

I have a particular interest in learning more about our adversary, in the hope that better understanding will facilitate more effective resistance. As Chafer noted, misunderstandings about Satan and his role in this age have caused many Christians “to be, not only working toward unscriptural and hopeless ends, but ... actually contributing to the confusion and darkness that is prevalent today.”<sup>1</sup>

What is most interesting is that – while the common misconception is to view Satan as obviously grossly evil, intent on gross misconduct, and residing in Hell – the biblical account suggests he is appears as an angel of light, is intent on fostering humanistic good deeds absent of dependence on God, and is residing in Heaven. Getting a biblical perspective on who Satan is and what he wants helps to understand how he works and thus how we can resist.

### **Identity and Goals**

Satan is an angel; indeed he was created as an anointed cherub, assuming Ezekiel 28:11-19 refers to him.<sup>2</sup> The “cherubim are a special class of angelic beings, who serve as guardians of God’s holiness (Gen. 3:24).”<sup>3</sup> [This makes me wonder what threats exist to God’s holiness, if we consider God incapable of sinning and omniscient about, and omnipotent to deal with, any threats, but that is not consequential here.] God created Satan perfect and blameless, according to Ezekiel 28:12, 15.

In the Scriptures, he is known as Satan [“adversary”], the Devil, the serpent in the Garden of Eden and the great dragon in Revelation, Beelzebul [approximately “Lord of Filth”], the “ruler of this world,” the “god of this world” [or “god of this age”], “prince of the power of the air,” “the tempter,” and “the Evil One.”<sup>4</sup> He has intellect capable of both strategy and communication.<sup>5</sup>

Looking in Job 1:6 and Luke 22:31-32, we see Satan still has access to Heaven and the Earth, and even has access to God for accusations against people.<sup>6</sup> Ephesians 6:11-12 and Revelation 12:7-9 suggest Satan is not yet cast out of Heaven, though we know he will be.<sup>7</sup> He lost his authority in Heaven, no doubt, but he remains in position until the Christ reigns as king.<sup>8</sup> Presently, he is a usurper, since Christ has been crowned.<sup>9</sup>

Assuming Isaiah 14:13-14 refers to Satan,<sup>10</sup> there are five ‘I will’ statements which reveal Satan’s sin of pride: he wanted to be equal with God in every way; he wanted to be the sole ruler over the angels; he wanted to rule as sovereign in place of God; he wanted God’s glory; and he wanted to usurp God’s power

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Satan: His Motives And Methods* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregal Publications, 1990), 40.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Lightner, *Angels, Satan, and Demons: Invisible Beings that Inhabit the Spiritual World* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 69.

<sup>3</sup> Lightner, 69.

<sup>4</sup> Lightner, 73-76.

<sup>5</sup> Lightner, 66-67.

<sup>6</sup> Chafer, 19.

<sup>7</sup> Chafer, 19-20.

<sup>8</sup> Chafer, 20.

<sup>9</sup> Chafer, 26.

<sup>10</sup> See Lightner, 70-71.

and authority.<sup>11</sup> Apparently the glory God invested in him was not good enough to satisfy him, but rather was the impetus for pride and selfish ambition.

In light of those goals, it is not surprising that Satan concentrated on preventing Christ from accomplishing his goals, trying to prevent his birth, his maturity, his ministry, and his qualification.<sup>12</sup> Fortunately, Satan did not understand God's methods! Thus, in his moment of seemingly greatest triumph, having the Christ put to death, the Christ accomplished his greatest earthly work. This was the defeat of Satan and provision of redemption for mankind.<sup>13</sup>

Having failed in the attempt to stop Jesus from accomplishing his goals here on Earth, Satan continues in his quest. "The secret purpose in his heart reveals his method to be not a violent attack upon the throne; but, like Absalom, to steal the hearts of the unfaithful in the Kingdom of God, and, through subtlety, to gain a kingdom for himself."<sup>14</sup>

### **Method of Attack**

In the Garden of Eden, Satan first "wrested the scepter of authority from man, by securing man's loyal obedience to his own suggestion and counsel."<sup>15</sup> Because of that, Satan has control of the world,<sup>16</sup> and "direct control of the physical well-being of his subjects, and at the same time as being able, by special permission, to gain access to the people of God."<sup>17</sup>

With his authority and power, Satan pursues his ends here on Earth in various ways. He tries to prevent people from coming to Christ. I used to think this was about the destination of our souls, but now I think Satan's purpose in this is to prevent the enlightenment that comes with the salvation and sanctification work of the Holy Spirit, and thus to protect the viability of his constituency. 2 Corinthians 4:4 says, "Satan has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ." "Jesus spoke of the unsaved as the 'children of Satan' (Matt. 13:38; John 8:44)... Satan is revealed as directing and empowering the children of disobedience [in Eph. 2:1-2]..."<sup>18</sup> The unsaved are in the power of darkness, with Satan imparting his "wisdom and strength to them in the same manner the power of God is imparted to the believer by the Holy Spirit."<sup>19</sup> "Satan is the light, inspiration, and power, of all those whom he energizes."<sup>20</sup>

The two main tools of Satan seem to be deception and temptation, and they go hand in hand. While I always thought of temptation first, with fleshly lusts in mind, I see now that deception is an important foundation for temptation and that the primary temptation in which Satan is interested is in tempting us away from dependence on God, our Savior, and the empowering Holy Spirit, not into fleshly lusts. We

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<sup>11</sup> Lightner, 72.

<sup>12</sup> Lightner, 105.

<sup>13</sup> Lightner, 109.

<sup>14</sup> Chafer, 21.

<sup>15</sup> Chafer, 22.

<sup>16</sup> Chafer, 49.

<sup>17</sup> Chafer, 52.

<sup>18</sup> Chafer, 43-44.

<sup>19</sup> Chafer, 45.

<sup>20</sup> Chafer, 45.

see from the story in the garden of Eden that Satan convinced Eve to doubt and distort God's word, then to doubt and distort God's nature, thus undermining confidence in God and his word, and then fed her an outright lie and convinced her to act independently of God.<sup>21</sup>

In tempting Christ, Satan tried to get him to act independently of God, the same sin Satan had committed.<sup>22</sup> Even with believers, Satan tempts us most of all to act independently, for this is to put our "seed" into the thorny soil, allowing our walk in faith to be choked out. "The word 'lust' constantly used in description of the Satanic system has a much larger meaning in the scriptures than its present popular use, where it refers only to that which is sensual. In these quoted passages it refers to the whole Satan-inspired ambition of humanity, and includes their principle of self-help, and their struggle for all that is highest and best to them."<sup>23</sup>

The temptation to independence of God is often subtle, not an outright call to rebellion.

... 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, in order 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 worshipers of himself, though for the present they may imagine that they are worshipping [God] 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.*<sup>24</sup>

Satan surely thinks of himself as something wondrous, to aspire to be in place of God, so we cannot expect him to reveal himself as blatantly evil. I think we tend to define evil incorrectly, as something obnoxious to common decency, perhaps, but it is really anything that promotes sin, the going against the will of God. Thus, while we expect to see evil obviously, we often miss it because it is subtle. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, who "were being led astray by those who preached a different Jesus and therefore a different gospel."<sup>25</sup> In 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, Paul wrote, "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds." Satan "deceives the whole world" [Rev. 12:9]; he masquerades [2 Cor. 11:14].

Chafer sounds like he is most describing Unitarianism, but he could be speaking of Roman Catholicism, the liberal denominations, or the rise of secular "lodges": "Satan, like a fond mother, is bending over those in his arms, breathing into their minds the quieting balm of a 'universal fatherhood of God' and a 'universal brotherhood of man,' suggesting their worthiness before God on the ground of their own moral character and physical generation; feeding their tendency to imitate the true faith by great humanitarian undertakings and schemes for the reformation of individuals and the betterment of the social order. God's

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<sup>21</sup> Lightner, 78.

<sup>22</sup> Lightner, 107-108.

<sup>23</sup> Chafer, 120.

<sup>24</sup> Chafer, 66; italics mine.

<sup>25</sup> Lightner, 65.

necessary requirements of regeneration are carefully set aside, and the blinded souls go on without hope...”<sup>26</sup>

Chafer devoted a good portion of his book to considering this mass deception that he saw growing in the beginning of the previous century, this growing movement into acts of religious service to justify ourselves, while omitting the supernatural atonement of Christ as unreasonable. He said that Satan robbed the church of its hope of Christ’s return, so he could attract attention to his own attempts at world improvement: he first discredited Christ’s return, then discredited the divinity of Christ, then discredited the atonement.<sup>27</sup> The idea is that Satan and his demons “will cover their lies with the empty form of religion, and by every means make them to appear as the truth, that they may rob both the saved and the unsaved of their hope in Christ...”<sup>28</sup> Chafer believes that this empty religion will take on all aspects of Christianity except the most important. “It is evident that this partial concession of the world to the testimony of God has opened the way for counterfeit systems of truth, which, according to prophecy, are the last and most to be dreaded methods in the Satanic warfare. In this connection it must be conceded that Satan has really granted nothing from his own position, even though he be forced to acknowledge every principle of truth save that upon which salvation depends.”<sup>29</sup> “In fact, that which is evil in purpose has gradually appropriated the good until but one issue distinguishes them. Part-truth-ism has come into final conflict with whole-truth-ism, and woe to the soul that does not discern between them.”<sup>30</sup>

1 Tim. 4:1-2 says, “But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.” Says Chafer, “These predicted Satanic systems are here carefully described. Their offers will be so attractive and externally so religious that into them will be drawn some ‘who shall depart from the faith’; they being enticed by seducing spirits.”<sup>31</sup> “It is evident that the method of this deception is to imitate the real ministers of Christ.”<sup>32</sup>

2 Timothy 3:1-5 says, “But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For *men will be lovers of self*, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, *holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power*; Avoid such men as these.” Says Chafer, “A counterfeit is Satan’s most natural method of resisting the purpose of God, since by it he can realize to that extent his desire to be *like the Most High*.”<sup>33</sup>

Evil will not appear on the outside of these systems; but they will be announced as ‘another gospel’ or as a larger understanding of the previously accepted truth, and will be all the more attractive and delusive since they are heralded by those who claim to be ministers of Christ, who reflect the beauty of an ‘angel of light,’ and whose lives are undoubtedly free from great temptation. It should be noted, however, that these false ministers do not necessarily know the

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<sup>26</sup> Chafer, 46.

<sup>27</sup> Chafer, 101-102.

<sup>28</sup> Chafer, 62.

<sup>29</sup> Chafer, 72.

<sup>30</sup> Chafer, 73.

<sup>31</sup> Chafer, 75.

<sup>32</sup> Chafer, 76.

<sup>33</sup> Chafer, 73 [italics in original].

real mission they have. Being unregenerate persons of the Satanic system, and thus blinded to the real Gospel, they are sincere, preaching and teaching the best things the angel of light, their energizing power, is pleased to reveal to them. Their gospel is one of human reason, and appeals to human resources. There can be no appreciation of divine revelation in them, for they have not come really to know God or His Son, Jesus Christ. They are ministers of righteousness which should never be confused with the preaching of grace. One is directed only at the reformation of the natural man, while the other aims at regeneration through the power of God.<sup>34</sup>

It is interesting to consider the state of these ministers. I have met some, and they did seem to honestly believe they were not only working for good, but for God. This sincerity is part of what makes them deceptive to others, though the deception is not their own. "Such religious leaders may be highly educated and able to speak with authority on every aspect of human knowledge, but if they are not born again, their judgment in spiritual matters is worthless and misleading. All teachers are to be judged by their attitude toward the doctrine of the blood redemption of Christ, rather than by their winsome personalities, or by their sincerity."<sup>35</sup>

Chafer adds some elements he expects in such churches: that they will exalt the person of Christ, but not the work of Christ, thus appealing to blinded humanity though the real salvation power is absent;<sup>36</sup> that, while leaving out the atonement, they will promote instead some biblical concept of universal appeal such as physical health, life after death, morality, prophecy, or religious forms;<sup>37</sup> and maybe even miracles.<sup>38</sup> However, he also expects to see increasing denunciation of the atoning work of Christ. "... the wisdom of this world is displayed in ever-increasing antagonism against the blood of the cross."<sup>39</sup> "The Scriptures abound in statements that regeneration, and the whole transforming work of redemption, are accomplished on the ground of the sacrificial blood of the cross; and if these statements of the Bible are rejected, the discussion can never be one of interpretation of the Scriptures, but becomes a question of the authority of the testimony of the Bible."<sup>40</sup> Discussing 2 Peter 2:1-2, Chafer said,

Here again the denial is against the purchase or redeeming work of Christ rather than His Person or character. They are offended at the Lord who bought them, though they may be devoted to the Lord who taught them. These Satanic agents are described here, as before, as those who seem to be teachers in the true faith, yet they bring in damnable heresies, in all covered subtlety, crystallizing in a denial of the redemption that is in Christ. Being only blinded unregenerate men, they may suppose themselves to be ministers of righteousness and apostles of Christ. Their humanitarian dreams may become world-wide in its influence, and they may drive their mighty ecclesiastical machinery by the injunctions of scripture; yet if the curtain could be lifted, their 'angel of light' would be found to be Satan, working through them to resist the purpose of God, and themselves the ministers of Satan, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared

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<sup>34</sup> Chafer, 76.

<sup>35</sup> Chafer, 77.

<sup>36</sup> Chafer, 103.

<sup>37</sup> Chafer, 103.

<sup>38</sup> Chafer, 103-104.

<sup>39</sup> Chafer, 96.

<sup>40</sup> Chafer, 97.

as with a hot iron, daring in their exalted position to devitalize the Gospel of its power unto salvation, and dragging immortal souls after them into hell.<sup>41</sup>

I know I am belaboring the point somewhat, in quoting Chafer so much on this issue, to which he devoted much of his book. I think it is important to understand this true aim and thus prevalent method of Satan to deceive us with things that are good, not just with the obvious things of the flesh.

Moving on, Satan “always seeks to frustrate God’s work in believers’ lives.”<sup>42</sup> “If Satan can cripple the believer’s service he accomplishes much in resisting the present purpose of God.”<sup>43</sup> It is interesting to consider how this comes about. Surely, much of it is tempting us into that thorny soil and deceiving us. I think there are times Satan and his demons bring about problems and failures, to sadden and frustrate the believer.

I also believe that one form of deception is what is commonly called “accusation,” which essentially is negative thoughts, especially about oneself. It is interesting to consider also how it is that people are deceived or accused, whether it is a demonic whisper as portrayed by fiction author Frank Paretti, or some other, supernatural, mechanism. Chafer said, demon influence is “A warfare from without ... carried on by suggestion, temptation, and influence.”<sup>44</sup> Merrill F. Unger said, “In demon influence, evil spirits may vary from mild harassment to extreme subjection when body and mind become dominated and held in slavery by spirit agents. Christians, as well as non-Christians can be so influenced. They may be oppressed, vexed, depressed, hindered, and bound by demons.”<sup>45</sup>

I believe one way we are tempted is into distraction. “One of the devil’s tricks is to keep us so busy worrying about things we can do nothing about that we fail to do anything about the things we can change.”<sup>46</sup> Similarly, “Satan gets people so busy doing things, many of which are not bad in themselves, that the more important things are often left undone.”<sup>47</sup> Also, the love of world can distract us from our purpose [that thorny soil].<sup>48</sup>

For the non-believer, there is one more method of attack: possession. Demonic possession of unbelievers was common in scripture,<sup>49</sup> often leading to physical and mental illnesses.<sup>50</sup> Chafer argues that such possession is probably more common today than suspected: “Demon possession in the present time is probably often unsuspected because of the generally unrecognized fact that demons are capable of inspiring a moral and exemplary life, as well as of appearing as the dominating spirit of a spiritist medium, or through the grosser manifestations that are recorded by missionaries concerning conditions

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<sup>41</sup> Chafer, 99.

<sup>42</sup> Lightner, 110.

<sup>43</sup> Chafer, 70.

<sup>44</sup> Chafer, 59.

<sup>45</sup> Lightner, 131, quoting Merrill F. Unger, *Demons in the World Today* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1971), 113.

<sup>46</sup> Lightner, 81.

<sup>47</sup> Lightner, 82.

<sup>48</sup> Lightner, 183.

<sup>49</sup> Lightner, 129.

<sup>50</sup> Lightner, 133.

which they observe in heathen lands. These demons, too, like their king, will appear as ‘angels of light’ as well as ‘roaring lions,’ when by the former impersonation they can more perfectly further the stupendous undertakings of Satan in his warfare against the work of God.”<sup>51</sup>

### **Our Resistance**

In light of who Satan and the demons are, supernatural [albeit fallen] angels, we must realize that we cannot fight them in our own strength. We must rely on God. “There are two passages where the child of God is directed to resist the devil [James 4:7 and 1 Peter 5:8-9]. The context, however, in both passages warns him that it must be in utter dependence upon the power of God. He must be wholly submitted to God and it must be done through a steadfastness of faith.”<sup>52</sup> As we resist the devil in dependence upon the power of God, James: 4:7 says the devil will flee. This resistance must be continuous, because the attacks are continuous.<sup>53</sup>

We can take comfort in remembering that “God alone is in control and sovereign... Yes, [Satan] is God’s enemy and ours, but he is an enemy who must obey God even though he hates him.”<sup>54</sup> We also must realize that we too often are our own worst enemy, playing the fool for Satan’s techniques. “We will never be prepared to avoid the snares of Satan unless and until we acknowledge our captivity and inner desire to sin. And of course Satan knows all our weak points and always attacks where he knows he can gain the best foothold.”<sup>55</sup>

We must walk in faith! In faith, we must live out the victory Christ accomplished.<sup>56</sup> We are to “Walk worthy of the calling,<sup>57</sup> which requires a full dependency on the Holy Spirit.<sup>58</sup> “The Spirit’s presence in and with the child of God is his or her source of strength and victory against all the satanic and demonic opposition against him.”<sup>59</sup> God offers to supply all that he requires.<sup>60</sup> This dependence for transformation is the opposite of Satan’s system of self-reliance.<sup>61</sup> This dependence leads to being filled with the Spirit [Ephesians 5:18], walking by the Spirit [Galatians 5:16], and the avoidance of quenching the Spirit [1 Thessalonians 5:19] and grieving the Spirit [Ephesians 4:30].<sup>62</sup>

“Paul told the Ephesian Christians the only way believers can be victorious over Satan is by putting on God’s armor.”<sup>63</sup> God’s armor from Ephesians 6:10-20 includes truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, and the Word of God. Knowledge of the Word of God allows us to dispel all deceptions

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<sup>51</sup> Chafer, 61.

<sup>52</sup> Chafer, 131.

<sup>53</sup> Lightner, 117 [which also stresses submission to God for effectiveness].

<sup>54</sup> Lightner, 66.

<sup>55</sup> Lightner, 80.

<sup>56</sup> Lightner, 185.

<sup>57</sup> Chafer, 125.

<sup>58</sup> Chafer, 127.

<sup>59</sup> Lightner, 114.

<sup>60</sup> Chafer, 128-129.

<sup>61</sup> Chafer, 129.

<sup>62</sup> Lightner, 183.

<sup>63</sup> Lightner, 110, 113.

and provides the Holy Spirit with tools to bring to our mind when necessary. It helps us grow, convicts us, provides cleansing, teaches, arms us against temptation, warns us about sin and Satan's ways, is the sword of the Spirit, and equips us.<sup>64</sup> The sureness of our salvation gives us the hope to carry on and the courage to face any task. Faith reminds us that God is sovereign, holy, reliable, omniscient... all that is necessary, and that he has already claimed victory. The gospel of peace reminds us of our identity in Christ and our mission for Christ. Standing in righteousness and truth is the essence of our Christian character, it is the obedience that comes of faith, and it strengthens us against temptation or accusation.

We must resist the urge to get distracted from the task God has given us. Quite often we not only neglect our own task, but we try to do God's. This can be an effective deception without the person even having the intention of sin: it is natural and we are brought up to worry about things out of our control, things that we should leave to God's care while we focus on the work he has given us. We must remember and live by verses such as Matthew 6:33-34, which clearly point out our responsibility distinct from God's.

We must also resist the urge to get tempted away from our values. We are not to love the things of this world, as it says in 1 John 2:15-16.<sup>65</sup> Lightner reminds us not to give the devil an opportunity, as it says in Ephesians 4:27.<sup>66</sup> The immediate context of this verse points out that acting in or holding onto anger, a negative emotion, is what gives the devil this opportunity. In a sense, we invite evil into our heart when we hold onto what is not of God. Lightner points out that some translations call this "opportunity" a "foothold."<sup>67</sup> These "footholds" can hold us in spiritual bondage, especially if we let them grow with repeated willful sins. The best course is to be truly submitted to the Word and Spirit of God, and to repent immediately of any failures in that respect.

Similarly, there seems to be some biblical evidence that idolatry and occultism can provide footholds for demonic activity, even to possession.<sup>68</sup> Some still believe in exorcism for today, and they should remember that the only biblical method was to appeal to God's power, along with prayer and fasting.<sup>69</sup> Can we do this today? Some think not, arguing that this ability was a miraculous sign of apostleship and was temporary to that period,<sup>70</sup> but it is noteworthy that people beyond the group of seventy were approved to do this work too, including Philip in Acts 6:6 and an unnamed man in Mark 9.<sup>71</sup> It seems to me that if possession is still occurring, then God would equip us to deal with it. While I have never seen a proven case of possession, I have seen lots of evidence of demonic influence, and I have been around people that emanated a sense of evil so strong that I was immediately on guard and wondering about whether they were possessed. I have also heard missionaries discuss such possessions in spiritually oppressed areas like Haiti, where idolatry and occultism are rampant.

Lastly, we must seek to recognize the signs of wrong religion, to protect ourselves from falling sway to those who are deceived and are deceiving others, and to help those who are vulnerable, either already under the sway of such ministers or simply a non-believer who has not yet met Jesus. I quoted Chafer

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<sup>64</sup> Lightner, 115.

<sup>65</sup> Lightner, 112.

<sup>66</sup> Lightner, 117.

<sup>67</sup> Lightner, 160.

<sup>68</sup> Lightner, 135.

<sup>69</sup> Lightner, 139-140.

<sup>70</sup> Lightner, 145-146.

<sup>71</sup> Lightner, 145, 147.

about many of these signs earlier, but he says they also often include the following: a minister depending on personality; the preaching of ethics and morality at the expense of salvation; prayers to aid humanity in an effort to commend itself to God by the faithful practice of religion; stressing the pleasures of music and art instead of Spirit inspired praise; offering mere social gatherings instead of true unity and love in fellowship; humanitarian appeals for betterment of the world instead of for evangelistic efforts; and the absence of mention of the gospel except in veiled denial.<sup>72</sup>

### **Our Future Hope**

One thing that gives us hope is that we know how the story ends. “It is also the teaching of the scriptures that Satan is in especial authority in the present age, 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 2 Timothy 3:9 as the final outcome of the attitude of the world in its independence toward God...”<sup>73</sup> We know Satan’s days are numbered: “In the middle of the coming Great Tribulation he will be restricted to earth to continue his evil work [see Revelation 12:7-13].”<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, “When Christ reigns on David’s throne in Jerusalem over the whole world in the millennial kingdom, Satan will be confined to the abyss ([Revelation] 20:1-3). At the end of this thousand-year reign of perfect peace and righteousness on earth, Satan will be loosed for a short time. Then he will be cast into the lake of fire prepared for him, where he will exist in torment forever (20:10).”<sup>75</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Satan’s mistake was to seek righteousness in himself, rather than from God. He wants to be like God, to replace God, and therefore he desires to build a world system for his own glory. The key to understanding how Satan works is to understand the very essence of his original sin: self-righteousness; self righteousness, not gross evil [most of which comes from our flesh]. What we need to do is ensure we are not making the same mistake, to ensure we have received our salvation by grace through faith in Christ – that we accept his righteousness, not relying on our own – but indeed the justified also must protect from straying into this sense of self-reliance, which is disobedient, is harmful, and gives Satan an opportunity to work in them.

The controversy between Satan-ruled man and God is one of method. It is one of self-righteousness and character building, or one of bestowed righteousness and character by the fruit of the Spirit. Will man try to save himself, or humbly submit to being saved by Another? Will he try to conform himself to what little he knows to be good and true, or will he be transformed by the power of God into that which is no less than the image of Christ? Will he present the sacrifice of a sincere effort to be moral and religious or accept the God-provided sacrifice for all sin in the shed blood of Christ? Will he try to establish himself before God on the ground of his own works, or rest in the finished work of Christ for him? Will he try to improve his fallen nature, or partake of the divine nature and become a son of God by the power of God, through faith in Christ Jesus!<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Chafer, 107.

<sup>73</sup> Chafer, 63.

<sup>74</sup> Lightner, 70.

<sup>75</sup> Lightner, 70.

<sup>76</sup> Chafer, 95.