

Satan's Motive

by Lewis Sperry Chafer

Satan's ultimate goal is to become like the Most High, to be like God, and his policy of deception is to extend to all nations and the whole world, deceiving people with power and signs and lying wonders.

Scripture: Romans 3:9

Topics: "Satanic Deception", "Tribulation Period"

Description

Lewis Sperry Chafer delves into the supreme motive of Satan to become like the Most High, emphasizing his constant actuating motive throughout history. The present period is highlighted as a time where Satan exercises authority to demonstrate the folly of his claims and the helplessness of those who reject their Creator. Scripture predicts a time of unsurpassed tribulation when Satan's power will be at its peak, revealing the wickedness of man in complete separation from God. Satan's policy of deception extends to all nations, deceiving the whole world with signs and wonders, aiming to draw people away from God to acknowledge him as supreme.

Transcript

According to Scripture, the supreme motive of Satan is his purpose to become like the Most High and, though that purpose was formed even before the age of man, it has been his constant actuating motive from that time until now. It is also the teaching of Scripture that this present period of time is that in which Satan is in especial authority; he being permitted the exercise of his own power in order that he, and all his followers, may make their own final demonstration to the whole universe of the utter folly of their claims and of their abject helplessness when wholly independent of their Creator. This is definitely predicted in II Tim. 3:9 as the final outcome of the attitude of the world in its independence toward God: "They shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest to all men."

It has also been stated that the unsurpassed tribulation only awaits the withdrawal of the restraining hand of God, for all the required elements for such a condition are latent in the unregenerate heart (Rom. 3:9-18). In this terrible period of tribulation the greatest power of Satan will be exercised, and the wickedness of man will be revealed in his attempt to live in whole separation from God.

Even fallen humanity would not, at first, acknowledge Satan as its object of worship and federal head; and such a condition of society wherein Satan will be received as supreme (as he will be in the person of the first Beast of Rev. 13), must, therefore, be developed by generations of increasing irreverence and lawlessness toward God. Thus it has been necessary for Satan to conceal his person and projects from

the very people over whom he is in authority and in whom he is the energizing power. For this reason this class of humanity believes least in his reality, and ignorantly rejects its real leader as a mystical person. When he is worshipped it is through some idol as a medium, or through his own impersonation of Jehovah; and when he rules it is by what seems to be the voice of a King or the voice of the people. However, the appalling irreverence of the world to-day is the sure preparation of the forthcoming direct manifestation of Satan, as predicted in Dan. 11, II Thes. 2 and Rev. 13.

Satan's policy of deception is described as extending to all the nations, and to the whole world: "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (II Thes. 2:9, 10). "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world" (Rev. 12:9). "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Rev. 20:2, 3). "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth" (Rev. 20: 7, 8). He who was the measure of perfection, full of beauty and wisdom; he who made the earth to tremble; who shook kingdoms; has been willing to be ridiculed by the world as a being without reality, that he might, in the end, realize his own deepest desire.

Again, his own subjects have strangely neglected the plain teachings of Scripture on his real power and authority. To them he has been an imaginary fiend, delighting only in the torment of unfortunate souls; making his home in hell, and himself the impersonation of all that is cruel and vile: when, on the contrary, he is real, and is the very embodiment of the highest ideals the unregenerate world has received; for he is the inspirer of all those ideals. With his own he is not at enmity, and he, like the most refined of the world, is in no sympathy with the grosser forms of their sin. He would hinder those manifestations of evil if he could. And certainly he does not prompt them; for they are the natural fruit of an unrestrained fallen nature, according to James 1:14, 15: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mk. 7:21-23). The dying drunkard, the fallen woman, and the suffering of the innocent are the evidences of Satan's failure rather than the realization of his purpose.

His own terrible sin before God would not be condemned in the eyes of the world, for it is that which they most idealize and praise. In his sin he aspired to that which is highest, and proposed to realize his ideal by his own self-sufficiency and strength. True, he has lowered his Creator, in his own mind, to a level where he supposes himself to be in legitimate competition with Him, both for authority over other beings and for their worship. Yet this unholy ambition and disregard for the Creator is a most commendable thing according to the standards of the Satanic order. In the language of the world, Satan is simply "self made" and every element of his attitude toward his Creator is, as a principle of life, both commended and practiced by the world.

Though hiding himself, Satan has had the satisfaction, under limitations, of governing the affairs of men; and the delight, to a large extent, of receiving their worship. The greatest care was taken in the law governing God's ancient people that they should not offer their sacrifices unto devils, which was the

practice of surrounding nations (Lev. 17:7; Deut. 32:17). In violation of these special laws, Rehoboam instituted special priests for the devils (II Chron. 11:15), while the worship of devils, according to the New Testament, is to continue throughout the age: "But this I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of devils" (I Cor. 10:20, 21). "And the rest of the men that were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk" (Rev. 9:20).

Again: Satan's ambition is leading him to make this age of his special opportunity as near perfect as his wisdom and power will permit. And in this connection it may be noted that Satan's ambition was not to become a fiend, but rather to become like the Most High. He will, therefore, strive for all that is moral and good: yet at the same time do all in his power to draw men from their natural reverence of God, that, in due time, they may acknowledge himself without fear. The Satanic ideal of this age is, then, an improved social order, a moral and cultured people, who are devout worshippers of himself, though for the present they may imagine they are worshipping Jehovah through their empty religious forms and ceremonies, while they are really in a state of God-dishonoring unbelief, and all their thoughts are energized by Satan alone. The Satanic message for this age will be reformation and self-development, while the message of God is regeneration by the power of the Spirit.

Satan, in his imitation of the Most High, is also working toward a universal kingdom of morality and peace upon earth, which will be temporarily realized under the reign of the Beast (Rev. 13). The difference between Satan's ideal and the purpose of God, apart from the utter folly of the one and the glorious certainty of the other, is of both method and time. According to the Satanic program, the present order of society, with himself on the throne, is to be developed into an ideal brotherhood, in which all men will practice that which is moral and good. According to the program of God, this is an evil age of darkness and pollution, in which the folly of Satan and man is to be proven, and out of which He is to gather the heavenly people for His own name. The kingdom of righteousness is then to follow, being ushered in by Christ-enthroning and Satan-dethroning events. There will then be a perfect humanity and social order for "all shall know the Lord from the least unto the greatest" and "righteousness and peace shall cover the earth as the waters cover the face of the deep."

The master passion of Satan leads him, not only to strive for the success of his own projects, but also to wage an unceasing warfare against Jehovah. These two lines of activity are inseparable; for he cannot establish and develop his own kingdom, and, at the same time, permit his subjects to be translated out of his kingdom into another, especially when they remain in the midst as a living power and testimony against him. Nor can he reasonably allow the accomplishment of any of the projects of God; for it is predicted that at the completion of these his own doom will be at hand. The present time is, therefore, to Satan, the struggle for his own existence, as well as the realization of all that has been his ambition in the ages past. The warfare is no mere passing amusement for him, for he, in desperation, is facing a terrible and awful judgment if he cannot succeed in his purpose.

The spectacle now presented to all enlightened beings of the universe, is that of a mighty celestial being, the god of the earth, who is by creation the full measure of perfection, both in wisdom and beauty, making his last and most desperate warfare, both to realize his own ambition and to thwart every movement of the Most High; knowing that in failure there is no ground for mercy, but only the terrible destruction that has been so long predicted. He knew when he formed this God-dishonoring purpose that it must either wholly

succeed or he himself fall into terrible judgment. On the other side of the conflict there is perfect calmness and certainty as to the end, for the judgment and sentence are past; yet every true believer is implored to be instant in season and out of season in the present projects of grace, that the sufferings and separations of earth may be cut short in righteousness.

Well may believers study their own motives in service in view of these vastly differing programs; and question whether there is in them a humble willingness to co-operate in the present purpose of God in preparing the Bride for the returning King: or whether they have carelessly fallen in with the Satanic ideal, which rejects the coming Kingdom of Christ by an unholy attempt to establish the present kingdom of Satan.

The program of Satan, which the world calls "optimistic" rests on the Satanic purpose of a reformed society: the program of God, which is called "pessimistic" in that it discredits this age, rests upon the infinite wisdom, love and power of God; and is so certain and near that the believer is taught to watch, wait, and be ready for the first Divine movement toward this glorious end.

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