

Satan has more names than you can shake a pitchfork at! And those names tell us very vividly what a clever creature he is.

The name Satan itself means “one who opposes,” and he certainly does that (Revelation 12:9). “Devil” means one who slanders someone else, and he certainly does that (Rev. 12:9). He is the Evil One in whose power the whole world lies (1 John 5:18). He is depicted as a great red dragon with horns and a tail (Rev. 12:3-9), which reminds us of how fierce a being he is. He is the tempter (1 Thessalonians 3:5). He is the ruler of this world (John 12:31), the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4), the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2), and the one who deceives nations (Rev. 20:3).

These names and descriptions tell us how powerful, intelligent, clever and deceitful a creature Satan is. Don't write him off or consider him a pushover. Mighty as Satan is, nevertheless he is a creature, not a creator. All of us who are creatures, including Satan, have limits; God, the Creator, does not. Furthermore, creatures will have to answer to their Creator. By contrast, God is certainly not accountable to His creatures.

Since Satan was created, that means he is not eternal as God is. The Bible does not tell us exactly when Satan was created, but it does say that he was created (Ezekiel 28:13). Satan does not belong to the animal kingdom, nor is he human. He is an angel. It may sound strange to associate him with angels, for we naturally think of angels as good, helpful and desirable beings—whereas Satan is the exact opposite of all that is desirable.

More specifically, Satan is not only an angel; he is a cherub. Again, the word “cherub” brings up visions of goodness and attractiveness, so it seems incongruous to call Satan a cherub. But the Bible does (Ezek. 28:14). How can that be? Simply because when he was created, Satan was a desirable and attractive creature. Actually, he was perfect in all his ways, filled with wisdom and beauty (Ezek. 28:12,15). He possessed complete moral integrity, and God trusted Satan to guard His holiness.

Satan's Sin

But something terrible happened. The sinless, beautiful, exalted one sinned. The New Testament calls Satan's sin to be arrogance, conceit or pride (1 Timothy 3:6). Satan was not content with the position he had; his pride and ambition drove him to seek a higher one. But since only God was a greater being than Satan originally was, this meant Satan wanted to usurp the position and authority that God had. He tried to become like God himself.

Many believe Isaiah 14, beginning with verse 12, portrays Satan's sin. If so, then the details of Satan's first sin are described in five phrases that each begin with, “I will.” They are:

- “I will ascend to heaven.”
- “I will raise my throne above the stars of God.”

SATAN

The Nature of The Conflict

By Charles Ryrie

- “I will sit on the mount of the assembly in the sides of the north.”

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

- “I will make myself like the Most High.”

Even if we cannot understand the full meaning of these phrases, it is crystal clear that they express Satan's driving ambition to usurp God's position and authority. The last phrase, “I will make myself like the Most High,” tells us two important facts about Satan's goals. First, he wants to counterfeit God, for he desired to be “like” God, rather than unlike Him. (More about that later.) Second, Satan wanted to have the power and sovereignty over the universe that God has, for the name “Most High”

emphasizes strength and power (Genesis 14:18).

Satan's sin was all the more heinous because of all the privileges and trust that God had given him. To betray that trust made Satan even more blameworthy. Satan's sin has had wide-ranging effects. It affected other angels, it affects all human beings who have or ever will live, and it affects the nations and all the world.

Satan's Counterfeits

Satan will use any means he can to deceive us. But if he has a preferred method, he will try to pawn off a counterfeit on people. He will promote religion and good things, because these are better counterfeits than promoting godlessness and evil things.

Remember that Satan wanted to be “like” God, so we must not be deceived into thinking he will only promote evil things. Sometimes he does do that, but if he can do what he prefers, he will try to pawn off counterfeits on us. No wonder, then, that the Bible says, “Satan disguises himself as an angel of light...(and) his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness” (2 Cor. 11:14-15).

What are some of the ways Satan does that today? In the religious world he promotes any doctrinal system that appeals to man's intellect—and which, oddly enough, can lead either to asceticism or unbridled lust (1 Tim. 4:1-3, Rev. 2:24). But if he could choose, Satan would promote a powerless godliness (2 Tim. 3:5). Therefore unbelievers, particularly those who live good lives, are deluded into thinking they are acceptable before God.

Salvation through good works, then, becomes one of Satan's greatest and most successful deceptions. But he will use almost any kind of religion, that people want to believe, to blind them from seeing the truth of the Good News that Christ died for the sins of the world and that He alone is the way to the Father. “All roads lead to heaven” is Satan's gospel; but Jesus' true words are, “No man comes to the Father but through Me” and “The one who comes to Me I will never cast out” (John 14:6, 6:37).

I think Satan is more directly active in churches that don't preach

the true Gospel, than he is in taverns and saloons. I think he is more pleased with people who go regularly to churches that are liberal, or people who are involved in so-called "Christian" cults, than he is with people who have no religion. Those who have some kind of religion lull themselves into a false sense of security, while those who have no religion may sense "something missing" that could lead them to accept Christ as their Savior.

Satan and Believers

When a person believes in the Lord, that doesn't mean Satan gives up on him or her. He tempts believers in at least three particular areas:

1. Satan tempts us to conform to the lifestyle of the world (1 Thess. 3:5). He wants us to have goals and ambitions and mindsets similar to those of unsaved people. He does not want us to dedicate our lives to Christ, for then our minds will be renewed rather than conformed to the world's standards (Romans 12:1-2).

2. Satan tempts us to be selfish and then try to cover it up. That's what he did in the cases of Ananias and Sapphira. They wanted to pretend to be spiritual and generous, when in reality they plotted to keep part of their gift to the church for their own purposes. Keeping a part wasn't necessarily wrong, but to pretend they had given all to the Lord—when they were holding back part for themselves—proved their selfishness (Acts 5:1-11).

3. Satan tempts us to immorality (1 Cor. 7:5). God has given marriage as the place for expressing sexual needs. When those needs are denied proper expression within the bonds of marriage, that gives Satan the opportunity to tempt believers to illicit or perverted sexual sins.

Satan uses these three temptations, and anything else he can, to squelch the believer's testimony. He prowls the earth like a roaring lion, seeking to destroy our stand for Christ (1 Peter 5:8). The word "devour" is the same word used to describe how the Red Sea swallowed up the Egyptians when they were pursuing the escaping Israelites (Hebrews 11:29). It paints a vivid picture of Satan's desire to completely drown the believer's testimony and usefulness.

Don't ever think you can conquer Satan in your own strength. Remember he is an exceptionally powerful creature, he is widely experienced, and he has a host of demons to help him. Our means of victory include fleeing sins and putting ourselves in good company (1 Cor. 10:14, 2 Tim. 2:22); resisting Satan (James 4:7); and putting on the armor of God (Eph. 6:10-18). Though Satan may win skirmishes and even major battles, ultimately it is our Lord Jesus Christ who will defeat him forever. ■

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CONFLICT OF THE AGES

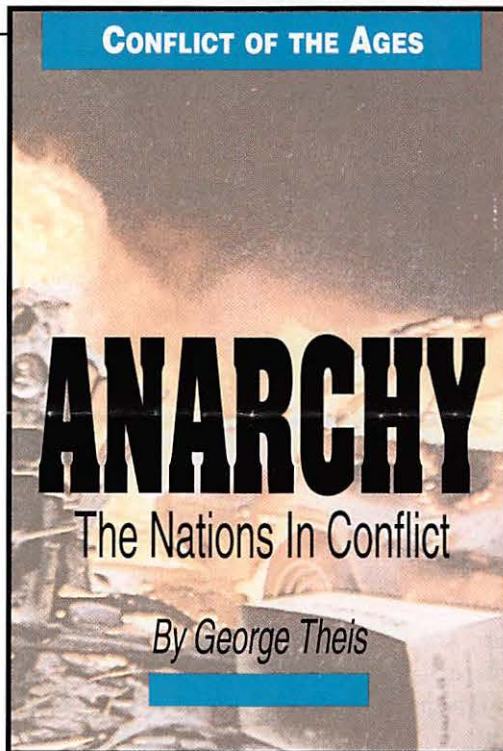
As we observe the conflict of the ages, the continual battle between God and Satan, good and evil, truth and error, light and darkness, morality and immorality, we are faced with an indisputable fact. The nations of the earth are but "drops in a bucket" (Isaiah 40:15) in the hands of God.

Yet throughout the ages, the nations of the world have been in conflict for world dominion, seeking to fill a void left by Adam's fall. When God made Adam, He gave him dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:28). But because of his disobedience Adam relinquished this right. Human history is the story of the conflict to regain that mastery.

What is a nation? How will the story unfold? The word "nation" actually means "heathen" or "gentiles." Everywhere we find the word "nation" in the Bible, we can translate it "heathen" or "gentiles." That is the term God uses to identify all nations except His chosen people, Israel.

World's Future Foretold

In the book of Daniel, there is some specific information about the gentile or non-Jewish nations of both the past and the future. Daniel lived



about 2,600 years ago. He was taken from his Jewish home, and carried off a thousand miles to Babylon, which is present-day Iraq. While in Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which is recorded in Daniel Chapter 2. Astoundingly accurate information about world history was given to Nebuchadnezzar in this dream from God.

During thousands of years, Israel had been the dominant force in history. Now a transfer of power is announced in this dream. Economic, military and religious power is taken from the Jewish nation and placed in the hands of a gentile ruler, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

In this dream, God explains that Nebuchadnezzar would rule the then-known world. However, after his death, Babylon would eventually be defeated by a second gentile nation, the Medes and the Persians—who in time would be

defeated by a third gentile national, the Greeks, who would then be deposed by a fourth gentile nation, the Romans.

The Roman Empire would decay from within and crumble. This empire would lose its international power for a time, and then after hundreds of years return to world power, only to be crushed and

destroyed by the return of Jesus Christ to Jerusalem. Christ will conquer all nations and sit on the throne of King David of ancient Israel. The Jewish nation, led by their Messiah, will then reign and there will be peace and prosperity on earth.

World's History Unfolded

Understanding Daniel Chapter 2 will give you wisdom the politicians and rulers of the world do not have. It will provide a Biblical perspective for finances, politics and military developments, and give spiritual insight into the world's problems.

To understand the conflict of the ages, you must understand the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream,

that God gives to the king through Daniel. The illustration above represents the figure of a great statue that Nebuchadnezzar saw, with a head of gold (representing Babylon), chest and arms of silver (Medo-Persia), belly and thighs of bronze (Greece), legs of iron (Rome), and feet of iron mixed with clay (Rome revived).

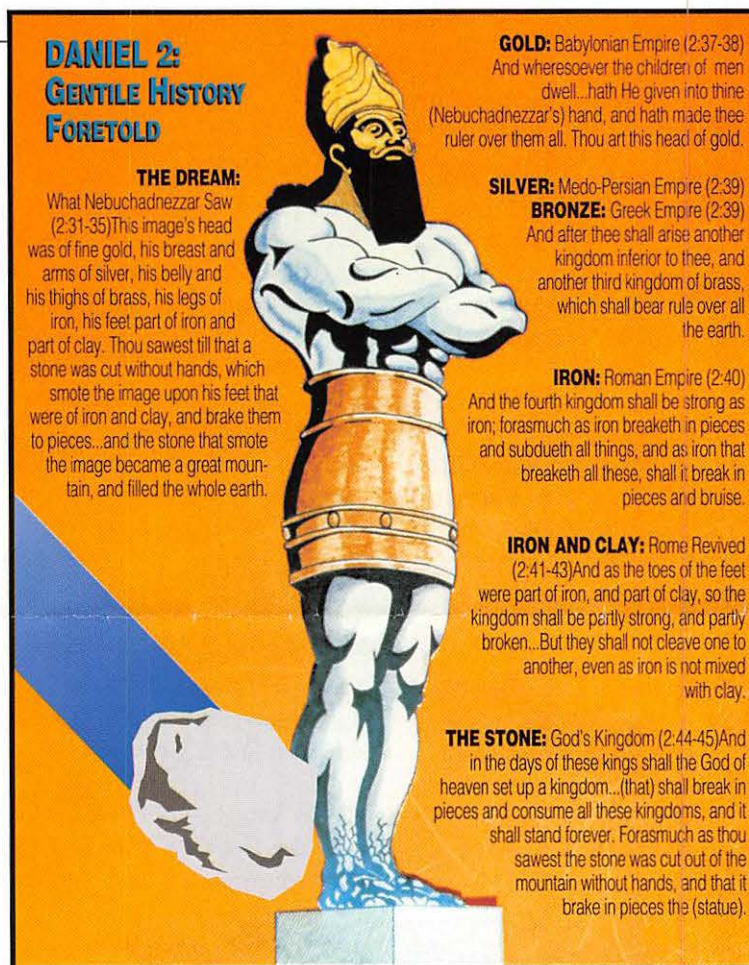
Now you may be thinking, "Okay, what does all this have to do with world dominion?" As God shared with Nebuchadnezzar the history of the gentile rule, he didn't specifically tell us about all the gentile nations. You don't find any definite mention of England, France, Brazil, Canada, the United States or many nations that are presently on the face of the earth.

Yet from the time Rome disintegrated until now, all the nations named above came into existence out of the ruins of the ancient Roman Empire. None of those nations has achieved world domination, but God tells us that there is coming yet another gentile world power, as shown by the feet of iron mixed with clay. It is going to be a weak, fragile federation of gentile nations, uniting to achieve world power and acceptance of their pagan, godless agendas.

"In the days of these kings," according to Daniel 2:44, God will send His Son, the Messiah of Israel, to shut down the anarchy that gentile rulers have made on planet earth, and then He will begin His Kingdom. Then and only then will there be true world peace.

World's Final Hour

You and I are watching the efforts of Europeans to build this fragile iron-and-clay union. President Bush has often referred to a "new world order." No, he doesn't realize this is the world's final hour, but is following counsel of men who think without any consideration of God's



DANIEL 2: GENTILE HISTORY FORETOLD

THE DREAM:

What Nebuchadnezzar Saw (2:31-35) This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces...and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

GOLD: Babylonian Empire (2:37-38) And wheresoever the children of men dwell...hath He given into thine (Nebuchadnezzar's) hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

SILVER: Medo-Persian Empire (2:39)

BRONZE: Greek Empire (2:39) And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

IRON: Roman Empire (2:40)

And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things, and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

IRON AND CLAY: Rome Revived

(2:41-43) And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken...But they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

THE STONE: God's Kingdom (2:44-45) And

in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom... (that) shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou sawest the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the (statue).

prophetic teaching.

The significance of the dismantling of the Soviet Union is overwhelming, as you consider this prophecy found in Daniel. As long as the Soviet military machine was in place, the European states needed Uncle Sam to keep the Communist armies from moving further west. Now there has been a tremendous shift in the balance of power, and Europe is flexing its muscles.

The United States finds itself in a tremendously difficult situation. Financially, we are bankrupt. Morally we are trying to duplicate Sodom and Gomorrah. Politically we find our leaders "leaning on their own understanding" and not willing to "trust in the Lord with all of their hearts," while our Supreme

Court makes it illegal to make even minimal public acknowledgement of God. Consequently there is "no direction for our paths."

Religiously, America has learned to be content with a "form of godliness while denying the power thereof." Domestically, our homes are in total disarray as we insist upon our "rights" to easy divorce, "free love," abortion (murder) on demand, condoms for our kids—to say nothing of the godless effects of organizations from Planned "Un-Parenthood" to the American Civil Liberties Union.

The gentile nations of the world today are represented in the feet of iron and clay of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. This will become the revived Roman Empire, the coalition of nations who seek world dominion, but will one day be shattered by God's Son, the Messiah of Israel, when He returns to earth. Christ's return is depicted in the vision of Daniel Chapter 2 by a huge stone that comes bolting out of heaven, then strikes and shatters the statue, even as Christ will crush the gentile nations into submission. The history of gentile world dominion will end and once again there will be a transfer of world power, this time from the gentiles back to God's chosen people, Israel.

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved," the apostle Peter challenges believers to consider "what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness (as you are) looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." (1 Peter 3:11-12). ■

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