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SATAN'S ROLE IN THE ANGELIC CONFLICT"

Ezekiel 28:12-19; Isaiah 14:12-17

Our enemy is known by many different designations in the Word of God, he appears under at least forty in fact. Some are descriptive titles, like "the accuser of our brethren" in Revelation 12:10, others are proper names. In Matthew 13:19; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; and five separate places in the letter of 1 John, he is called "the evil one." In John 8:44 Jesus calls him, "...a murderer from the beginning ...a liar, and the father of lies." John 12:31 and John 16:11 both have him as "...the ruler of this world." 2 Corinthians 4:4 say's, he is "the god of this age;" Ephesians 2:2, "the prince of the power of the air." And in what may be the most definitive passage on Satan in the entire Bible, Revelation 12:9 calls him by four proper names-- "...[1] the great dragon [which pictures his incredible power] ...[2] the serpent of old ['of antiquity;' word means- primal, ancient; / serpent was a symbol of cunning and wisdom in / ancient world, that's why you see him frequently associated with / mystery religions and their hidden wisdom; / idea is one of subtlety, of a clever, cunning wisdom] who is called [3] the devil and [4] Satan, [then it say's that he is / one--] who deceives the whole world..."

The world in which we live, the Cosmic System, belongs to Satan by default through the sin of Adam-- at least until the 2nd Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. We-- as Church Age believers-- are guerrilla warriors dropped behind enemy lines, spiritual special forces placed by Almighty God right smack in the middle of the enemy's territory as an offensive force constantly on the move.

Our enemy is bigger, meaner, quicker, smarter, and smoother than any man who ever lived. He is a master strategist who has had thousands and thousands of years to hone his evil skills. He stalks about on planet earth, "like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour," 1 Peter 5:8. He can break a man or woman-- physically, mentally, and emotionally-- as effortlessly as we might wad up and throw away a piece of paper. But he is no match for an omnipotent God, or for the believer who knows how to stand in the power of God.

Ignorance of our enemy and of his strategies is one of Satan's greatest weapons in the Angelic Conflict. God intends that we be informed and intelligent, that we understand what is going on and who it is we are fighting in the cause of Christ. In the Word He tells us all we need to know about Satan and his demonic army.

Before we move into our study of the two main passages on 'Satan's role in the AC' I want to deal with a few principles of introduction to get us oriented to where we're headed.

1. Satan appears in the Bible with power, prominence, and importance second only to the Trinity Itself.

2. He is mentioned in the Word of God as often as all the other angels combined. Satan is drawn into the story of human history from its first page to its last, from Genesis 3 to Revelation 20 he is always there, lurking in the background like a cobra waiting to strike.

3. No other creature in the universe is so closely and carefully analyzed concerning his motives, methods, character and purpose as this one.

So the theologian-- with a small t-- which is what every believer ought to be, a serious student of the Word of God, is confronted with this tremendous doctrine. He's challenged to give serious heed to the truth about a being who is the originator of sin, who is the promoter of sin in both the human and angelic realms, and who is the most arrogant, tyrannical opponent of the plan of God to ever exist.

4. Satan is the one being who "deceives the entire world," Revelation 12:9.

There's no greater evidence of this than most of the world doesn't really believe he even exists. No doubt for him that's an incredible advantage. Being uninformed and misinformed man becomes an easy prey to the enemy of souls.

There are modern day "Sadducees" who want to transform Satan into a 'figure of speech,' a 'metaphorical personification of evil,' or a 'delusion of unsound minds.' As for those who hold and advocate such a humanistic, philosophical view, let me say this. 'Figures of speech' are not described by the Word of God as created angels who sin of their own volition and then seek to deceive all of mankind. 'Figures of speech' are not doomed to a final judgment at the hand of God. A 'metaphor' could hardly enter Judas Iscariot and put into his heart to betray the Savior of the world. A 'metaphor' could not personally guide, influence, oversee, and empower the leader of an empire that spans the length and breadth of the entire globe, as Satan will with the 'man of sin,' the Antichrist. Nor would a 'delusion of ignorant minds' offer all the kingdoms of this world to the Lord of glory, holding out the prospect of the Crown which is rightfully His before the suffering of the Cross.

5. Satan and the angels have something equivalent to a human soul. Just like any other person in the Bible, every element of a soul is seen in Satan.

a. Satan has a "heart," which means a right lobe of the soul with the capacity to think, and to make decisions based on that thinking-- Ezekiel 28:17; Isaiah 14:13.

b. Satan has a mentality because that "heart" is said to be "full of wisdom"-- Ezekiel 28:12.

c. Satan has self-consciousness, inherent in the words "I will."

d. Satan has volition, which is abundantly clear in the five "I wills."

e. Satan has emotion because he obviously appreciated his own plan, otherwise he never would've begun the AC.

f. Satan has a conscience of sorts, with norms and standards based on his own thinking, his own cosmic viewpoint.

6. The fall of Satan was not a compromise between good and evil. By his own action he became the embodiment of evil and completely devoid of good.

7. Satan is a living personification of deceit. Listen to what Jesus told the Jewish religious leaders of His day, "You are of {your} father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own {nature;} for he is a liar, and the father of lies," John 8:44.

Revelation 12:9 declares him the deceiver of the whole world. In 20:2-3 it is prophesied that he will be cast into the abyss, shut up, and sealed "...so that he should not deceive the nations any longer..." When released from his prison, as it say's in vv. 7-8, he "...will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, ...to gather them together for the war..." After he and his minions have been locked away for a thousand years in their own little prison, his policy of deception hasn't changed. Also during the Tribulation, the Antichrist, operating in the power of Satan, will cause the nations to believe "what is false," a counterfeit to Christianity instigated by Satan, and received by them because of a "deluding influence" sent by God-- 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12.

The pastor-teacher who hungers and desires to faithfully exposit the Word of God and to truthfully guide human souls, should comprehend-- in addition to knowing the Triune God, His plan for the Church Age, and the power of His grace-- the truths and principles which relate to the enemy of God. Should the full knowledge, the epignosis of our foe be lacking, the results are nothing less than a tragedy which reaches on to eternity.

8. Belief in the malignant influence of evil spirits antedates the Word of God. The Greek historian Plutarch states, "It was a very ancient opinion, that there are certain wicked and malignant demons, who envy good men and endeavor to hinder them in the pursuit of virtue, lest they should be partakers at least of greater happiness than they enjoy." His objective for the demonic realm is not exactly accurate, but his statements illustrate the universal belief of the ancient world in demons.

The false religions and demon worship of Africa, Burma, Ceylon, China, India, and ancient Persia and Chaldea are nothing more than a satanic perversion of the true divine revelation given at the beginning of the human race.

The Word of God dwells at considerable length on this one mighty angel. It deals with his creation, his initial place in the plan of God, his fall, his authority, his various judgments, and his final consignment to the lake of fire. The career of Satan is a long and ancient tale reaching back into eternity past and on into eternity future, and it is filled with vital principles for the CA believer.

I want to close our introduction with a quote from L. S. Chafer's Systematic Theology-- "By many it is believed that the earth was, in its first order, like other planets, the abode of spirit beings; that Satan was in authority over this realm; and that the chaos which is indicated in Genesis 1:2 was the direct result of Satan's sin."