

The Invisible War In the Visible Realm

Satan's Strategy for His Domain

Presented To
Arlington Community Church
Arlington, Texas

Lesson #4

Introduction

Our previous lesson in this study explored Satan's usurpation of dominion over this planet by luring Adam and Eve into an act of disobedience to God's explicit prohibition against eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:17). Satan's actions, followed by Adam and Eve's attempt to hide their sin, revealed Satan's strategy in his conflict with God.

Every force in a war has a strategy and Satan, as God's most brilliant creature, has no less. Scripture discloses that Satan has an organizational structure for his angelic forces that consists of "principalities," "powers," and "rulers of the darkness of this age" (Eph 1:21 cf. 6:12; Rom 8:38). Satan governs a portion of the angelic realm and that governance will continue until Satan's appeal trial is concluded at the Great White Judgment Throne (Rev 20:10-15) at the end of human history.

It is at this point (i.e. the Great White Judgment Throne) that human history will have served its purpose as God's evidentiary matter in Satan's appeal trial. It is at this point that Satan's strategy to: 1) neutralize the evidence; and 2) eliminate the evidence will have failed and will no longer be permitted. Human history will have served its God-intended purpose of demonstrating to all of creation that God is love plus absolute righteousness and sovereign authority. The integrated function of the attributes of His essence is not only fair toward His creatures, but it guarantees that He will go to the most extreme length to make available His uncompromised love to willing recipients. The infinite nature of God's essence makes Him worthy forever of praise, adoration, glory and honor having no equal.

Human history, as God's evidentiary matter, will have established the integrity of God's essence as a fact not ever again subject to challenge. Satan's challenge of God's essence in eternity past as documented in Isaiah 14:11-15 and Ezekiel 28:12b-19 will have been answered with irrefutable evidence for all of eternity. Once the evidence of human history has been completely presented, the presence of one sovereign over all creation will never be subject to question or doubt. The eternal security of believers is guaranteed and will be assured by the presence of one will – a single unified will that is shared by God and all elect creatures (unfallen angels and human believers). There will be no opportunity for a believer to choose an alternate sovereign in eternity.

A Contrast in Strategies

It is important to emphasize the fact that Satan's domain did not include man and the earth during the period of time from the restoration of the earth in Genesis 1 until man's fall in Genesis 3:6. While it is impossible to know the full extent and the particulars of Satan's domain prior to these events, we do know that his domain included that portion of the angelic realm that he enticed to accept his lie – that he was equal to God and would be like the Most High God (Isa 14:12-14).

Evidently, his strategy for ruling the angelic portion of his domain is different from his strategy of neutralization and elimination in regard to the earthly portion of his domain. For Satan to achieve the worship and acclaim which he desires as documented in Isaiah 14:12-15, he must

have subjects over which to rule. This contrast in strategies that Satan applies to the two different realms (angelic and human) under his dominion serves to validate the fact that from Satan's viewpoint, human history is evidentiary matter to be neutralized and eliminated. Why? If the evidentiary matter is eventually eliminated (after the Truth is suppressed through a process of neutralization), God's essence has been proven false and God has lost His right to be sovereign over all creation.

Satan's Strategy Revealed

At the end of lesson #3, we briefly discussed the first display of a counterfeit plan of pseudo-righteousness. When Adam and Eve sinned, their first act was an attempt to hide their sin with a work of their own hands – fig leaves. This is the first attempt by man to perform a deed or work of his own hands to satisfy God's righteousness, i.e. hide the effect of sin from each other and from God. Satan had enticed Adam and Eve to sin and to acquire knowledge they did not possess – the knowledge of "good and evil."

Satan knew that he was prohibited from eliminating man by his (Satan's) own hand; however, Satan wanted to expand the boundaries of his domain to encompass the earth and its inhabitants and eventually eliminate this evidence (the inferior creature, mankind) in his appeal trial. Satan's desire to be "like the Most High" included his own plan of "good" or pseudo-righteousness which had been, was, and continues to be an integral component of his governing strategy for his domain.

God knew of Satan's counterfeit plan of "good" or "righteousness" and understood it to be a part of Satan's desire to be "like the Most High" Himself. This is why man's disobedience to God's prohibition against eating of the one tree in the Garden of Eden would result in a knowledge "good and evil" (Gen 2:17; 3:1-5). The "good" was the pseudo-righteousness of Satan's domain to which man would be subjected if he violated God's one prohibition. If Satan could entice man to violate the prohibition and sin, then man could possibly be further deceived to believe his own good was satisfactory.

To accept a counterfeit system of good to be satisfactory was tantamount to acknowledging Satan's system as an acceptable alternative – even if Adam and Eve were ignorant of the greater celestial and cosmic ramifications of their decision. Satan knew that eventually man could be lured even further away from the need for God's righteousness through the brilliant and blinding nature of his (Satan's) system of righteousness. The ultimate result would be that he could neutralize God's evidence to include any plan of redemption for man (pictured by God's provision of animal skins in Gen 3:21) via the promotion of a plan of human good or human righteousness.

The pseudo-righteousness of Satan's governing strategy preceded man's creation with Satan's express desire in eternity past to be "like the Most High." Therefore, God knew that the ramifications of man's violation of any prohibition would not only be sin, but it would also subject man to Satan's system which included pseudo-righteousness – the "knowledge of good and evil." Systems of pseudo-righteousness are viewed by God as evil.

By enticing man to sin and violate the one prohibition in the Garden, Satan introduced one of the two prongs in his two prong strategy – neutralization. Not to be redundant, but just to emphasize the point again – if man could be led to believe that he could meet God's righteous requirements through his own efforts, man would think that his sin was covered and of no eternal consequence. There would be no need of a redeemer – a Savior.

Today, the deception of Satan's system of pseudo-righteousness blinds the unbeliever to the need for a Savior – a Redeemer. The unbeliever is deceived to think his own works or deeds are sufficient to satisfy the demands of a righteous God just as Adam and Eve thought their work of sewing fig leaves was sufficient to cover for their sin. The believer can be deceived by the

blinding influence of Satan's system of good when he involves himself in organizations, pursuits, and energies that are devoid of an eternally redemptive effect in people's lives. When the believer is not pursuing a strategy for his/her life that leverages the "human good" of the cosmos so as to promote the Gospel to unbelievers or have a redemptive effect in the life of fellow believers, then more than likely, that person wrongly believes he or she is satisfying God's righteous standard when in reality, only "human good" is being produced.

For instance, the brave men and women in our military services who are believers and who are involved in the "good" of defending freedom so as to have greater credibility when they have opportunity to present the Truth, are leveraging a "good" of the cosmos. They are also leveraging the "good" of the cosmos when they defend our freedom knowing that they are providing other believers with an environment in which to promote the Gospel, grow to spiritual maturity, and send missionaries to other parts of the world. The believer in the military who is not similarly motivated is just producing human good. This illustration extends as a parallel to other "good" of the cosmos.

All earthly property is of the satanic order, which property the believer may use, but must not abuse: "But whoso hath this world's good [cosmos] and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3:17)¹

This deception of man regarding the good of the cosmos has continued throughout history as revealed in Scripture. For instance, Isaiah declares that "all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags" (Isa 64:6). Paul declares that our salvation is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5). Paul distinguishes between the quality of the work produced by the believer. He indicates that the result of some work will burn ("wood, hay straw") when subjected to evaluation at the judgment seat of Christ whereas the result of other work ("gold, silver, precious stones") will endure the fire of judgment (1 Cor 3:12-15). The judgment of unbelievers at the Great White Judgment Throne (Rev 20:11-15) will prove that the "good" produced by unbelievers is insufficient to satisfy the righteousness of God, thus their names are not written in the book of life and they are cast into the Lake of Fire.

Human Good Defined

Human good is the phrase I have adopted to describe that good that man produces that is not sin, but it has nothing to do with God's plan of righteousness. It is a pseudo-righteousness that leads to relativism. Human good is acknowledged and promoted by the unbelieving world as an acceptable substitute for God's system of appropriating His righteousness – e.g. faith alone in Christ alone for salvation. Human good or deeds of human righteousness will be the basis by which the unbeliever is judged at the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of human history (see Rev 20:11-15). Human good is Satan's counterfeit system of righteousness by which he attempts to execute his claim to be "like the Most High God" (Isa 14:14). The believer's acts of human good will be evaluated and destroyed at the Bema Seat Judgment (1 Cor 3:11-15 cf. Rom 2:16; 14:10, 12; 2 Cor 5:10).

Read excerpts from Lewis S. Chafer, *Satan – His Motives and Methods* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1990), 91-100. This is the chapter entitled "The Fatal Omission" and in it, Chafer deals extensively with the concept of *human good*. Even though he does not use that particular phrase, he eloquently describes the concept.

Also, read excerpts from Lewis S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas, Texas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), Volume II, 76-121.

¹ Lewis S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas, Texas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), Volume II, 87.