

**Intro:**

In this lesson we are going to examine the various ways in which Satan acts. Satan is very skilled – ‘wise’ in his way, cunning, crafty, skilled.

In his cunning, the Bible describes his activities in various ways. It is instructive to observe the Biblical teaching about him so that we might be less easily tripped up by his wiles.

**I. Satan’s Activities in relation to Christ****A. Animosity predicted (Gen 3.15)**

1. Between seed of Satan [his followers] and seed of woman [her spiritual descendants]

It seems to me that in this statement the saving faith of Eve is assumed or ‘foretold’ by God. If her seed are opposed to Satan, isn’t she? Although deceived, sinning, she is restored and redeemed. [Am I reading too much into this?]

2. Individual seed will bruise head of serpent (though serpent will bruise heel)

**B. Satan’s efforts to thwart mission of Christ on the earth**

1. Animating force behind Herod’s destruction of Bethlehem babes (Mt 2.16)
2. Peter unwittingly aligned himself with Satan’s plan when Peter dismissed the idea of Christ’s death in Jerusalem (Mt 16.21-23)
3. Satan entered Judas to accomplish the betrayal (Jn 13.27)
4. Principal and most direct attack: Temptation (Mt 4.1-11)
  - a. Temptation endured longer than the three tests described (Lk 4.2)
  - b. The three tests described may have been the concluding tests

“These were tests particularly suited to the God-man. Only He (not we) could turn stones to bread. Only He (not we) could jump off the pinnacle of the temple and land unharmed in the area below. Only He (not we) could expect to have all the kingdoms of this world.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Charles Caldwell Ryrie, Basic Theology : A Popular Systemic Guide to Understanding Biblical

- 1) Independence (4.3-4)
- 2) Indulgence (4.5-7)
- 3) Idolatry (4.8-10)

“Since Satan was unsuccessful in preventing the Cross, he attacks the Gospel, the followers of Christ, and what yet remains of the plan of God for this world.”<sup>2</sup>

## II. Satan’s Activities in relation to God

Principal tactic to attack God is to offer a counterfeit kingdom

- A. Offered Eve an opportunity to know good and evil (Gen 3.5)
- B. Offered Christ a kingdom without enduring death (Mt 4.8-10)
- C. Offers a ‘form of godliness’ while denying its power [counterfeit religion] (2 Tim 3.5)
  1. Disguises his servants as servants of righteousness (2 Cor 11.5)
  2. Promotes doctrines of demons by advocating false asceticism or unbridled license (1 Tim 4.1-3; Rev 2.24)
- D. Ultimate counterfeit: kingdom of antichrist (2 Th 2.9-11)

## III. Satan’s Activities in relation to Nations

- A. Deceives nations [into thinking they can govern righteously and bring about peace apart from Christ] (Rev 20.3)
  1. Employs demons in this deception (Dan 10.13, 20)
  2. Uses governments to hinder the gospel (1 Th 2.18)
- B. Will deceive the nations to worship antichrist (Rev 13.2-4)
- C. Will deceive nations to march to doom at Armageddon (Rev 16.13-16)
- D. Will lead final revolt of nations after millennial kingdom (Rev 20.7-10)

## IV. Satan’s Activities in relation to Unbelievers

- A. Blinds minds (2 Cor 4.4)
- B. Removes word lest it take root (Lk 8.12)

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Truth (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1999). 167.

<sup>2</sup> Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 168.

- C. Uses any aspect of world system to keep people out of the Kingdom of God (Col 1.13; 1 Jn 2.15-17)

## V. Satan's Activities in relation to Believers

### A. As Tempter

1. God may use Satan's tests for our benefit
  - a. To prove us (1 Pt 1.6-7)
  - b. To teach us (1 Pt 4.12-13, *cf.* Hb 5.8)
  - c. To increase our love for God (Jas 1.12)
2. Satan's purpose is to get the believer to commit evil
  - a. By the pressures of our social setting (1 Th 3.5)
  - b. By the fear of revealing selfishness (Ac 5.1-11)
  - c. By the lure of empty immorality (1 Cor 7.5)

### B. As Adversary

1. He opposes our witness
  - a. By sowing weeds among the wheat in the world (Mt 13.38-39)
  - b. By snatching away the Word that has been sown (Lk 8.12 [see above], and parallels)
  - c. By aligning governments against believers (1 Th 2.18 [see above], Ac 13.6-8)
  - d. Imprisoning believers for their witness (Rev 2.10)
2. He accuses our sins before the Father (Rev 12.10, 1 Jn 2.1-2)
3. He pressures believers to abandon godliness (1 Tim 5.14-15)
4. He prowls as a roaring lion, seeking to devour (1 Pt 5.8)

“As I mentioned earlier, Satan may prefer to do some things over others. But he will do whatever he has to in order to promote his plans and programs successfully. Remember too that he is powerful, he is experienced, and he has a host of demons to help him. Therefore, the believer can successfully fight him only in the strength and power of God who dwells within him. Other aspects of the believer's defense will be discussed in another chapter.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 171.