

SATANOLOGY (26)

Passage #6 - One N.T. passage profound in O.T. significance is Revelation 12:3-4 .

We learn from this text that the percentage of angels who joined Satan's rebellion against God was one-third . We also learn that one of Satan's primary objectives is to destroy Jesus Christ .

It is very important for us to recognize how Satan attempted to "devour" the baby Jesus and it was through a national, political opposition (Matthew 2:1-13). This gives us a clear picture as to why Satan used many nations in the Old Testament to try to destroy Israel. He was trying to prevent Jesus Christ, the Messiah/King/Savior from being born. His attempts at ridding the world of the Jews have all failed because of the sovereign program and plan of God that continues to protect and preserve Israel.

We may conclude that satanic attacks are aimed at stopping the work of God and the work of Jesus Christ. Satan does not want the program of God for a nation or an individual to succeed. We may also conclude that "anti-Semitism" is a satanic attempt to stop God's program and God's will for Israel. Satan obviously knows the significance of the nation Israel to the whole program of God and he is out to destroy it.

QUESTION #10 – How does Satan work in the New Testament?

Even though we learn much about Satan from the O.T., there is no doubt that the N.T. devotes much more space to Satan's work. Dr. Charles Ryrie writes: "Every writer of the New Testament affirms his reality and activity."

One question the serious student of the Bible will ask is—"Why is there more emphasis on Satan and his work in the N.T. rather than in the O.T.?" Probably the answer to this question is rooted in the major distinction between God's program in the O.T. as compared to God's program in the N.T.

In the O.T., God is working, for the most part, with a nation . In the N.T., God is working, for the most part, with an individual . The O.T. features satanic work that is primarily aimed at destroying the nation Israel. The N.T. features satanic work that is primarily aimed at destroying individual believers. Every N.T. believer is a satanic target. The intensity of the satanic attack and the cunning tactics of the attack would be greatly determined by the faithfulness and depth level of the N.T. believer. It becomes imperative that the N.T. believer understands as much as possible concerning Satan's person and work.

For informative purposes, the first N.T. glimpse we get of satanic work, which ironically does not include the naming of Satan, just as in Genesis 3, is Matthew 2:1-12 . As we have already discussed from Revelation 12:4, this attempt to destroy Jesus Christ was satanically inspired. The first N.T. mention of Satan is found in Matthew 4:11 . This is the first mention in the chronological compilation of N.T. books. In actual chronological writing it is James 2:19; 3:15; 4:2.

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Now much of the satanic activity is carried out by demonic forces, which we will study under “Demonology.” There are five specific satanic targets of satanic assault in New Testament times:

(Target #1) - Satan aims his attack against Jesus Christ.

The first N.T. glimpse we get of satanic attack is that which is against Jesus Christ. Satan tried to stop Jesus Christ and thwart the whole program of God. There were four different types of attacks that Satan used:

Attack Type #1 - Satan tried to kill Jesus Christ. Mt. 2:1-12/Rev. 12:4

Attack Type #2 - Satan tried to tempt Jesus Christ. Mt. 4:1-11; Mk. 1:12-13; Lk. 4:1-13

In the temptation of Christ it is not a solicitation to do evil; it is a solicitation to try to get Jesus to take the easy way out and not submit Himself completely to the will of God, by not going to the cross of Calvary. Dr. Charles Ryrie said: “The whole goal of Satan’s temptation was to eliminate the suffering and death of the cross. He offered the Lord glory without the cross” (*Basic Theology*, p. 147).

The Spirit of Christ led Christ into this temptation (Mt. 4:1). In every instance, Satan is attempting to get Christ to take the easy way out rather than to endure the will of God. The temptation actually ended up proving that Jesus Christ will always do the will of the Father, even when it means personally going to the cross to suffer and die.

Attack Type #3 - Satan tried to oppose Christ’s teachings.

Satan opposed the teachings of Jesus Christ through religious enemies like the Pharisees (John 8:13, 44). He also opposed the teachings of Jesus Christ through a close apostle like Peter (Mt. 16:21-23; Mk. 8:31-33).

Opposition to the truth of God whether it comes from the outside or the inside is satanic. Satan does not want God’s truth to be known, believed and obeyed and he will do everything possible to negate the power of the Word of God in a variety of contexts. At times he will use religious hypocrites and at other times he will use close allies. However, Jesus Christ had a persistent commitment to the Word and will of God and that should be our same focus even when we find we are facing satanic opposition.

Attack Type #4 - Satan did kill Jesus Christ. John 13:21-27

Satan worked through people to betray and ultimately execute Jesus Christ. Although Judas is the initial contact person, it is very clear that many others also were satanically used to get Jesus Christ nailed to the cross.

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It must always be remembered, concerning the death of Jesus Christ, that when we consider passages such as Acts 2:23 and Acts 4:26-28 it becomes very evident that in the execution of Jesus Christ, Satan and his forces were nothing more than “puppets in the sovereign hand of God.” It was not Satan who was calling the shots; it was God. The entire redemptive program of God was contingent upon Jesus Christ going to Calvary and even though Satan was putting this evil act in the minds of certain people, it was still all controlled by God.

Satan can and will attack through a betrayal of a supposed ally. He may use one who is close to someone to turn against him and try to get rid of him and even destroy the one who is focused on doing God’s will. That is what He did to Jesus. However, even if Satan is permitted by God to seemingly accomplish his objective, in the end, it will be seen and known that God was behind all things, moving and directing in accordance with His eternal plan and will. Eventually, the one who was satanically used will be destroyed and the one committed to doing God’s will and obeying God’s Word will be exalted.

(Target #2) - Satan aims his attack against unbelievers .

There is no doubt that in the N.T. age, Satan is a major influence with the unbelieving world. There are four specific influences that Satan has in the unbelieving world:

Influence #1 - Satan dominates the entire unbelieving world. I John 5:19

Satan controls things religious and non-religious that are not based on the truth of God’s Word. F.C. Jennings, in writing of Satan’s power over humanity, says: “He so weaves the course of this age: its religious forms, ceremonies, external decencies, respectabilities, and conventionalities as to form a thick veil, that entirely hides ‘the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,’ which consists in righteous mercy to penitent sinners only. This veil is not formed by evil-living, depravity, or any form of what passes as evil among men; but by cold formality, heartless decency, proud self-complacency, highly esteemed respectability, and we must add, church membership—all without Christ. It is the most fatal of all delusions, the thickest of all veils and the most common” (Cited from Chafer, Vol. 2, pp. 97-98).

Satan uses good things and bad things to keep the world away from the pure truth of God. He uses religion, education, occupations, vacations, discussions, temptations, donations and any other means to try and keep people from coming to a pure, true relationship with God. He dominates the entire unbelieving world in any way he can, to prevent people from coming to terms with the pure truth of God.