

The Lie

The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3.4-5).

Introduction

In His most heated encounter with the Jewish authorities (John 8.44), Jesus declared that Satan was a murderer and a liar, "the father of lies." As "the father of lies," Satan works constantly to deceive mankind about God's existence, God's goodness and love, and his own existence (2 Corinthians 4.3-4). Religion is a creation of Satan as a counterfeit to God and His plan of salvation. Satan's deception will reach its apex during the period of time known in the Bible the Day of the Lord or the Tribulation.

Satan's lie, THE LIE, came into existence as a result of Satan's thinking he could become God (Isaiah 14.14). Satan deceived himself with this lie and it led to his rebellion against God. He now peddles the lie to mankind. He seduces man with a message that, a) man can become God and b) Satan is God. His lie to man began in the garden of Eden.

The Beginning of THE LIE: Satan, the Anointed Cherub

God created the Shining One (שֶׁמֶן הַיְהוָה), his name before he became Satan, as His most beautiful and powerful of God's creations. He was the "anointed cherub that covers" (Ezekiel 28.14). The word "covers" is כָּסָה and means to cover as a guard or protector. We find the word describing the cherubim who covered or guarded the mercy seat (Exodus 25.20, 37.9, 1 Kings 8.7; 1 Chronicles 28.18). The mercy seat of the Ark was the earthly representation of God's heavenly throne. Satan, before his rebellion, was its chief guardian and protector.

Satan is described having “every precious stone was your covering” (Ezekiel 28.13). As a result of rebellion, he exchanged his glorious attire of ruby, topaz, diamond, beryl, onyx, jasper, lapis lazuli, turquoise, emerald, and gold for maggots and worms (Isaiah 14.11). God remembered him as he was before he rebelled:

¹² *“You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.*

¹³ *“You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared.*

¹⁴ *“You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire.*

¹⁵ *“You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you (Ezekiel 28.12-15).*

How did Satan fall? Isaiah recorded Satan’s thought processes which led to his rebellion:

¹³ *“But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north.*

¹⁴ *‘I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High’ (Isaiah 14.13-14).*

Notice the progressive nature of Satan’s pride: ascend, raise, above, sit on the mount, in the north, ascend, above. He whole attitude focused upon himself, not God. Everything was “I will” and “my.” He ended his boast with: “I will make myself

like the Most High.” This is how THE LIE began.

Yet Satan’s future will be eternal humiliation:

⁹ *“Sheol from beneath is excited over you to meet you when you come; It arouses for you the spirits of the dead, all the leaders of the earth; It raises all the kings of the nations from their thrones.*

¹⁰ *“They will all respond and say to you, even you have been made weak as we, you have become like us.*

¹¹ *‘ Your pomp and the music of your harps have been brought down to Sheol; Maggots are spread out as your bed beneath you and worms are your covering.’*

¹² *“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! (Isaiah 14.9-12 cf. Revelation 20.10)*

Satan fell victim to his lie. He formed the idea in his mind that he could be God and acted on this thought. Since his rebellion, his chief labor has been to deceive other created beings: angelic and human. He deceived one-third of the angels (Revelation 12.4) and acted quickly to ensure mankind’s fall. He works assiduously to promote his lie and keep men and women from God’s love and mercy.

Satan and the Woman: Attack of THE LIE

¹ *Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?”* ² *The woman said to the serpent, “ From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; ³ but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will*

die.'" ⁴ The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die!" ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3.1-5).

Satan's campaign of deceit to the human race is recorded in the opening chapters of Genesis. He is introduced as a serpent but Eve did not speak with a snake. She spoke to Satan and he appeared as a "shining one." He seduced Eve into believing God was selfishly withholding something good from her. He deceived her into thinking that eating from the forbidden tree, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, would result in her having knowledge of good and evil and becoming like the gods, like the "sons of God." Satan's temptation was not that Eve could be God. That would have been a step too far. The woman had too much reverence for God to think she could be like him. Rather, the temptation was that she could become like the divine beings who attended and served at God's throne (Psalm 82.1). Eve thought this would be wonderful and Satan was able to cause her to doubt God's good and and He was withholding something good from her. She became convinced that if she ate she would be like these divine beings, the "sons of God" (אֱלֹהִים, Job 1.6, 2.1, 38.7). This was THE LIE.

After Eve ate from the forbidden tree she realized her terrible mistake. Genesis recorded God's conversation with the woman:

Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate" (Genesis 3.13 cf. 2 Corinthians 11.3; 1 Timothy 2.14).

Believing THE LIE, "you will be like the gods" has but one end: death.

THE LIE and the End of the Age

¹ *Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.*

² *And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."* ³ *As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age"(Matthew 24.1-3)?*

Jesus' statement about the Temple shocked the Twelve. His distressing statement created many questions among them. They asked Him when these things would occur and when would He return and end the age. They were especially interested to learn when the age would end and when He would establish the Messianic kingdom because Jesus had promised they would rule in it (Matthew 19.28).

In Jesus' explanation of the events that would occur He emphasized one point repeatedly: do not be deceived. Thus, we read in the passage:

⁴ *And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many (Matthew 24.4-5).*

The word translated "mislead" is πλανᾶω (from which we get our word "planet," i.e., "wandering star.") It means "to cause to stray," "to lead astray," "to go astray, wander, roam about," and metaphorically "to lead away from the truth, to lead into error, to deceive." Two more times in this passage Jesus warned about future deception:

Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many (Matthew 24.11).

For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show

great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect (Matthew 24.24).

The greatest deception the world will experience will occur at the end of this age. The prophets called this time the Day of the Lord (cf. Joel 2.30-32; Zephaniah 1.14-18). Jesus called it the Tribulation (Matthew 24.15-22). During this period Jesus warned of the “abomination of desolation” of Daniel’s prophesy (Daniel 9.27). It is a time when God will pour out his wrath and judge a disbelieving, Christ-rejecting world. These events will occur after God has completed and removed the Church, the body of Christ. How do we know this? We know it because the Scripture explicitly states it. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians about the Day of the Lord:

| 1 Thessalonians 5.1-11 | |
|---|---|
| You, We, Us, Our | They, Them, Those |
| <p>¹ Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. ² For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.</p> | <p>³ While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.</p> |
| <p>⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; ⁵ for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; ⁶ so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.</p> | <p>⁷ For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night.</p> |

⁸ But since **we** are of *the* day, let **us** be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God has not destined **us** for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through **our** Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for **us**, so that whether **we** are awake or asleep, **we** will live together with Him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as **you** also are doing

Paul always wrote to believers, not to unbelievers. He distinguished between “they,” “them,” i.e., unbelievers (verse 3) and “you,” “we,” “us,” i.e., believers (verses 1-2, 4-6, 8-11). Members of the body of Christ will not, indeed, cannot experience God’s wrath, i.e., the Day of the Lord (Tribulation) because “God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (verse 9, cf.. 1 Thessalonians 1.10). The salvation Paul wrote of was salvation from the day of the Lord through resurrection, i.e., the Rapture. Paul had written about it earlier in the letter (1 Thessalonians 4.13-18, cf. 1 Corinthians 15.51-53).¹ It should be obvious to even a dull theologian that the wrath Paul wrote of was not hell but God’s future judgment of the earth: the Day of the Lord. In Paul’s second letter to the Thessalonians, he corrected the false teaching that had come to the Thessalonians that members of the body of Christ would go through the Tribulation (2 Thessalonians 2.1-2). The reason Church age believers cannot go through the Tribulation, the Day of the Lord, is because Paul explicitly stated God will remove His Church prior to His wrath.

Paul’s letter of 2 Thessalonians elaborated on doctrine he had

written in his first letter. In that letter, he made it clear that God would remove the Church, the body of Christ before the day of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4.13-18). He had began his first letter with a word of assurance that they would not experience the day of the Lord, i.e., "the wrath to come." Paul wrote:

⁹ For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come (1 Thessalonians 1.9-10).

Paul expected the Lord to return soon and that He would rescue believers from the day of the Lord.

The Coming Antichrist: Personification of THE LIE

Following His healing of a man at the pool by the sheep market Jesus declared, to Jerusalem's Jews:

³⁹ You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; ⁴⁰ and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life. ⁴¹ I do not receive glory from men; ⁴² but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. ⁴³ I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him (John 5.39-43).

Jesus warned the nation that while they had rejected Him, another would come whom they would receive. Jesus told them He had come in His Father's name but that an impostor would come in his own name. This individual will be the Antichrist or

Beast of Revelation. In his second letter to the Thessalonians Paul provided additional information about the deception with the coming Antichrist which he had received from the Lord. He wrote,

⁸ Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; ⁹ that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, ¹⁰ and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, ¹² in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness (2 Thessalonians 2.8-12).

The Greek text of verse 11 reads:

“καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πέμπει αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς ἐνέργειαν πλάνης εἰς τὸ πιστεῦσαι αὐτοὺς τῷ ψεύδει.”

My translation is, “And on account of this, God will send them a supernatural operation of error so that they believe the lie.” The word ἐνέργεια is used 8x in the New Testament, only by Paul. He always used it of supernatural power.

THE LIE during the day of the Lord, the Tribulation, will be that Satan is God (Isaiah 14.14) in the person of the Antichrist. Revelation's title is, “Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,” “The Revelation of Jesus Christ,” but the book also reveals Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet, the infernal trinity. These three will perform supernatural signs and deceive the world with THE LIE that Satan is God and that men can become like the “gods,” the powerful divine creatures that attend God.

The Warnings in Revelation

In Revelation, Jesus appeared to the apostle John and gave specific instructions to seven Jewish assemblies. John sent the book of Revelation to these assemblies to strengthen them in the tribulation they were experiencing (cf. Revelation 1.9). The interpretation of the events depicted in the book remains future, however. In the future, a generation of Jews will study these words as they experience the Day of the Lord. Jesus' words are words of salvation for that future generation as they face the pressure to worship Satan's man, the Beast. The Lord's instructions to them were an extension of His teachings to the Jews in Matthew 24. John wrote that the things he witnessed in the Spirit were "on the Lord's Day." This was John's reference to the Day of the Lord, not, of course, Sunday (Zephaniah 1.7-18; Joel 2.1-17).

The world of Revelation is wholly different world from the world we experience in our Age of Grace. Miracles, prophecy, signs, wonders have returned. They will be reestablished because the time of Revelation is the last seven years of Israel's history according to Daniel's 70 weeks (Daniel 9.24). Signs and miracles occurred regularly in God's dealing with Israel. Paul wrote, "For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom" (1 Corinthians 1.22). While the Day of the Lord will affect the entire world, in terms of prophecy, the nation of Israel is primarily in view. It is the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30.7). Jesus warned of the great deception of the Antichrist. He will claim he is the Messiah, God incarnate, and produce miraculous signs to back his claim. Through him Satan will attempt to fulfill his boast, "I will make myself like the Most High" (Isaiah 14.14) and maintain his rule of the earth (Ezekiel 28.13; cf. Matthew 4.8-9; 2 Corinthians 4.4).

The warnings Jesus gave to these future Jewish churches have two key elements. The first is the admonition, "he who has an ear, let him hear." The second is Jesus' refrain about

“overcoming.” The language of “overcoming” is clearly associated with salvation in terms of eternal life, e.g., “paradise of God,” “not hurt by the second death,” “not erase his name from the book of life,” etc. What “overcoming” means for an individual during the years in view in Revelation is remaining faithful to Christ. One “overcomes” during this period by 1) death for refusing to worship the beast, worship his image, and take his mark (Revelation 13.3-4, 7-10, 15-17, 20.4) or 2) surviving until the Lord returns. The vast majority will die (Revelation 6.9-11, 9.13-14, 17.6).

| The Seven Assemblies | | Jesus’ Warnings To the Seven Jewish Assemblies |
|-----------------------------|----------|--|
| 1 | Ephesus | He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God |
| 2 | Smyrna | He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death’ (Revelation 2.11). |
| 3 | Pergamum | He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give <i>some</i> of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it’ (Revelation 2.17). |

| | | |
|---|--------------|--|
| 4 | Thyatira | He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received <i>authority</i> from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches' (Revelation 2.26-29). |
| 5 | Sardis | He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches' (Revelation 3.5-6). |
| 6 | Philadelphia | He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches' (Revelation 3.12-13). |
| 7 | Laodicea | He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches'" (Revelation 3.21-22). |

Noteworthy is the fact that Jesus' warning phrase, "he who has an ear" to the seven Jewish churches is found in only one other place in Revelation beyond the verses above. This is in the description of the deception of the Beast and the False

Prophet (Revelation 16.13, 19.20, 20.10) who deceive the world by signs and miracles. There, the warning is to not worship the Antichrist. This passage echoes Jesus' warning to the Jews of His day that they would reject Him but would receive a counterfeit messiah (John 5.43 cf. 1 Corinthians 1.22). Thus,

⁷ It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. ⁸ All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. ⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰ If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints. (Revelation 13.7-10).

Religion is Satan's system to blind humanity about God. Religious deception will reach its apex during the Tribulation. John witnessed the advent of the great false religious leader who corresponds to the Holy Spirit in the false trinity. The Holy Spirit draws men and women to Christ. The False Prophet will draw men and women to the Antichrist. John recorded:

¹¹ Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. ¹² He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. ¹³ He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. ¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform [k]in the presence of the

beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. (Revelation 13:11-14).

At the mid-point of the Tribulation, deception will intensify greatly upon earth since God will remove Satan from heaven onto the earth. Satan will recognize he has but a short time to accomplish his goals (Revelation 12.12).

The following verses reveal the DECEPTION Jesus warned about:

and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery (Revelation 18:23).

And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone (Revelation 19:20).

and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time (Revelation 20:3).

The Final Deceit: THE LIE Reprised

God will release Satan to work his deception one last time after his incarceration of 1,000 years. Why would He do this? We cannot understand fully the answer to this question. It seems likely, however, that God will make one final demonstration to His creation of man's hopelessness apart from Himself. Only God is good (Matthew 19.17). All that can be good depends upon Him and we can only become like God when we

depend (trusting Him) upon Him (Romans 8.28-30).

For 1,000 years the world will have enjoyed perfect environment. The planet will have no poverty, no pollution, no want, no need, almost no crime, no war, extremely long lifespans, and almost no disease (Isaiah 2.2-4, 11.1-5, 65.20). The animal kingdom will be at peace. Wolves will lie down with lambs; lions will eat straw (Isaiah 11.6-9). Despite this utopian world, despite the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ will personally reign in Jerusalem, despite the fact that this golden era will be the direct result of the Messiah, some will refuse to believe in Him.

All who enter the Messianic (Millennial) Kingdom will be believers. They will have children. In the course of time, some of the children will not be believers. After 1,000 years with extremely long lifespans, the earth's population will again number in the billions (Revelation 20.8). This will be the world Satan will enter after his temporary incarceration (Revelation 20.7).

⁷ When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. ⁹ And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰ And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Revelation 20.7-10).

Satan will come forth from his prison and follow his nature. As the "father of lies" he will present THE LIE, that man can

be like the gods. How will this be possible? Paul wrote that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light and uses religion to deceive (2 Corinthians 11.13-15). Consider the past. Eve lived in paradise, a utopian world. She had a perfect world with a perfect husband. But Satan convinced her that something was missing: she could become like the gods. After 1,000 years of paradise, Satan will convince men again that while things have been good, they could be better: they can be like gods. Some will rebel again God and follow Satan. God will make short work of their evil. He will destroy them and cast Satan into his permanent abode: the Lake of Fire.

Conclusion

Satan is “the father of lies” who proclaims THE LIE. He is the master confidence artist. His pitch can be appealing but it always leads to sorrow, loss, and death. Only one path to life exists: the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14.6). God never disappoints. He is faithful and true (Revelation 3.14, 19.11). Trusting and following Him leads to joy, honor, and life. The first step to remove Satan’s cloak of deception is to believe the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15.1-4).

¹ See the author’s study on the [Day of Christ](#) vs. the Day of the Lord.

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