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CHAPTER I

THE CAREER OF SATAN

THIS chapter is a brief outline of the past, present and future of Satan, which is taken up at this point both that the following chapters may be more easily studied and because of the fact that those passages which deal most directly with his earliest condition are closely interwoven with predictions of his future and final defeat.

Revelation in regard to Satan begins with that dateless period between the perfect creation of the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1) and the desolating judgment which ended that period, when the earth became waste and empty (Gen. 1:2; Isa. 24:1; Jer. 4:23-26). One passage, Ezek. 28:11-19, deals at length with Satan and his relation to that age. In this Scripture, Satan is evidently described under the title of "The King of Tyrus." Like the Messianic Psalms,—wherein the Psalmist is apparently referring to himself, though statements are made and conditions described that could only be connected with the Messiah, the Son of God,—so, here, that which is addressed to "The King of Tyrus" is, by its character, seen to be a direct reference to the person of Satan; for no similar person to whom this description could ap-

ply is revealed in the Scriptures. In the previous as well as the following chapters the final judgment of Jehovah is pronounced upon the enemies of His chosen people. Satan is numbered among these enemies in 1 Chron. 21:1; hence he naturally appears in this list.

Every sentence of this extended passage is a distinct revelation and is worthy of long and careful study. Only a passing reference can be made to it here. The passage is as follows:

“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 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 thy iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; 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."

This passage describes much of the early and latter career of Satan. Twice is his creation referred to. In verse fifteen it is stated that he was created perfect, and in verse thirteen that perfection is set forth in detail by the suggestive symbols of precious gems. He among all created beings was also "full of wisdom," "perfect in beauty," filling up the sum of perfection. In verse fourteen he is called the "anointed cherub that covereth." By this the purpose of the Creator is revealed. While Satan doubtless exercised some authority in the earth over the primal creation, the evident meaning of this verse is that Satan was created as a guard or protector to the throne of the Most High. This is reasonable. Like the golden cherubim, covering the visible mercy seat in the Holy of Holies of the earthly tabernacle, he was created a guard and covering cherub to the heavenly center of Glory. It is expressly stated that he was located by the Most High upon the holy mountain of God, the

mountain of God being a symbol of the center of God's power, government, and eternal throne (Ps. 48:1; 68:15; Isa. 2:2). Over this exalted throne Satan was set as a covering cherub. He is also said to have been in "Eden, the garden of God," which is evidently another Eden than that in which Satan appeared as a serpent. The Eden of Genesis was one of verdure and cosmic beauty, while this is an Eden of "stones of fire." No king of Tyrus was ever in either of the Edens mentioned in the Bible. The title belongs most evidently to Satan. The whole passage suggests a position of great authority for which he was created and anointed; a position from which he fell, drawing with him a host of beings over whom he had governing influence and power.

Again, it is stated that Satan was perfect in all his ways from the day he was created. It is important to notice both that he was created, and that he was created perfect. Since he was created, he is not self-existent, and never can be free from his dependence upon the Creator. He may vainly propose to become independent, and even be permitted for a time to act under that delusion; but that only delays the inevitable judgment that awaits him. He was created perfect, or was a perfect fulfilment of the Creator's intention. Satan was a free moral agent, capable of choosing evil but not obliged to do so. That he chose evil must ever be his own condemnation, for the Creator had surrounded him with sufficient motives for choosing the good. Christ said of him, "He was a murderer from the

beginning, and abode not in the truth." It is thus revealed that Satan began in the truth, but afterwards turned to a state wherein Christ could go on to say of him, "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).

The crime of Satan is partly revealed in verse sixteen and this is followed by an exact description of his final judgment as it is predicted in the book of Revelation.

An important teaching of this passage is of Satan's first position and power—a power and wisdom sufficient to guard the throne of God from every possible enemy, and a glory and beauty that would become the highest officer in the Court of Heaven. By this revelation his present position and power may be estimated.

Another revelation next in importance is that of his crime which is clearly set forth in Isa. 14: 12-20. Before reading this passage it should be noticed that the prophet's vision of Satan, here recorded, is from the time of his final judgment, and the prophet is looking backward over Satan's whole career. Much that is still future is, therefore, referred to as though it were past. The passage is as follows:

"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. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcass trodden under feet."

This heavenly title, "Lucifer, Son of the Morning," speaks of his first place in the celestial sphere, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy (Job 38:7). Christ is "The Bright and Morning Star," "The Sun of Righteousness" who shall yet arise with healing in His wings.

Has Satan ever fallen from heaven? The Word of God alone can answer this question. There are seven passages which should be considered in this connection:

1. Ezek. 28:16. "Thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God."

This prediction of judgment, with others which follow in the context and with which this casting out is associated, are predictions of the yet future

judgments which are to fall upon Satan when he is banished to the pit and to the lake of fire. This passage does not teach that Satan was cast out of heaven at the time of his sin and as an immediate judgment for his sin.

2. Isa. 14:12. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!"

This Scripture, as has been stated, is also a description of that final judgment which is to be at the very end of Satan's career.

3. Job 1:6. "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them."

There seems to be nothing unusual in the appearance and presence of Satan among these heavenly beings. The passage discloses his position in heaven and also reveals the fact that, in the days of Job, Satan was free to go and come in the earth.

4. Luke 22:31, 32. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you [obtained thee by asking], that he may sift you as wheat."

From this Scripture we may conclude that Satan still had unchallenged access to the presence of God in the day when this was spoken.

5. Eph. 6:11, 12, R. V. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles [strategies] of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies."

According to the Scriptures, throughout this age the believer must be prepared to war against a "spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenlies." The contributing evidence of this passage is to the effect that Satan is not yet cast out of heaven.

There is another revelation concerning Satan's present position in which it is declared that he now has access to the earth. "Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom withstand steadfast in the faith" (1 Pet. 5:8, 9). To this may also be added the revelation disclosed in the letter to the church at Pergamos, Rev. 2:13: "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat [throne] is."

From these passages it may be concluded that the position of Satan in heaven and his freedom to go to and fro in the earth has not changed since the days of Job.

6. Rev. 12:7-9. "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was there place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

This is the first passage in the Word of God which declares Satan to be actually banished from heaven. The passage also teaches that Satan remains in heaven until the time herein described.

According to the context it is that yet future time immediately preceding the setting up in the earth of the kingdom of God and the power of His Christ.

7. Lk. 10:18. "And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."

In the light of the passage just considered, it must be concluded that this was a prophetic utterance on the part of Christ, rather than a statement of history. The seventy had just returned with joy saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name."

There is no question concerning the sufficiency of the power of God over Satan. It is only a question as to *when* that power will be exercised. The experience by the seventy of power over devils was only a suggestion to the mind of Christ of the mighty power which would yet be displayed in banishing Satan and his hosts from the heavenly sphere.

It is important to distinguish Satan's yet future physical banishment out of heaven from his moral fall. He undoubtedly fell morally at the moment of his sin, but his position throughout the ages, or until the return of the King, is in heaven. From this high position he has access both to God and to the earth.

There is not the slightest Biblical basis for the theory that Satan or any of his hosts are now occupying hell. Though it is revealed that Satan is now a heavenly being, there is no evidence that there is agreement or fellowship between God and Satan. God's final judgments against Satan are

not yet executed. In like manner, God has not yet caused sin to cease in the earth; but the day is coming when He will.

Returning to Isa. 14:12-20, the passage under consideration, we read of two aspects of Satan's present activity: He is first seen to be seeking to establish authority for himself and then he is seen to be the promoter of confusion and terror in the earth. He said, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God," and it is also said of him: "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?"

The crime of Satan is concisely stated in the fourteenth verse as being a purpose in his heart to become *like* the Most High. His heart was lifted up because of his beauty; he who was created and placed as the "Covering Cherub," with the high honor of guarding the throne of God, has corrupted his wisdom by reason of his brightness; he has struck at the throne which he was set to protect. It was a purpose in his heart which would require the time of the ages wholly to destroy. There could be but one Most High, and the purpose of Satan to become like Him could, naturally, be nothing less than an attempt to dethrone the Almighty.

Satan was the first being to manifest a will opposed to the will of God. In the above passage from Isaiah, five "I wills" are recorded of him:

"I will ascend into heaven."

"I will exalt my throne above the stars of God."

“I will sit also upon the mount.”

“I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.”

“I will be like the Most High.”

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, and, through subtlety, to gain a kingdom for himself. He would thus become an object of worship and attract attention from other beings to himself. To accomplish this, a hindering attitude must be assumed toward the purpose and projects of the Most High. No adequate appreciation can be formed of Satan's present projects and devices, and the motive that prompts them, without a clear understanding of his age-abiding attitude toward the Person of God.

There are two prominent events revealed in the history of Satan, falling within the period of time when he proposed in his heart to become like the Most High and his yet future banishment and execution. The first of these was his meeting with and triumph over the first Adam, when he wrested the scepter of authority from man, by securing man's loyal obedience to his own suggestion and counsel. This earthly scepter Satan held by the full right of conquest, seemingly without challenge from Jehovah, until the first advent of the Last Adam; this meeting of the Last Adam, Christ, with Satan being the second great event which is revealed during this period in his career. Only the unfolding of the coming ages can reveal the magnitude of this terrible conflict. A glimpse is re-

vealed from time to time of the unceasing effort of Satan to triumph over the Last Adam, as he had triumphed over the first. He met the Lord Jesus in the wilderness, offering Him all he had gained from the first Adam, even the kingdoms of this world; if only he might become *like* the Most High, and receive the obedient worship and adoration of the Last Adam, the Son of God. Again he is seen voicing his attempt to dissuade the Christ from His sacrificial death, through the impetuous Peter (Matt. 16:23).

Since Satan had been in authority over the primal earth, it is reasonable to believe that he was filled with jealousy and hatred toward Adam, the newly created being to whom the earth authority was given. Satan made an attack upon Adam and wrested the scepter from his hand. God then decreed that there should be enmity between the seed of the woman and Satan. In tracing the line of the seed from Eden to Calvary, we may discern the constant attack of Satan upon this line of seed, and note as well the unfailing divine protection and intervention. The first born of Adam is mentioned in 1 John 3:12 as, "Cain, who was of that wicked one and slew his brother." But God raised up Seth. Thus it ever was.

However victorious Satan may have been over the first Adam, it is certain that he met a complete and final judgment and sentence in the Last Adam, and that the bruising of the serpent's head which was a part of the Adamic covenant was realized. Referring to His cross, Jesus said, "Now is the judg-

ment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). And again in John 16:11, "Of judgment because the prince of this world is judged." Still another Scriptural testimony to this great defeat of Satan is recorded in Col. 2:13-15: "Having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." It is, therefore, clear that, though Satan may have triumphed over the first Adam and thereby become the god and prince of this world, he himself was perfectly and finally triumphed over and judged by the Last Adam in the cross.

It is quite possible, however, that a sentence may be pronounced and made known some time before the sentence is actually executed. During such an interval a criminal is said to be under sentence awaiting his execution which some higher authority has decreed. This period of sentence is that in which Satan appears in the present age, which age had its beginning with the cross. Execution of this sentence would have banished him forever. That he is not banished is revealed in the fact that he, even after his judgment in the cross, is referred to in the Scriptures as still being in authority over this world.

An illustration of Satan's present relation to this world may be taken from the history of Saul and David. It is natural that David, the first to occupy

the Davidic throne, should be a type of Christ, predicted to be the last and most glorious occupant of that throne (Luke 1:31-33). As there was a period between the anointing of David and the final banishment of Saul, in which Saul reigned as a usurper, though under divine sentence and David was the God-appointed king: in like manner there is now a similar period in which Satan rules as a usurper, though under sentence; and the actual occupation of Christ's throne is still future. In this period Satan, the rejected monarch, still rules; hunting to the death all those who have allied themselves with Christ, the God-anointed King.

Why Satan is thus allowed to continue his reign is perhaps but partly revealed. The real Church which is the Bride of Christ, is to sit with Him upon His throne (Rev. 3:21; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Matt. 19:28), and the present age must continue until that glorious heavenly people are gathered out from the world. Again, it seems the course of God's purpose to make a sufficient and final trial of every claim of His adversaries; and when this age, with all its developments, shall have passed by, every mouth will be stopped, and the whole world and Satan will know their own failure and sin before God. They will stand self-condemned, and nothing could accomplish this but the testing, by actual trial, of all the self-sufficient claims of Satan and man. The sin of man has brought him under sentence too, and grace alone withholds his immediate execution (John 3:18; Rom. 5:18, 19). Though the day of execution is, in the purpose of God de-

layed, it is, nevertheless, sure; and the time is fast approaching when an awful destruction of self-enthroned beings will be executed, and He alone shall reign, whose right it is to reign, "for he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:25). The Kingly Son shall yet arise and claim the nations of the earth and "break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel" (Ps. 2:9).

Another probable reason for the delay in the termination of evil in the world and the execution of judgment upon Satan is that the presence of evil in the world provides the Christian with a ceaseless conflict by which he can alone gain the character of an overcomer. This character is vital and is priceless in the sight of God.

So, also, the Christian is privileged to be a witness. (The word witness is from the same root as martyr.) By his faithful testimony against the enemy of God, the believer is able to gain his crown and reward. This, too, is priceless in the sight of God.

It would seem that, until near the end of his career, Satan cherishes the expectation of actually accomplishing his purpose (though the demon testimony of Matt. 8:29 is suggestive on this point). Preceding his banishment to the pit, he is violently cast out of heaven and into the earth, according to Rev. 12:7-12; and his activity from that time on is limited to that sphere. He is no longer granted access to God. The passage is as follows:

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his

angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was there place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accuseth them before God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

Here Satan is pictured as being in great wrath as he is banished from heaven into the earth, "knowing that he has but a short time." After this short time, in which occurs the great tribulation in the earth, Satan is bound and cast into a pit; this being an event in the glorious return of Christ to the earth, where He will reign on the throne of His father David for a thousand years. Satan is confined to the pit during the same period, at the end of which he is released for "a little season." He then gathers an army for a last attack upon the government and people of God, which ends in his being banished to the lake of fire, where

he meets his final and long predicted doom. These events are clearly stated in their order in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of Revelation. A portion of this Scripture is here given :

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit [abyss] and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit [abyss], and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled : and after that he must be loosed a little season. . . . And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle : the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city : and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev. 20 : 1-10).

Satan is thus revealed as having been created perfect in all his ways, mighty in power, and full of beauty and wisdom. While thus privileged, he proposed in his heart a stupendous project—himself to become like the Most High. Though re-

maining in heaven and having access to God, he is seen wresting the world scepter from man; ruling as the god of this world, until the judgment of the cross; and after that he still rules as a usurper. At the end of the age he is cast out of heaven into the earth, with further access to the former denied; from thence to the pit; and finally is banished to the lake of fire forever.

This review of the career of Satan is made at this point in order to call attention to the direct and mighty influence he exerts upon the affairs of this world according to his varying positions and freedom.

After Satan rebelled, humanity, too, was thrown into an abnormal and almost universal attitude of independence toward God; and this continues beyond the cross to the end of the age with increasing confusion and darkness. The only exception to this rebellion is the little company of believers, and how real is the tendency to the self-governed life of the old nature, even among these! When Satan is cast out of heaven and limited to the earth, there is the tribulation upon the earth of which Jesus speaks in Matt. 24: 21, and which is also referred to in Dan. 12: 1. When Satan is bound and put in the pit, and the promised Kingdom of Christ has come, there is peace covering the earth as waters cover the face of the deep.

Can it be doubted that this mighty being is a living power, acting directly over the affairs of men, even in this self-glorying age?