



May 24, 2021

## In God's Crosshairs

*"He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." - 1 John 3:8*

If we look at Satan's work from beginning to end in the Bible, from the opening chapters of Genesis to the concluding chapter of Revelation, we see a clear pattern: Satan's constant deception of human beings. This means, if God is going to achieve his ultimate purpose for human beings, the defeat of Satan is of central importance. Jesus came into the world to this end.

In the gospel of Matthew, when Joseph learned that Mary was pregnant and considered divorcing her, an angel appeared to him and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:20-21). To save people from sin is to destroy sin, which in turn is to destroy the works of the devil.

Satan, then, is God's primary target, for he is the one who bears the primary responsibility for all that is wrong with the world. Now you may say that I am not giving humans enough responsibility in this. Well, we do bear sufficient responsibility, for we make choices and we bear the consequences as we live with the mess that is human history. But the reality of evil and lack in our world makes it impossible to place the full blame on human ingenuity or action. While it is true that much of the pain and suffering in the world could be avoided if human beings would not just lie down and accept it all, the question is, why don't they actively resist it? The answer is, because Satan deceives and misleads people and thereby prevents them from making the kind of connection with God that would work against the effects of sin in the world.

Each year at Christmastime we celebrate the event known as the incarnation, when the Son of God took on a human body. Why was this necessary? In Hebrews 2:14 we are given an answer: Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.

**Reflect:** *Satan had the power of death, the power to separate people from God and to use death as an instrument for repressing and managing human beings. It is of fundamental importance to understand that, while he has plenty of helpers, there is one principal agent of evil in the universe, Satan, and his intent is to thwart God's purposes by manipulating the minds of human beings. That is his intent, and he has been quite effective at achieving it.*

*(Q) As Jesus seeks to save people from sin by destroying sin in their lives, are there ways you remain vulnerable to the works of the devil by accepting his lie that life is one of desertion, deficiency, and dread? How is God actively countering that false narrative in your life?*

**Next Legislator Study:** John 17:20-23 - "That They May Be One" on Tuesday, June 8th @ 8 am, Room 202 Irvis Bldg, Rep. Mark Longiotti's office