUESTION #9 – How did Satan work in the Old Testament?

There is tremendous value in tracking Satan's work throughout the entire Bible because it gives us a complete and accurate picture of Satan's person and work. We may learn a great deal about him and his tactics by approaching the study this way. There are six main passages we want to consider:

Passage #1 - The first glimpse we get of Satan's tactics is Genesis 3:1-6.

This is a critical doctrinal passage because it gives us a good view of how Satan moves people to rebel against God. Now before we look at the specific tactics Satan uses, we make two observations:

(Observation #1) - Satan knows the Word of God. Gen.3:1

Satan is able to challenge one concerning knowledge of the Word of God because he is very knowledgeable concerning what God has and has not said. Satan's knowledge of God's Word and God's program is so precise that he even dared challenge Jesus Christ (Mt. 4:5-9). Satan knows exactly how God's prophetic program works and he is able to recognize his own time is running out (Rev. 12:12). Satan is so knowledgeable of God's Word that he uses his agents to "wrongly divide" not "rightly divide" God's Word. Satan cannot know God's Word at the level of the Holy Spirit, who is able to make a believer very wise and skilled in the Word, but he does have a working knowledge of the Bible, which is far greater than most believers who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. He will twist and turn passages and verses in a deceitful way which is why **it is imperative that we always examine the context**.

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(Observation #2) - Satan knows that most people do not know the Word of God. Gen. 3:1c-3

Most people know something about the Bible. If you talk to most people, they know some verse or fragment of a verse or two, but they typically have no idea what the verse is actually talking about. This gives Satan a real advantage because in these verses it is obvious that he knew God's Word better than Eve did. Now Satan uses a very subtle method of attack against Eve. He determines her susceptibility by using the Word of God. There are five tactics Satan uses:

Tactic #1 - Satan gets Eve to question something God said. Gen. 3:1c

Tactic #2 - Satan discovers Eve is unsure as to what God did actually say. Gen. 3:2-3

It is clear that Eve was uncertain of what it was that God actually said because she adds something God did not say. In Genesis 2:17, God says "you shall not eat," but Eve made up something God never said; "you shall not touch it" (3:3). God never commanded Adam and Eve not to touch the fruit, but He did command that they not eat the fruit. This played right into Satan's tactic because he quickly learned Eve really did not precisely know what God had said. When Eve first touched the fruit and nothing negative happened, her confusion would naturally lead to the next step, eating the fruit which brought the death penalty. What is revealed in these verses should motivate us to carefully and systematically study the Scriptures so that we may be able to accurately and precisely know what God's Word does and does not say. If we do not have a clear understanding of God's Word and doctrines, we are in a good position to be tricked just like Eve.

Tactic #3 - Satan directly contradicts what God did say. Gen. 3:4

Once Satan knew how unstable Eve was in her knowledge of God's Word, he knew he was in good position to say just the opposite of what God said and she would probably believe it. Satan is very tricky when it comes to using God's Word. We must never underestimate his crafty ability to twist and turn Scriptures in such a way that he promotes just the opposite of what they actually say. Satan's greatest agents are people who distort and twist the Scriptures (II Pet. 3:16).

Tactic #4 - Satan directly attacks God. Gen.3:5

It is evident that Satan's desire to be like God has never left him and in this verse he promotes this very concept to Eve. He not only wanted to be like God, but in this verse he tells Eve that she can be also. Satan is attacking God by implying that Eve is missing something that she could gain by partaking of the fruit. It is true that by eating the fruit, Adam and Eve would know good and evil like God because God even said that (Gen. 3:22). But what Satan did not tell Eve was that if she partook of the fruit and did know good and evil, she would not be able to choose good anymore and from that moment on would only choose evil because once this choice is made, there is no one who chooses good, not one (Ps. 14:1-2; Rom. 3:10-12). A simple proof is Gen. 3:8. Satan is a master at convincing people that they are missing out on something forbidden by God if they do not partake. He is a master at emphasizing indulgence while neglecting consequences.

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Tactic #5 - Satan makes his sinful enticements appear to be very appealing. Gen. 3:6

Satan is very crafty and when he has totally distorted the Word of God and the doctrines of God, Satan lures the person into sin by making sin look good. Once Satan senses the weakness, he makes his own lure to appear to be very lovely and enticing. **Satan is able to make sin sound good and look good.** Eve would later classify her own sin as a great satanic deception (Gen. 3:13).

Once Satan and his forces realize they are working with an unstable and unsure believer, they are able to make even the most diabolical acts of rebellion against God to look good. The devil flees from one who knows God's Word, who understands Satan's tactics and who resists him. But Satan is able to fool those who are unsure of God's Word or unstable in it.

Genesis 3:1-6 is a critical passage. God wants us to carefully understand, very early in His revelation, how this "evil, wicked one" operates. A critical theme that continues to surface from this text is—had Eve had a firm grasp of the Word of God, she would have instantly spotted the deception and would have survived this devilish temptation. Ignorance of the Word of God is one of the great "devouring" tactics of Satan. If he can keep people in ignorance of God's Word, he can lure them into a sinful rebellion that destroys what God desires to do with a person.

In light of this Genesis text, those of sound minds will purpose to carefully and precisely understand God's Word and doctrines so that they will be able to withstand the "wiles of the devil."

Passage #2 - Another critical O.T. passage concerning Satan's work is I Chronicles 21:1 .

This is a very important text that reveals very subtle warfare tactics of Satan and it also reveals the sovereignty of God. **The historical background for this text is found in II Samuel 24:1-4 .**

In this text, David angered God by numbering his army and apparently it was Satan who was putting this idea into David's heart and mind. We do see from II Samuel 24:1, 15-16 that the LORD was sovereignly monitoring all of this and controlling all of the events that happened.

What Satan was specifically doing was trying to turn Israel's heart away from trusting in God for deliverance and victory. David had seen God do so much in caring for him and for Israel during his life and now Satan was putting within David the idea that a key to future success for Israel would be the numbers of his army. David should have immediately taken the position no matter what the odds, "If God be for us, who can be against us." But David lost his way for a moment and the results and consequences were devastating (II Sam. 24:15). God subtracted a number of people because they were relying on numbers, not Him. Numbering people in God's work is deadly serious business because it may say we look to the numbers and not to God.

We learn an important lesson about satanic work. **Satan will try to get even the most faithful believers to stop relying and depending on God and start relying on self.**

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Satan attempts to get God's people, whether it is Israel or the Church, to take their eyes off a dependency on Him and put it on a dependency on them. Many churches and many believers neglect prayer meetings and private times of prayer because they have been duped into thinking they can accomplish great spiritual things on their own. God will always protect and provide for His faithful people and He desires that His people depend on Him and trust Him and any other perspective is satanic.

Passage #3 - Another critical O.T. passage concerning Satan is Psalm 109:6.

Here is one place where, in my opinion, the King James has the best rendering of the Hebrew text. Both the NASV and the NIV translate the name Satan with the English noun "accuser." As we have already studied, the name Satan is a name which refers to one who opposes God, one who is an adversary of God (*Satanology*, p. 4).

In Hebrew, the actual word that shows up here is the word "Satan," which is translated that way in the KJV. The Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew O.T., uses the Greek word for "devil," which is consistent with the meaning of "accuser" (*Ibid.*, p. 5). The precise Hebrew word used here is Satan.

Now the context of this Psalm is that David is praying that God will pour out His vengeance on David's enemies. It is very clear from verses 1-4 that David had many enemies who were speaking out against him and were opposing him. David prayed (vs. 4-6) that God would take care of his enemies. He specifically prays that the one behind all of this would have his life shortened (v. 8a), have a brief reign (v. 8b), have his children barren (v. 9a), have his wife a widow (v. 9b) and have his children be perpetual losers (v. 10).

One question arises as to how God would answer such a prayer? Who would God use as an agent for sending this type of destruction upon David's enemies? The answer is God would use Satan (Ps. 109:6). **The important lesson we learn from this text is that God can and does use Satan as an agent to answer prayers of judgment.**

Many believe this prayer was made during the rebellion of Absalom and was specifically against Ahithophel, the traitor (II Sam. 15:31). If this is true, the prayer was directly answered (II Sam. 17:14, 23). Ahithophel ended up committing suicide under satanic influence.

Several years ago, I heard of a man who was once involved in Satan worship. He said that in certain instances it was possible to ask Satan to harm someone and it happened. The Bible teaches that it is possible to ask God to have Satan harm someone and it could happen. In fact that is precisely what Paul did do in the N.T.—I Cor. 5:5; I Tim. 1:20.

Satan is always under the umbrella of God's sovereignty. If he is permitted to harm someone, it was God who permitted it for His purposes. Proper theology realizes God works out His sovereign will and can even utilize Satan and his forces to do it.