

GOD'S PROPHECIES

FOR

PLAIN PEOPLE

by William L. Pettingill

- 1923 -

Van Kampen Press Wheaton, Illinois

Chapter Fourteen -

SATAN'S LIFE-STORY: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

There is a surprise in store for the man who for the first time sits down with his Bible to learn what it teaches about Satan. For it is more than likely that before thus coming to his Bible for the truth about Satan he has learned much about him that is not true.

Nothing could be further from the truth than the almost universal conception of him as a black hideous, repulsive monster, with horns and hoofs and forked tail, reigning as king over lost souls in hell, and inciting men on Earth to loathsome deeds of lust and foulness.

The Bible picture of Satan is in sharp contrast with all this. Instead of being black and hideous, Satan appears as an angel of light. Instead of reigning as king in hell, Satan has never yet been in hell, although that place was prepared for him and his angels; and when he is finally cast into hell it will not be to reign as king, but to be the most miserable and helpless sufferer there. And instead of inciting men to deeds of lust and foulness, Satan rather inspires men to deeds of "reform" and "world-improvement."

The natural man, "the flesh," has no need of Satan's assistance to descend to all kinds of vileness; Satan does not appear in the terrible arraignment of the race in the first chapter of Romans; the indictment there is against men who "**hold the truth in unrighteousness.**" GOD "**gave them up,**" and nothing more than that was needed to plunge them into the sink of iniquity described in the closing verses of that terrible chapter.

Satan Strong for "Religion"

Satan operates in the spiritual realm. His favorite device is to enlist men in *religious* enterprises contrary to the Word of GOD, "**Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof**" (II Timothy 3:5).

It is probably no exaggeration to state that the great majority of people do not believe in the existence of Satan at all as a person. We hear much of "The evil principle," but the Word of GOD speaks of "**the evil one.**" The personality and reality of Satan are as clearly taught in the Scriptures as the personality and reality of GOD Himself.

Doubtless it is quite agreeable to Satan's plans that his existence should be ignored, but it is well for us to be "**not ignorant of his devices.**"

In "**the good fight of faith**" there are three battle lines. The first line is described in the seventh of Romans, where the believer is seen fighting against the law of sin in his members, and seeking to overcome it in his own strength. The fight is desperate, and it is hopeless, too, until the believer cries out, "**O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?**" The second line is seen in Romans 8, where the indwelling HOLY SPIRIT takes up the fight in the believer's behalf, and gives him victory over the old nature. And the third line is seen in Ephesians 6, where the believer is exhorted to "**Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places**" (Ephesians 6:11, 12).

Let us not, then, confine our thinking, as touching Satan, to the saloons and dives, house of prostitution, penitentiaries, insane asylums, and the like. We should have such things as these without Satan; they belong to "**the works of the flesh,**" which "**are manifest: . . . adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like**" (Galatians 5:19-21).

It is not that Satan is free from responsibility for the presence of these things in the world; they are the result of sin, and it was he who brought sin into the world; but having brought sin into the world, he has only to let men have their own way with sin, and it goes on its corrupting course.

I am not at all sure but that Satan would, if he could, abolish from the world every one of these "**works of the flesh,**" for these outbreaking evils hinder rather than help him in his supreme effort *to make this world independent of GOD!* It is his purpose to overthrow the throne of GOD, and to establish himself permanently as "**the prince of this world,**" and toward the accomplishment of this purpose he is bending every energy, day and night.

It would be well for those who desire to walk with GOD in these present days to *look* into His Word with reference to the great movements in the various denominations looking toward world-betterment, and given secondary place or no place at all to the work of soul-winning; it may be that Satan has more to do with these things than is supposed. Let us beware lest, through "**a zeal of God**" which is "**not according to knowledge,**" we are caught in "**the snare of the devil**" with those "**who are taken captive by him at his will.**"

The first passage of Scripture which we shall study in tracing Satan's life story is a portion of the twenty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel. In the first ten verses of this chapter the Prince of Tyre is rebuked by the Word of the LORD for the sin of blasphemy. This Prince of Tyre was evidently the man who occupied the throne of Tyre at the time the prophecy was uttered. He claimed divine honors for himself, saying, "**I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas**" (Ezekiel 28:2).

When Satan Was a "Cherub"

His awful end is predicted in these verses, and then, beginning at verse 11, there is a denunciation of the *King* of Tyre, which goes far beyond any Earthly ruler. The person addressed, as many have recognized, is Satan, who, as "the power behind the throne," ruled the Kingdom of Tyre through the Prince of Tyre already referred to. There are other passages of Scripture in which Satan is thus indirectly addressed: "**And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel**" (Speaking to the serpent, but addressing Satan, in Genesis 3:15) and "**But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men**" (Speaking to a friend that had allowed himself to be used by Satan in Matthew 16:23). Let us now examine these verses in Ezekiel 28:

"The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying,

Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord God; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God: Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee: With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures: By thy great wisdom and by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches:

Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas. Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee. Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God.

"Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the Beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was

lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more" (Ezekiel 28:1-19).

All will agree that this language goes beyond any human King, and also that it perfectly corresponds with what we know from other sources about Satan. He was the real ruler of Tyre, though he did not appear as such, except to the eye of GOD. The last clause of the quotation is somewhat involved, the translators having supplied the words "shalt" and "be." Satan's annihilation is not taught here or elsewhere, as will appear later.

From this passage we learn that Satan was created as one of the cherubim - "**the anointed cherub that covereth.**" Cherubim always stand in Scripture for the guardianship of the righteousness of GOD. Carefully examine Genesis 3:24; Exodus 25:17-22; 26:31-33; Psalm 80:1, and the other passages. The whole subject is interesting and should be treated in a separate article, which may be forthcoming later. It is evident that in the original creation Satan was a great dignitary, perhaps at the very head of the creation of GOD prior to that catastrophe which overtook the Earth between the first and second verses of the first chapter of Genesis.** His title, "**the covering cherub,**" may indicate that he was appointed to guard the throne of GOD, whose foundations are righteousness and judgment (Psalm 89). He had his place in "**Eden the garden of God**" and upon "**the holy mountain of God.**" He was glorious in beauty, sealing up the sun, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

***Editor's Note: This is referred to as the Gap Theory - and it does not fit the Scriptures. The angels were created within that creation week, and none fell until after (in other words, there was no sin until later). See Genesis 1:31 and Job 38:7. Also, notice how Ezekiel 28:13 teaches that Satan walked in the Garden of Eden before he fell, yet we know that this Garden was not created until day six, according to Genesis 2.*

How Sin Entered the Universe

But Satan fell from his high estate, for "**iniquity was found in**" him. Pride was his undoing: "**Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil**" (I Timothy 3:6). the story of his fall is found in the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah, where he appears as the King of Babylon (v. 4), again ruling as "the power behind the throne," though that throne was occupied by a human prince. His name as given here is Lucifer, which means Day-star:**

"How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit" (Isaiah 14:12-15).

Here is seen the introduction of sin into the universe.

Editor's Note: The Hebrew word here for Lucifer means "Shining One."

Satan invaded the garden of Eden in the form of a serpent. Not the serpent as we now know him, crawling on his belly in the dust, for this is the result of the curse; but erect and beautiful. Eve was beguiled with his subtlety, and therefore **"sin entered into the world, and death by sin"** (Romans 5:12-14; II Corinthians 11:3). In the covenant which GOD gave to Adam and Eve the promise was made that Satan should one day be overthrown and destroyed by the coming Deliverer, who should be "the Seed of the woman."

Let it not be supposed, however, that the sentence against Satan has been fully executed. Satan is still going to and fro in the Earth, **"seeking whom he may devour"** (I Peter 5:8). He still has access into the Heavens, where he accuses the brethren day and night. Luke 10:18, **"I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven,"** is anticipative, a prediction to be fulfilled when the scenes of Revelation 12 are enacted. Satan is still **"the prince of this world,"** and **"the whole world lieth in"** him (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; I John 5:19). He is **"the prince of the power of the air,"** which evidently means that he is - and we know from Scripture elsewhere that he is - at the head of innumerable hosts of demons who infest the air to do his bidding. He is **"the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience"** (Ephesians 2:2). Under limitations imposed by GOD, Satan had (and it may be still *has*, except in the case of believers), the **"power of death"** (Hebrews 2:14, 15). For believers, **"the fear of death,"** and even death itself, potentially, has been abolished through the death of the Son of GOD in their behalf. (Compare Hebrews 2 with **"But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."** II Timothy 1:10)

The advocacy of CHRIST is set over against the accusing work of Satan for the safety of the saved, but even yet Satan is sometimes permitted to "sift as wheat" or test the children of GOD, while CHRIST keeps them in faith through His intercessory work:

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face" (Job 1:6-11).

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 21:31, 32).

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Corinthians 5:4-5).

"This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (I Timothy 1:18-20).

compare with: **"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1).**

It was Satan who **"entered into [Judas]"** (John 13:27). It was Satan who tempted Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the HOLY SPIRIT: **"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?"** (Acts 5:3). Satan hindered Paul **"once and again"** in his apostolical ministry (I Thessalonians 2:18).

The fate of Satan is clearly revealed in Scripture. At the beginning of the Great Tribulation he and his forces shall be cast out of Heaven, and during the Great Tribulation he will do his utmost, energizing the Beast and False Prophet, to establish himself in permanent power as Prince of this World. But his efforts will come to naught, and at the opening of the Millennium he will be shut up in the abyss for a thousand years. After the thousand years he is **"loosed out of his prison"** and will lead in a final effort to overthrow the Kingdom of GOD. Failing in this he finds his doom in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20).

I have referred to the demons as Satan's agents. He has human agents also, men posing as **"ministers of righteousness,"** but who are really Satan's servants, and **"whose end shall be according to their works."** Whenever a professing minister of righteousness is denying the LORD that bought him, or turning away from the doctrine of CHRIST, there you have a minister of Satan, transforming himself into a minister of CHRIST. **"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light"** (II Corinthians 11:13-15). The ecclesiastical world has many such men in it today. And sometimes, indeed, institutions which men suppose to be churches of CHRIST are in reality **"synagogue(s) of Satan"** (Revelation 2:9).

Christians who read these lines may take fright as they see what the Scriptures of GOD have to say about their foe. There is no need of fright, however, for those same Scriptures tell us precisely how to meet our adversary.

Many even among GOD's dear children make the foolish and dangerous mistake of laughing at Satan, and treating the whole subject lightly. This ought not to be. Michael the archangel, - that is, the Chief Angel, - did not so, **"when contending with the Devil, he disputed about the body of Moses."** Michael, great and high as he is, recognized in Satan even a higher dignitary than he, and he **"durst not** (that is, he *dare* not **bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee!"** (Jude 9, compare with Zechariah 3:2). **"And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"** Satan is not a joke, and he is not to be

laughed at. That is not the way of wisdom.

In "**the good fight of faith**" the first enemy we meet is "**the flesh**," and the Word of GOD tells us that this enemy is to be *avoided*, rather than fought:

"Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (II Timothy 2:22).

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (I Peter 2:11).

"Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body" (I Corinthians 6:18).

The second enemy is "**the world**," and we are to be separated from this, as crucified to it: "**But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world"** (Galatians 6:14).

But when we come to the third enemy, "**the Devil**," we are told to *fight*. The fighting is not our own, it is "**in the Lord, and in the power of his might**," but it is real fighting, nevertheless, and with a real foe. "**Submit yourselves therefore to God, Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you**" (James 4:7). "**Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil"** (Ephesians 6:10-19). We need not *fear* even so great an enemy as Satan, but we might *fight* him with the weapons GOD supplies, and in the energy of the HOLY SPIRIT if we are to quit ourselves like men, well pleasing to GOD.

"Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

"And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us:
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.

"That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth:
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever."

~ end of chapter 14 ~
