

SATAN'S DECEPTIONS

by W. A. Mason

"He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

—John 8:44

Satan seeks to imitate, confuse and distort God's Word and Christ's atoning work.¹ He continually seeks to discredit the believer before his God and before the world.

God says righteousness is by faith (Phi 3:9). Satan insists upon self-righteousness. Satan would have us to have faith in anything, or any kind of faith except faith in Christ.

God says, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit." Satan substitutes forms of prayer or just saying prayers.

God's plan is Christ for the world. Satan's plan is the world for Christ. Christ says, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel" (Mar 16:15). Satan says, "Build fine buildings, make yourselves religious advantages."

God says to His people, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God" (2Ti 2:15). Satan would have us seek the applause and approval of men. There is not one doctrine or promise into which Satan does not enter. He has one object in all that he does, and that is to overthrow God by undermining faith in God's Word.

Satan's business is to furnish wedges between us and God, between brother and brother, and even putting Scripture against Scripture. He works through the flesh, causing unbelief, doubts, quarrelings, and such like.

Satan makes God's people one-sided Christians. He gets them on a hobby² and many times it is a good one. He causes them to ride it to the neglect of other important truths. This is one of Satan's oldest tricks, and at times he has used some of God's choicest servants. Satan undertakes some of his cleverest work against established Christians. He takes the foundation truths and cleverly fastens them to some utterly unscriptural teaching. Satan has great success in keeping Christians from rightly dividing the word of truth.

Satan seeks to confuse the Holy Spirit's work with Christ's work...³

Satan always attacks the man that God has filled with the Holy Spirit.

Satan is at his best when excuses are needed for things not pleasing to God, and he furnishes a sedative with the excuse that makes some people think it right to do wrong.

Satan's play upon the carnal nature is astonishingly successful. He appeals to the inclinations, preferences, and desires of human nature. He touches the chords of laziness, selfishness, and thoughtlessness within us. Satan is continually seeking to stir up jealousy, envy, and unholy desires in the believer, that he might lead us away from a true testimony and fellowship with Christ. He comes to annoy, to provoke, to vex and discourage, or to do anything to undermine the serenity of our faith in God.

Satan is a great flatterer and finds a welcome in most any human heart. Satan has the brazen face to turn men away from the written Word by traditions or by almost anything that arouses the ego of the natural heart.

Satan uses the inconsistencies, infirmities, and sins of God's people to discredit the Word of God.

God has His Church (His "little flock"; Luk 12:32). Satan has this great mixed thing in the world falsely known as "Christianity."⁴

¹ **atoning work** – Christ's sacrifice at the cross of Calvary, paying the full penalty for the sins of His people, resulting in reconciliation with God.

² **hobby** – focus on a favorite doctrine, emphasizing it to the point where it becomes imbalanced.

³ **confuse...work** – that is, confuse the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification (His work *in* His people after the new birth) with Christ's work of redemption (His work *for* His people to accomplish their salvation).

⁴ **Christianity** – here used to refer to organized religion in its formal practices and institutions.

Satan ventures into even the highest places and corrupts the truth by the injection of error. He never loses an opportunity nor neglects anything that he can possibly use to cause us to deny and distrust truth. Satan uses anything to set aside the Bible, [even] the merest conveniences and habits of life. There is not a revelation of truth that he has not imitated. Satan's whole effort is to take the throne of God and to occupy it as god of this world. Satan injects his own infernal power to discourage the supernatural in true Christianity. Satan causes unbelief that destroys true faith and causes man to substitute a dead faith. Satan is the author of error which has always brought discord and division to the Church. He seeks to deny what God says and to put something in the place of truth.

Satan brings temptations, trials, and distress. He annoys, confuses, and discourages that he might cause us to sin.

Satan contends every step of the way, and if he has to admit the truth, he will get us to hide it or to be ashamed of it. How far has Satan succeeded in eliminating the full, complete Christ from your life? There is not one golden promise or precept that Satan has not tried to take away from it the very truth that makes it worthy of God.

Satan wears the garment of an angel of light and enters the very sanctuary (2Co 11:14). He ordains to his nefarious⁵ work men who have taken the vows of God upon them, and sends them forth as his ministers of "righteousness" and critics of the Word of God. This is one of Satan's master strokes. The present day "Christian" organizations with their impressive and ornate buildings, intellectually trained preachers, grand organs, and padded pews are proofs of this.

There is not a doctrine that he does not dispute nor a divine promise that he does not discredit.

Satan always proposes what appears to be for man's good but his design is always to undermine faith. He uses doubt and every device his ingenuity can invent to bring this about.

Satan offers pleasure, profit, exaltation, and pride, always suggesting some forbidden thing.

Satan is practical. He is the author of worldly ambition, discontent, and fear.

Satan tempts man with safety, pleasure, and elevation,⁶ and with any other temptation that appeals to the natural man (1Jo 2:16).

Satan's main activities are in the realm of religion and he is the author of all false religion. God says His Word is "quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb 4:12), but Satan offers only a form of religion devoid of any power.

Satan seeks to overcome the Word of God by here and there adding to, or taking away from it. Thus he is continually digging at the foundation so that the purposes of God might be defeated.

The startling fact that we should never forget is that Satan uses man for all his purposes, to discredit God and His Word. This should cause us to be continually alert and concerned about our spiritual condition before a holy God, lest we become one of those that Satan might use to accomplish his purposes—for if we give place to Satan in anything, it will destroy the harmony of our spiritual life.

Let us briefly review what we have seen:

1. Satan is a great, strong, and wise enemy of God in this world.
2. He is always working with an artfulness and cunning peculiar to himself.
3. He has brought into contribution to this end all the influences and power of this world, which he has ruined.
4. The peculiar objects of his evil designs are believers who in every way are seeking loyalty to God's truth.
5. He promises great things to such as follow him: pleasures, gain, honor, riches, and advantages (Mat 4:8-9)—that they might be drawn away from the source of their love.

As we look at our human weakness and ignorance, and compare them with Satan's greatness, wisdom, and enmity, how easy it is to see that our only safety is in Christ.

Thank God that the Bible, which Satan hates so much, contains one little passage which is the divine direction for dealing with him:

⁵ **nefarious** – extremely wicked.

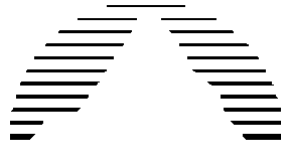
⁶ **elevation** – rise in status, inflating one's ego and making sinfully proud.

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (Jam 4:7).

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