

22nd January 2017

## The nature of Satan – Pt 3 Satan tempts and provokes believers.

In our previous studies on this topic we established that Satan is a deceiver and a destroyer. In this study we establish that Satan tempts, provokes and stands up against God's children.

Scriptures upon which this teaching is founded.

### 1. The devil tempts God's children.

"For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain" (1Thes.3: 5).

C.f. Matt.4: 1 & 3, Lk.4: 2, & 1Cor.7: 5.

The Lord Jesus and Paul both refer to Satan, the devil as the tempter, and Christ went into the wilderness and was tempted and Paul warned the believers about being tempted by him.

### 2. The devil stands up against God's children.

"And Satan stood up against Israel" (1Chr.21: 1).

Not only does Satan tempt us, but he stands up against us especially when we do the Lord's work.

### 3. The devil provokes God's children.

"And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel" (1Chr.21: 1).

Satan not only stands up against us but he provokes us to do that which is against God. In the example in 1Samuel Hannah was provoked by "her adversary...to make her fret, because the Lord had shut her womb" (1Sam.1: 6). Hence sometimes the adversary provokes us to do that which is not of the Lord and other times to become emotionally charged about something that perhaps is unnecessary to fret about (Lk.10: 41).

Additional comments on our three points.

"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (Jas.1: 14). And so we know that God does not tempt anyone but Satan provokes, as we see in the example of David where the devil provoked him to number the children of Israel.

Applying the teaching to our life today.

When a brother in the battle gets imprisoned for fraud and there is some truth to the allegations then it is likely that he was tempted or provoked by Satan to do that which he would normally not do.

Question to think about.

If Satan tempts and provokes us or perhaps stands in our way and we beseech the Lord in prayer and the tempting does not cease what can we do to cope?

My answer to our question from the scriptures.

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness..." (2Cor 12:7 – 9). Paul points out in the next verse that he takes "pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (verse 10).

Satan's purpose is to destroy us, and so little by little he wears us down, tempts, provokes and stands up against us. Therefore, to cope with such attacks, as hard as it is "having done all, to stand, stand therefore" (Eph.6: 13 & 14) in the Lord's grace and strength. For the devil will **never** stop tempting, provoking or standing up against God's children to incite them to sin.