

Lucifer

“TRY SOMETHING NEW”

The Middle Beginning

1. **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”**

— John 1:1

2. **“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, ... for he is a liar and the father of it.”**

— John 8:44

3. **“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”**

— Genesis 1:1

The Second Mystery

- ◆ **“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness.”**

— 1 Timothy 3:16

- ◆ **“For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work.”**

— 2 Thessalonians 2:7

- ◆ **hidden “from the beginning of the ages”**

— Ephesians 3:9

The Second Mystery

“For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work.... The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

— 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12

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— Isaiah 14:13-14

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Why?

“It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence.... Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin.”

— *Great Controversy*, 492

Why?

“God calls for far more tact, more wise generalship, than has yet been given him by his human agents. There is need of sharp, sanctified thinking, and keen work to counteract the ingenious plans of Satan.”

— *Youth's Instructor*, May 24, 1894

Why?

“At the final condemnation of Satan and his angels and of all men who have finally identified themselves with him as transgressors of God’s law, every mouth will be stopped. When the hosts of rebellion, from the first great rebel to the last transgressor, are asked why they have broken the law of God, they will be speechless. There will be no answer to give, no reason to assign that will carry the least weight.”

— *Signs of the Times*, April 28, 1890

Why?

“The greatest talents and the highest gifts that could be bestowed on a created being were given to Lucifer, the covering cherub. Before his fall he was a glorious being, occupying a position next to Christ.”

— Letter 21, 1901

Lucifer “was a covering cherub, distinguished by his excellence. God made him good and beautiful, as near as possible like Himself.”

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Why?

“When God said to His Son, ‘Let us make man in our image,’ Satan was jealous of Jesus. He wished to be consulted concerning the formation of man, and because he was not, he was filled with envy, jealousy, and hatred.”

— *Early Writings*, 145

“Satan.... hates mankind because they are the workmanship of God. He opposed the creation of man.”

— *Manuscript 38*, 1890

Why?

“Next to the angelic beings, the human family, formed in the image of God, are the noblest of His created works.”

— Ministry of Healing, 397

“The earth was to be peopled with beings only a little lower than the angels.”

— Patriarchs and Prophets, 60

“No other creature that God has made is capable of such improvement, such refinement, such nobility as man.... Man cannot conceive what he may be and what he may become. Through the grace of Christ he is capable of constant mental progress.”

— Letter 26d, 1887

Why?

“It was a wonderful thing for God to create man, to make mind.... God created man that every faculty might be the faculty of the divine mind.”

— Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, 1430

“Man was the crowning act of the creation of God, made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God.... Man is very dear to God, because he was formed in his own image.”

— Review and Herald, June 18, 1895

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God “would place man upon probation to test his loyalty, before he could be rendered eternally secure. If he endured the test wherewith God saw fit to prove him, he should eventually be equal with the angels.”

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“The work of redemption involved consequences of which it is difficult for man to have any conception. There was to be imparted... an excellency of power, which would place him higher than the angels who had not fallen.”

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— Manuscript 112, 1897

“He who was once the covering cherub, whose work it was to hide from the heavenly intelligences the glory of God, perverted his intellect, and divorced himself from God.”

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Adam and Eve “were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between.”

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Why?

“Through the imparted life of Christ, man has been given opportunity to win back again the lost gift of life, and to stand in his original position before God, a partaker of the divine nature.”

— Signs of the Times, June 17, 1897

“Satan in his efforts to deceive and tempt our race had thought to frustrate the divine plan in man’s creation; but Christ now asks that this plan be carried into effect as if man had never fallen. He asks for His people not only pardon and justification, full and complete, but a share in His glory and a seat upon His throne.”

— Great Controversy, 483

So Maybe That's Why....

“The creation of our world was brought into the councils of heaven. There the covering cherub prepared his request that he should be made prince to govern the world then in prospect. This was not accorded him. Jesus Christ was to rule the earthly kingdom; under God He engaged to take the world with all its probabilities. The law of heaven should be the standard law for this new world, for human intelligences. Lucifer was jealous of Christ and this jealousy worked into rebellion and he carried with him a large number of the holy angels.”

— Manuscript 43b, 1891

The Core of Rebellion

- ◆ God said, “Please do this.”
- ◆ But Lucifer thought, “No, that is better.”

In order to get to this point, one of two things had to have already happened:

- ◆ Either Lucifer believed that God had made a mistake
- OR**
- ◆ He believed that God had deliberately commanded something that was not in Lucifer’s best interest

The Core of Rebellion

In other words, Lucifer had lost faith in God.

Even if God had just made a “simple mistake,” that was a serious concern. After all, God was in charge of running the universe!

Who could trust His wisdom if it had been proven faulty?

And if God *hadn't* made a mistake, then it meant that He was intentionally harming His subjects!

Who could trust His love if it had been proven false?

So Lucifer had lost faith in God's wisdom, and probably God's love as well.

The Core of Rebellion

But that's not all!

If Lucifer was smart enough to spot God's mistake, that meant *Lucifer was smarter than God!*

What's more, if God *had* tried to trick Lucifer into doing something that wasn't for his best good, then the mere fact that God had failed to fool him meant that *Lucifer was smarter than God!*

That's the stuff that pride is made of.

Now it would be easy for Lucifer to simply do what *he was sure was the best thing.*

That's what we call disobedience.

The Core of Rebellion

But that's not all!

Even if Lucifer never said a word about his disobedience, the influence of his actions told all the other angels, "You can't depend on God to take care of you! You need to take charge of your own life! You need to do what God does. *You need to exalt yourself!*"

That's a lie.

The Core of Rebellion

But that's not all!

Once Lucifer took the responsibility of caring for himself, it meant he had to do whatever it took to provide for himself.

If necessary, that meant stealing.

If necessary, that meant murder.

Like Jesus said, Lucifer "was a murderer from the beginning."

The Tactics of Rebellion

- ◆ **Exploit position and trust as long as possible**
- ◆ **Hide intentions from others**
- ◆ **Imply or insinuate without clear assertions**
- ◆ **Distort others' perceptions**
- ◆ **Maintain plausible deniability**
- ◆ **Shift responsibility to others**
- ◆ **Lie**
- ◆ **Abandon discredited positions without accepting responsibility for having advocated them**
- ◆ **Cite supporters as evidence of correctness**
- ◆ **Appeal to sympathy**

The Tactics of Rebellion

“Taking advantage of the loving, loyal trust reposed in him by the holy beings under his command, he had so artfully instilled into their minds his own distrust and discontent that his agency was not discerned. Lucifer had presented the purposes of God in a false light—misconstruing and distorting them to excite dissent and dissatisfaction. He cunningly drew his hearers on to give utterance to their feelings; then these expressions were repeated by him when it would serve his purpose, as evidence that the angels were not fully in harmony with the government of God.

The Tactics of Rebellion

“While claiming for himself perfect loyalty to God, he urged that changes in the order and laws of heaven were necessary for the stability of the divine government. Thus while working to excite opposition to the law of God and to instill his own discontent into the minds of the angels under him, he was ostensibly seeking to remove dissatisfaction and to reconcile disaffected angels to the order of heaven. While secretly fomenting discord and rebellion, he with consummate craft caused it to appear as his sole purpose to promote loyalty and to preserve harmony and peace.”

— Patriarchs and Prophets, 38

The Tactics of Rebellion

“In his first display of disaffection, Satan was very cunning. All he claimed was that he wanted to bring in a better order of things, to make great improvements.”

— Review and Herald, August 4, 1910

“Satan could present no defined reasons as to why he wished the law of God changed or abolished. He simply declared his conviction that the angels would be better off without the law, but could not tell in what way they would be advantaged.”

— Signs of the Times, November 14, 1895

The Tactics of Rebellion

“Lucifer... gained the sympathy of some of his associates by suggesting thoughts of criticism regarding the government of God. This evil seed was scattered in a most seducing manner; and after it had sprung up and taken root in the minds of many, he gathered the ideas that he himself had first implanted in the minds of others and brought them before the highest order of angels as the thoughts of other minds against the government of God. Thus, by ingenious methods of his own devising, Lucifer introduced rebellion in heaven.”

—Letter 162, 1906

The Tactics of Rebellion

“Words... have power to react on the character. Men are influenced by their own words. Often under a momentary impulse, prompted by Satan, they give utterance to jealousy or evil surmising, expressing that which they do not really believe; but the expression reacts on the thoughts. They are deceived by their words, and come to believe that true which was spoken at Satan’s instigation.... It is dangerous to utter a word of doubt, dangerous to question and criticize divine light.”

— Desire of Ages, 323

The Tactics of Rebellion

“Many of these angels [who sympathized with Lucifer] had occupied high positions in the government of God. All were enriched with the talent of intellect and were girded with strength and glory.”

— Manuscript 87, 1903

The Tactics of Rebellion

“The seeds of alienation were planted, afterward to be drawn out and presented before the heavenly courts as originating, not with Satan, but with the angels....

“In his artful way he drew expressions of doubt from them. Then, when he was interviewed, he accused those whom he had educated. He laid all the disaffection on the ones he had led.”

— Review and Herald, September 7, 1897

The Tactics of Rebellion

“In his interviews with other angels, after succeeding in finding sympathizers, he arranged his arguments and presented them as if they were sentiments that had originated in the minds of those whom he first led astray.”

— Manuscript 23, 1891

“The tempter would throw all the blame of his course upon others who were below him. He would make it appear that if he could have moved according to his own judgment all this demonstration of rebellion would have been avoided.”

— Letter 16a, 1892

The Tactics of Rebellion

Lucifer worked “through the medium of influence, taking advantage of the action of mind on mind.... And ever since then sin has continued its hateful work, reaching from mind to mind. Every sin committed awakens the echoes of the original sin.

“Mutual dependence is a wonderful thing. Reciprocal influence should be carefully studied.... When placed on the side of right, influence is a power for God; when placed on the side of evil, it is a power for Satan. One human being under Satan’s control becomes a means of temptation to another human being. Thus evil grows into immense proportions.”

— *Review and Herald*, April 16, 1901

The Tactics of Rebellion

“The influence of mind on mind, so strong a power for good when sanctified, is equally strong for evil in the hands of those opposed to God. This power Satan used in his work of instilling evil into the minds of the angels, and he made it appear that he was seeking the good of the universe.”

— Letter 114, 1903

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— Letter 114, 1903

“Satan was artful in presenting his side of the question. As soon as he found that one position was seen in its true character, he changed it for another.”

— *Review and Herald*, March 9, 1886

The Tactics of Rebellion

“Satan exultingly pointed to his sympathizers, comprising nearly one half of all the angels, and exclaimed, These are with me! Will you expel these also, and make such a void in heaven?”

— *Signs of the Times*, January 9, 1879

“When it was announced that with all his sympathizers he must be expelled from the abodes of bliss... Satan and his host threw the blame of their rebellion wholly upon Christ, declaring that if they had not been reprovved, they would never have rebelled.”

— Manuscript 125, 1907

The Tactics of Rebellion

Lucifer “cast the cause of his defection upon Jesus Christ and upon God. If They had not so firmly resisted his plans, he said, he would not have gone on doing as he did. Wrongdoers always find sympathizers, and Satan so represented his case to the angels that he drew many angels from their allegiance to God.”

— Letter 15a, 1896

The Tactics of Rebellion

“It is impossible for man to measure the ingenuity shown by Satan in deceiving human minds.”

— Letter 80, 1910

Lucifer’s “work of deception was done in so great secrecy that the angels in less-exalted positions supposed that He was the Ruler of heaven.”

— Letter 292, 1906

The Tactics of Rebellion

“The originator of sin worked with all his deceptive powers and satanic subtlety to become equal with God in heaven, as the Son of God was. Then, he thought, he could sway the heavenly angels as he desired. This specious, deceptive work was carried on secretly. The archdeceiver himself concealed his identity, so far as was possible, and the Lord permitted this rebellion to develop before anything was done to save the angelic host from apostasy.”

— Letter 271a, 1903

The Accusations

- 1. Angels are holy by nature and wise enough to govern themselves, so they don't need God's law.**
- 2. God was unfair when He exalted Jesus above Lucifer.**
- 3. God is proud.**
- 4. God is selfish.**
- 5. God's law is defective, and needs to be changed.**
- 6. Neither angels nor human beings can obey God's law.**
- 7. God's law is arbitrary.**
- 8. God's law makes forgiveness impossible.**
- 9. God has actually changed His law.**



One of the more admired traits in today's business world is innovation, the ability to "think outside the box."

Sometimes that's called for; sometimes it's not.

Lucifer tried his hand at innovation, and pitched his idea to the angels of heaven. "Come on," he said,

CLICK for text:

"let's try something new!"

We'll start our story at the beginning, or—more precisely—at

The Middle Beginning

1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

— John 1:1

2. "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, ... for he is a liar and the father of it."

— John 8:44

3. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

— Genesis 1:1

2

What we commonly think of as the beginning turns out to be the third beginning.

CLICK for text:

Which means that there must have been two other beginnings, and indeed there were. But the first of these is not our starting point today.

CLICK for text:

No, as the title tells us, we're looking for the one in the middle.

CLICK for text:

This second beginning, the beginning of sin, is closely related to...

The Second Mystery

- ◆ **“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness.”**

— 1 Timothy 3:16

- ◆ **“For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work.”**

— 2 Thessalonians 2:7

- ◆ **hidden “from the beginning of the ages”**

— Ephesians 3:9

The first mystery is the good one.

CLICK for text:

The second mystery is the bad one.

CLICK for text:

One of the interesting aspects of these two mysteries is that the first one was...

CLICK for text

That’s actually very impressive, since the first mystery is God’s response to the second mystery—and yet it was planned before the second mystery had ever gotten started.

The Second Mystery

“For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work.... The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

— 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12

4

Still, right now our focus is the second mystery, the bad mystery, so let's look at it more closely.

CLICK for text:

There's an interesting detail down near the end of this. Some translations make this more general by saying that those who did not receive the love of the truth end up believing "a lie." But the Greek scholars tell us that Paul was more specific. The wording points to....

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one particular lie.

And what lie is that? The devil was a liar from the beginning, and by this time he's told lots of lies. One of the more serious ones is "You shall not surely die." But that's not "the lie" in this passage.

"The lie" is more basic, more foundational to the whole experiment with sin, so let's go back to that beginning and look for it.

The Lie

“I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.”

— Isaiah 14:13-14

This is what Lucifer started off saying, but is all this really a lie, or just groundless boasting? Sure, he thought he would ascend into heaven, but it won't end up that way. He thought he was going to sit on his throne “above the stars of God,” but it's not going to happen.

So, where's the lie?

Right here...

The Lie

“I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.”

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The idea here isn't just one more in a list. This is what Lucifer thought he'd be when he managed to do all the other stuff.

In other words, he was saying “God exalts Himself; God promotes His own glory; God puts Himself first. That's what I'm going to do!”

Without endorsing Lucifer's idea, you can sort of see how he might make it look that way. After all, who did all the angels worship? All the songs of the heavenly choir that Lucifer led... was it just a coincidence that they were all about God? Did that just happen? Or did God set things up that way on purpose?

Why?

“It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence.... Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin.”

— *Great Controversy*, 492

Now, before we go any further, we need to recognize something important. We need to be clear that there never was, and never will be, a reason for sin.

Notice:

CLICK for text:

If we think we've found a reason for Lucifer choosing to sin, we're wrong. But that doesn't mean that God hasn't told us why he chose to sin in the manner he did. It turns out that we've actually been given quite a few insights into the methods of our enemy.

And it's important we remember we are in a war!

Why?

“God calls for far more tact, more wise generalship, than has yet been given him by his human agents. There is need of sharp, sanctified thinking, and keen work to counteract the ingenious plans of Satan.”

— Youth's Instructor, May 24, 1894

If we're going to do this “sharp, sanctified thinking” God wants us to do, we are going to need to pay attention to some details that we often just skim over quickly.

Why?

“At the final condemnation of Satan and his angels and of all men who have finally identified themselves with him as transgressors of God’s law, every mouth will be stopped. When the hosts of rebellion, from the first great rebel to the last transgressor, are asked why they have broken the law of God, they will be speechless. There will be no answer to give, no reason to assign that will carry the least weight.”

— *Signs of the Times*, April 28, 1890

Again, we see that there is no good reason for sin. But you know Satan has come up with dozens of “reasons.”

And that’s the point! At “the final condemnation of Satan,” everyone sees that none of those reasons “carry the least weight.” But that’s only because the “wise generalship” of God—and sometimes of His “human agents”—has *demonstrated* that his “reasons” were worthless.

So let’s take a look at what we’ve been told about Lucifer and the beginning of sin.

Why?

“The greatest talents and the highest gifts that could be bestowed on a created being were given to Lucifer, the covering cherub. Before his fall he was a glorious being, occupying a position next to Christ.”

— Letter 21, 1901

Lucifer “was a covering cherub, distinguished by his excellence. God made him good and beautiful, as near as possible like Himself.”

— *Review and Herald*, September 24, 1901

READ Text:

CLICK and READ second item:

So the first thing to note is that Lucifer was “made... good.” He was “created” with the “greatest talents and highest gifts.” All this was given to him, apparently from the moment he came into existence.

Even though we commonly think of God as able to do anything He wants, here we see a situation in which God had reached even His limit! It just wasn't possible to create someone more like God than Lucifer.

That's not a bad way to start off your life, is it?!

Why?

“When God said to His Son, ‘Let us make man in our image,’ Satan was jealous of Jesus. He wished to be consulted concerning the formation of man, and because he was not, he was filled with envy, jealousy, and hatred.”

— *Early Writings*, 145

“Satan.... hates mankind because they are the workmanship of God. He opposed the creation of man.”

— *Manuscript 38*, 1890

But Lucifer chose to sin. And we'll never know why he did that. What we do know is that this happened about the same time as God was getting ready to create our planet.

CLICK for two items

So here's a question: Is that only coincidental? Or did the plans for earth and human beings play a role in Lucifer's course of action?

Why?

“Next to the angelic beings, the human family, formed in the image of God, are the noblest of His created works.”

— *Ministry of Healing*, 397

“The earth was to be peopled with beings only a little lower than the angels.”

— *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 60

“No other creature that God has made is capable of such improvement, such refinement, such nobility as man.... Man cannot conceive what he may be and what he may become. Through the grace of Christ he is capable of constant mental progress.”

— *Letter 26d*, 1887

13

I think the two issues were very much connected, so I want you to consider these next statements from Lucifer’s point of view—after he had secretly begun to cherish selfishness and pride.

CLICK for two items

That’s simple. Just like Psalm 8, and Hebrews 2: Man was created “a little lower than the angels.” But look at this one.

CLICK for text:

That makes human beings sound kind of special. And notice the words “improvement,” “become,” and “progress.” This is not a gift given fully formed at creation; this is an ongoing process.

Why?

“It was a wonderful thing for God to create man, to make mind.... God created man that every faculty might be the faculty of the divine mind.”

— *Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, 1430

“Man was the crowning act of the creation of God, made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God.... Man is very dear to God, because he was formed in his own image.”

— *Review and Herald*, June 18, 1895

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Well, that all sounds kind of special, doesn't it?

But now, consider this next statement...

Why?

God “would place man upon probation to test his loyalty, before he could be rendered eternally secure. If he endured the test wherewith God saw fit to prove him, he should eventually be equal with the angels.”

— *Signs of the Times*, January 9, 1879

“Those who in the strength of Christ overcome the great enemy of God and man, will occupy a position in the heavenly courts above angels who have never fallen.”

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Equal. That's a new idea.

And notice, that's something that was to happen “eventually.” That sounds like a process, doesn't it?

OK. Fair enough. But there are more statements to consider!

CLICK for text:

“Above”? What happened to “a little lower”?

Why?

“The work of redemption involved consequences of which it is difficult for man to have any conception. There was to be imparted... an excellency of power, which would place him higher than the angels who had not fallen.”

— *General Conference Bulletin*, October 1, 1899

But notice that these last two statements have described the end result of the plan of salvation. Lucifer wouldn't have known anything about that. So we have to ask whether this “above the angels” result was something that would only happen because of sin and salvation, or was it a part of the original plan for human beings.

In order to answer that question, we need to know a little more about Lucifer.

Why?

“God was a light so effulgent, that Lucifer occupied the position of covering cherub, so that the universe could at all times look upon His glory.”

— *Manuscript 112, 1897*

“He who was once the covering cherub, whose work it was to hide from the heavenly intelligences the glory of God, perverted his intellect, and divorced himself from God.”

— *Letter 197, 1901*

Adam and Eve “were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between.”

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CLICK for two items

So that was Lucifer’s job. Well, one of his jobs, really. He was also the choir director, of course, and who knows what else. But still, there’s a reason he was called the covering cherub. That was his highest profile job.

But notice:

CLICK for text:

What was going to happen to Lucifer’s job if that idea ever caught on?

And this communion was definitely a part of the original plan before sin messed things up.

Why?

“Through the imparted life of Christ, man has been given opportunity to win back again the lost gift of life, and to stand in his original position before God, a partaker of the divine nature.”

— *Signs of the Times*, June 17, 1897

“Satan in his efforts to deceive and tempt our race had thought to frustrate the divine plan in man’s creation; but Christ now asks that this plan be carried into effect as if man had never fallen. He asks for His people not only pardon and justification, full and complete, but a share in His glory and a seat upon His throne.”

— *Great Controversy*, 485

CLICK for second text:

Does any of this excuse sin? Are human beings the “reason” Lucifer fell?

No. Not at all. Even if Lucifer were somehow demoted to the lowest position in heaven, the proper reaction would have been, “Praise the Lord! Everything He’s ever done, and everything He’s ever asked me to do, has always been for my good. I can’t wait to see what He has for me in this new position.”

But let’s not get too smug here. Remember, the same goes for us when we don’t get what we want!

Still, since Lucifer had chosen selfishness in his heart, these details help us understand this next quotation.

So Maybe That's Why....

“The creation of our world was brought into the councils of heaven. There the covering cherub prepared his request that he should be made prince to govern the world then in prospect. This was not accorded him. Jesus Christ was to rule the earthly kingdom; under God He engaged to take the world with all its probabilities. The law of heaven should be the standard law for this new world, for human intelligences. Lucifer was jealous of Christ and this jealousy worked into rebellion and he carried with him a large number of the holy angels.”

— Manuscript 43b, 1891

Well, all that gives us some background, but we still need to understand Lucifer's fall. We need to see what's at the very heart of sin.

The Core of Rebellion

- ◆ God said, "Please do this."
- ◆ But Lucifer thought, "No, that is better."

In order to get to this point, one of two things had to have already happened:

- ◆ Either Lucifer believed that God had made a mistake
- OR**
- ◆ He believed that God had deliberately commanded something that was not in Lucifer's best interest

At the core of Lucifer's rebellion, there is one very simple, but immensely important, issue:

CLICK for six items

The Core of Rebellion

In other words, Lucifer had lost faith in God.

Even if God had just made a “simple mistake,” that was a serious concern. After all, God was in charge of running the universe!

Who could trust His wisdom if it had been proven faulty?

And if God *hadn't* made a mistake, then it meant that He was intentionally harming His subjects!

Who could trust His love if it had been proven false?

So Lucifer had lost faith in God's wisdom, and probably God's love as well.

CLICK for five items

The Core of Rebellion

But that's not all!

If Lucifer was smart enough to spot God's mistake, that meant *Lucifer was smarter than God!*

What's more, if God *had* tried to trick Lucifer into doing something that wasn't for his best good, then the mere fact that God had failed to fool him meant that *Lucifer was smarter than God!*

That's the stuff that pride is made of.

Now it would be easy for Lucifer to simply do what *he was sure was the best thing.*

That's what we call disobedience.

CLICK for five items

The Core of Rebellion

But that's not all!

Even if Lucifer never said a word about his disobedience, the influence of his actions told all the other angels, "You can't depend on God to take care of you! You need to take charge of your own life! You need to do what God does. *You need to exalt yourself!*"

That's a lie.

CLICK for two items

The Core of Rebellion

But that's not all!

Once Lucifer took the responsibility of caring for himself, it meant he had to do whatever it took to provide for himself.

If necessary, that meant stealing.

If necessary, that meant murder.

Like Jesus said, Lucifer "was a murderer from the beginning."

CLICK for four items

Of course, our main goal in all this is to see how Lucifer went about spreading his apostasy. In later sessions, we'll see that there are good reasons to be familiar with this.

The Tactics of Rebellion

- ◆ **Exploit position and trust as long as possible**
- ◆ **Hide intentions from others**
- ◆ **Imply or insinuate without clear assertions**
- ◆ **Distort others' perceptions**
- ◆ **Maintain plausible deniability**
- ◆ **Shift responsibility to others**
- ◆ **Lie**
- ◆ **Abandon discredited positions without accepting responsibility for having advocated them**
- ◆ **Cite supporters as evidence of correctness**
- ◆ **Appeal to sympathy**

25

We don't have the time to cover all the statements in the Spirit of Prophecy that fill in these details, so I want to list the specific tactics Lucifer used, and then give just a little of the supporting evidence.

Again, there are good reasons for us to be aware of these techniques—but not because God is ever going to ask us to use them! Sadly, other people may try to get us to use these techniques, or they may try to use them on us. Either way, our only safety is in refusing to have anything to do with them.

CLICK for nine items

The Tactics of Rebellion

“Taking advantage of the loving, loyal trust reposed in him by the holy beings under his command, he had so artfully instilled into their minds his own distrust and discontent that his agency was not discerned. Lucifer had presented the purposes of God in a false light—misconstruing and distorting them to excite dissent and dissatisfaction. He cunningly drew his hearers on to give utterance to their feelings; then these expressions were repeated by him when it would serve his purpose, as evidence that the angels were not fully in harmony with the government of God.

The Tactics of Rebellion

“While claiming for himself perfect loyalty to God, he urged that changes in the order and laws of heaven were necessary for the stability of the divine government. Thus while working to excite opposition to the law of God and to instill his own discontent into the minds of the angels under him, he was ostensibly seeking to remove dissatisfaction and to reconcile disaffected angels to the order of heaven. While secretly fomenting discord and rebellion, he with consummate craft caused it to appear as his sole purpose to promote loyalty and to preserve harmony and peace.”

— Patriarchs and Prophets, 38

The Tactics of Rebellion

“In his first display of disaffection, Satan was very cunning. All he claimed was that he wanted to bring in a better order of things, to make great improvements.”

— Review and Herald, August 4, 1910

“Satan could present no defined reasons as to why he wished the law of God changed or abolished. He simply declared his conviction that the angels would be better off without the law, but could not tell in what way they would be advantaged.”

— Signs of the Times, November 14, 1895

CLICK for second text:

The Tactics of Rebellion

“Lucifer... gained the sympathy of some of his associates by suggesting thoughts of criticism regarding the government of God. This evil seed was scattered in a most seducing manner; and after it had sprung up and taken root in the minds of many, he gathered the ideas that he himself had first implanted in the minds of others and brought them before the highest order of angels as the thoughts of other minds against the government of God. Thus, by ingenious methods of his own devising, Lucifer introduced rebellion in heaven.”

— Letter 162, 1906

This technique of planting ideas and then getting others to parrot them back is the single thing that Ellen White points to more than any other in Satan's efforts to corrupt the angels.

And with good reason:

The Tactics of Rebellion

“Words... have power to react on the character. Men are influenced by their own words. Often under a momentary impulse, prompted by Satan, they give utterance to jealousy or evil surmising, expressing that which they do not really believe; but the expression reacts on the thoughts. They are deceived by their words, and come to believe that true which was spoken at Satan’s instigation.... It is dangerous to utter a word of doubt, dangerous to question and criticize divine light.”

— Desire of Ages, 323

Incidentally, having been a classroom teacher for twenty years, I might just mention that one of the major functions of education is getting students to repeat what the teacher said.

Something to be aware of.

But let’s get back to Lucifer.

The Tactics of Rebellion

“Many of these angels [who sympathized with Lucifer] had occupied high positions in the government of God. All were enriched with the talent of intellect and were girded with strength and glory.”

— Manuscript 87, 1903

Sort of an interesting parallel with the “two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown,” who joined in the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram against Moses and Aaron, isn’t it.

I think that tells me that pride of position is a very dangerous thing. Just something to remember.

The Tactics of Rebellion

“The seeds of alienation were planted, afterward to be drawn out and presented before the heavenly courts as originating, not with Satan, but with the angels....

“In his artful way he drew expressions of doubt from them. Then, when he was interviewed, he accused those whom he had educated. He laid all the disaffection on the ones he had led.”

— Review and Herald, September 7, 1897

See how he's shifting the responsibility onto others?

Someone may do that to you one day. And if you've already said the things that you've been prompted to say, you may well accept that responsibility and actually think your honor depends on you defending those positions. Might want to think very carefully about doing that.

The Tactics of Rebellion

“In his interviews with other angels, after succeeding in finding sympathizers, he arranged his arguments and presented them as if they were sentiments that had originated in the minds of those whom he first led astray.”

— Manuscript 23, 1891

“The tempter would throw all the blame of his course upon others who were below him. He would make it appear that if he could have moved according to his own judgment all this demonstration of rebellion would have been avoided.”

— Letter 16a, 1892

CLICK for second text:

Now put yourself on the other end of the situation. Suppose there's some sort of problem, and someone comes and tells you that there are lots of people all upset about such-and-such. And maybe he even quotes what they've said about it.

Are you going to be able to see where the real source of the problem lies?

The Tactics of Rebellion

Lucifer worked “through the medium of influence, taking advantage of the action of mind on mind.... And ever since then sin has continued its hateful work, reaching from mind to mind. Every sin committed awakens the echoes of the original sin.

“Mutual dependence is a wonderful thing. Reciprocal influence should be carefully studied.... When placed on the side of right, influence is a power for God; when placed on the side of evil, it is a power for Satan. One human being under Satan’s control becomes a means of temptation to another human being. Thus evil grows into immense proportions.”

— Review and Herald, April 16, 1901

You know, they say that a chain is no stronger than its weakest link. That’s true of evil chains, too.

Can you imagine how many people you might protect, how much evil you might prevent, by refusing to be a link in the devil’s chain of evil influence?

The Tactics of Rebellion

“The influence of mind on mind, so strong a power for good when sanctified, is equally strong for evil in the hands of those opposed to God. This power Satan used in his work of instilling evil into the minds of the angels, and he made it appear that he was seeking the good of the universe.”

— Letter 114, 1903

“The influence of mind on mind,” is an expression that Ellen White used to describe both good and bad influences. When she spoke about the evil kind, though, she often used two terms that came and went during her lifetime: “mesmerism” and “mind cure.” From 1901 onward, she often used the more modern term, “hypnotism.”

The devil likes to make hypnotism look like a joke, a TV comedy kind of thing. But for the record, hypnotism is no joke.

More on that three meetings from now, but let’s go on to another common technique that Lucifer invented:

CLICK for text:

The Tactics of Rebellion

“The influence of mind on mind, so strong a power for good when sanctified, is equally strong for evil in the hands of those opposed to God. This power Satan used in his work of instilling evil into the minds of the angels, and he made it appear that he was seeking the good of the universe.”

— Letter 114, 1903

“Satan was artful in presenting his side of the question. As soon as he found that one position was seen in its true character, he changed it for another.”

— *Review and Herald*, March 9, 1886

CLICK for second item:

This is clearly dishonest, of course. But angels had never seen dishonesty before. Did it take them a while to catch on? Or was the devil just so good at shifting their minds away from the old, discredited argument that they didn't stop to think about it?

I don't have a clear answer to those questions, so I'll just have to leave them as questions. But I do know that Lucifer had more distractions to use....

The Tactics of Rebellion

“Satan exultingly pointed to his sympathizers, comprising nearly one half of all the angels, and exclaimed, These are with me! Will you expel these also, and make such a void in heaven?”

— *Signs of the Times*, January 9, 1879

“When it was announced that with all his sympathizers he must be expelled from the abodes of bliss... Satan and his host threw the blame of their rebellion wholly upon Christ, declaring that if they had not been reproved, they would never have rebelled.”

— *Manuscript 125*, 1907

CLICK for second text:

Ah yes, the always popular arguments of “Hey! Everybody agrees with me!” and “You just pick on me all the time!”

This last one gets into a tricky area, because Christians are supposed to be sympathetic... but they’re also supposed to be intelligent enough to know right from wrong!

The Tactics of Rebellion

Lucifer “cast the cause of his defection upon Jesus Christ and upon God. If They had not so firmly resisted his plans, he said, he would not have gone on doing as he did. Wrongdoers always find sympathizers, and Satan so represented his case to the angels that he drew many angels from their allegiance to God.”

— Letter 15a, 1896

When we look at Satan’s arguments like this, they all seem pretty weak. But bear in mind that you are no match for the devil. He is, unfortunately, very good at what he does.

How good? Check this out:

The Tactics of Rebellion

“It is impossible for man to measure the ingenuity shown by Satan in deceiving human minds.”

— Letter 80, 1910

Lucifer’s “work of deception was done in so great secrecy that the angels in less-exalted positions supposed that He was the Ruler of heaven.”

— Letter 292, 1906

Well, for what it’s worth, it turns out that we humans aren’t the only ones who have had problems here.

CLICK for second text:

Just in passing, notice here one intriguing aspect of God’s dealing with Lucifer’s rebellion as it was developing in heaven:

The Tactics of Rebellion

“The originator of sin worked with all his deceptive powers and satanic subtlety to become equal with God in heaven, as the Son of God was. Then, he thought, he could sway the heavenly angels as he desired. This specious, deceptive work was carried on secretly. The archdeceiver himself concealed his identity, so far as was possible, and the Lord permitted this rebellion to develop before anything was done to save the angelic host from apostasy.”

— Letter 271a, 1903

We won't take time to consider this right now in any depth, but notice especially the timing of the events at the very end of this quotation.

The Accusations

- 1. Angels are holy by nature and wise enough to govern themselves, so they don't need God's law.**
- 2. God was unfair when He exalted Jesus above Lucifer.**
- 3. God is proud.**
- 4. God is selfish.**
- 5. God's law is defective, and needs to be changed.**
- 6. Neither angels nor human beings can obey God's law.**
- 7. God's law is arbitrary.**
- 8. God's law makes forgiveness impossible.**
- 9. God has actually changed His law.**

And finally, I want to list Satan's accusations against God and His government. These are, after all, the basis of the whole great controversy.

CLICK for nine items:

So here's a closing question: Suppose you were God, and Lucifer started spreading these ideas; what would you do about it?

That's what we'll look at in our next meeting.