

## Doctrinal Summary of Satan & Company: Their Strategy for Deception

In Revelation 12:9, John identifies that Satan is the one who deceives the whole world.

“And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

The words “who deceives” are translated from the Koine Greek words ὁ πλανῶν (“ho plah-nohn”) which literally means, “the initiator performing the continuous type of action as a matter of principle to lead something off path, based on his own initiation.” Satan is described as one who initiates the action of leading others off path. He does this based on his character and his objective to overthrow God. Thus, his deception of angels and man away from God is something which is a principle of his operation. He operates this way day in and day out as a matter of principle in his attempt to overthrow God and become the highest authority (cf. Isaiah 14:13-14).

Satan has carried out the same strategy which he had used against the angelic fall throughout human history as well. Ezekiel 28:18 identifies his strategy which ultimately defiled his role in God’s kingdom.

“By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries.”

The phrase, “in the unrighteousness of your trade” is more literally translated as, “in the dishonest behavior of your trades made for personal gain.” What Satan promises is never genuinely honest. It has components of truth but is also truth twisted so that he can use it for his own benefit. This is evident in the garden of Eden where Satan deceived the woman (cf. Gen 3:1-6) in order to put man into the same position of judgment as him. Satan shrewdly removed the woman’s attention from God and His character and put it onto the fruit and its character. Once her attention on the fruit, Satan deceived the woman into believing the fruit would be beneficial even though taking it would require disobedience. The woman began to think about the fruit and its characteristics rather than God and His characteristics. And thus, she ate.

The same strategy was attempted by Satan against God the Son through the three temptations of Jesus identified in Matthew 4. In the first temptation Satan attempted to focus Jesus’ attention on His hunger (sensuality) in exchange for satisfying Himself apart from God’s provision. Satan then attempted to focus Jesus on His own importance in God’s plan (pride) in exchange for testing God’s character. The third temptation attempted to focus Jesus on all the kingdoms of the earth (materialism) in exchange for worship. In each of these temptations Satan’s strategy was the same:

1. Remove attention from God’s character and holiness.
2. Deceive the individual into thinking rebelliously.
3. Offer something that appeals to the individual, but produces rebellion.

Satan & Company continuously employ this strategy against the believer and unbeliever alike as a matter of principle. The goal is to orient man’s focus away from God and onto feeling, ego, or creation. Once man’s attention is off of God and His character, Satan & Company are able to manipulate man by his lust into rebellious thinking that results in disobedience and failure to trust God.