

# How Does Satan Attack Churches?

To set the foundation, in answer to our question, we must define who the enemy really is and his tactics. First of all, the enemy is Satan, the fallen angel who wanted to take away God's Glory. Secondly, after Satan was punished and cast to the earth, he set out to destroy God's glory through Adam and Eve. Satan deceived Eve, and Adam fell into sin. Satan is described in John 8:44, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. 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."

Likewise, the book of Revelation 12:9 says, "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." From these two verses, we find the essence of who Satan is, and also his tactics, that he deceives, distracts and divides the church. This is the way Satan attacked churches in the New Testament and still today.

The first tactic that Satan uses is deception. This plan of Satan goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden. The word means to "To *take aside, to ensnare*" (American Dictionary of the English Language Noah Webster, 1828.) John writes in Revelation 20:3, "And cast him into the bottomless pit, 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." The deception spoken of here continues up to the Thousand Year Reign of Christ.

Satan's deception is a primary goal. Satan deceived the church as illustrated in Romans 1:25, "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator..." Satan got the Church of the New Testament to get away from truth, as Jesus said, that devil was the father of lies.

We see this deception illustrated in Peter's life. Peter got mixed up over circumcision and salvation, and meats sacrificed to idols. Much of all the epistles in the Bible are correcting bad doctrine that derived from deception. Today we see the church deceived from the truth of the effectiveness of the Bible in society, the clarity of the Gospel, the worship of entertainment verses the love of the Truth.

The second tactic that Satan uses is that he distracts the churches. After Satan deceives, then he distracts the church. We see this in the book of Corinthians. The people got wrapped up in who they were to follow, as see in 1 Corinthians 1:12-13, "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" Both I and II Corinthians deals with one distraction after another, whether it was tongues, or the seats at church, or the Lord's Supper which all seemly distracted the church of Jesus Christ.

When Satan effectively deceives and distracts he renders God's army ineffective. As he did in the books of Corinthians, and in 2 Timothy 2:26 the Word of God states, "And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." I

have observed over the years that Christians are backsliding from the Lord at alarming rates. When only about 40 percent of those who are born again go to church, and of those 40 percent, only about 10-20 percent of those actually give of their Time, Talents, and Treasure in the ministry or the battle for the Lord to win the lost. It is evident that Satan is having a hay day with Christians.

Don't get me wrong. Satan surely is deceiving the unsaved, but honestly, he really already has them. Christians belong to the Heavenly Father. Satan's attack on God's people is his priority because he renders good Christian soldiers ineffective in the battle, which is waged against God. S

Satan roams this earth laughing at his victory over us as Christians, not really seeking to kill us, but just to wound us. You may ask like I did, "Is this really true?" Let me illustrate. A captain of an army once said, "that he would much rather wound an enemy than kill them." That puzzled me, but his explanation made a lot of sense. He said, "If you wound a soldier, then three soldiers are actually taken out of the battle because there is the one that is wounded, and then there are the two other soldiers who have to carry and care for the wounded." Satan is working hard on God's few soldiers that he has to render us unfit for battle, wounding us and getting us out of the real battle, which is reaching the lost and glorifying our Heavenly Father. Much of ministry is caring for the wounded in the church who has been deceived and distracted from the real battle.

Lastly and consequently, Satan's tactic is to divide. Everyone knows that the strong army must unite. As we saw illustrated in the Corinthian church, the divisions were rampant. "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it" (1 Corinthians 11:18). Likewise, in Galatians 1:6-7: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."

Satan's tactic of dividing the church in the New Testament over issues that were non-essentials was effective in sidetracking the church. Divisions get us fighting ourselves, rather than focusing on Satan and his powers. He divided the church over communion, widows, meats, and over anything he could, so the attention was not given to him. Satan still does this same tactic today. The church today is distracted by numbers in pews, rather than lives for Christ, doctrinal polity, worship wars, generational differences, and scores of other things.

In conclusion, Satan has no new tricks; he deceives, distracts, and divides God's people. We need to be aware and see these tactics from Satan in our churches, and make sure that they are not evident. We need to get in the real battle, to win souls and glorify the great Saviour.

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