

Making Jesus of Highest Priority (Unmasking Satan's deceptions - How Satan Tries to Make Jesus Useless)

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The Purpose of the Church

“To hold Jesus of highest priority as a member of the Godhead, enthusiastically embracing His teachings and testimonies and willingly obeying His commandments even unto death, and teaching others to do the same.”

“We willingly submit to Him in our lives joining with Him for the salvation of souls.”

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As we prepare for the end of time, especially spiritually, it is very important to understand what God is looking for in His end time people. Let us look at several consistent quotations from the book of Revelation. Pay special attention to the concepts of obedience to the commandments of God and those who hold onto word or testimonies of God or Jesus Christ.

Revelation 6:9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman [a symbol for God's church], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 14:4 [Regarding the 144,000] ... These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, [being] the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints: here [are] they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Revelation 19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See [thou do it] not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and [I saw] the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received [his] mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Revelation 22:14 Blessed [are] they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

Notice carefully from these verses that keeping the commandments of God, holding onto the words or testimonies of Jesus which are given through the spirit of prophecy (dreams or visions), who have the faith of Jesus to endure trials, are the traits of those who will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Putting it the opposite way, those who disobey or reject God's commandments or lessen their importance and/or reject the testimonies of Jesus as given through the spirit of prophecy (dreams or visions) will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

The most succinct unveiling of Satan's deceptions that I have ever found is found in one of the first books ever written. The context of the following quotation is very deep with several truths, but there is one line that we will focus on.

The First Book of Adam and Eve, Chapter 6 ¹

⁴ And the Lord said to Adam and Eve, ...

⁷ **But the wicked Satan did not keep his faith and had no good intent towards Me, that although I had created him, he considered Me to be useless, and sought the Godhead for himself;** for this I hurled him down from heaven so that he could not remain in his first estate -- it was he who made the tree appear pleasant in your eyes, until you ate of it, by believing his words.

When I read that passage, it blazed with the searing light of truth! The good Lord impressed upon me that that line **was the key to unlocking all of Satan's deceptions!**

But the wicked Satan ... considered Me to be useless, and sought the Godhead for himself;

Lock those words in your mind. Do you think that Jesus having hurled or cast Satan out of heaven for those reasons would allow anyone back into heaven who treats Jesus as useless, not listening to nor obeying Him, or seeks to replace Jesus on the Godhead? No way!

Here is a similar passage from the book of Isaiah.

Isaiah 14:12-15 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! [how] art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, **I will** ascend into heaven, **I will** exalt my throne above the stars [angels] of God: **I will** sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: **I will** ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will** be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.²

Notice the "**I will**" problems that Satan has. It's pure selfishness! And with that same spirit, he works to deceive men and women throughout history and especially as we enter the end of time.

Here is the key to identifying whether a teaching comes from God or the evil one:

Any teaching, ANYTHING that lessens the importance of Jesus, His creative power, His commandments, His words and testimonies as given through the spirit of prophecy (the Bible, the ancient scriptures, dreams or visions), or lessens the fear and reverence due Him, is from the evil one.

And as a corollary, a true prophet having dreams or visions is one who points to Jesus, encourages us to listen and hold onto the words of Jesus and teaches obedience to His commandments.

In a monarchy, who gets to make the laws? Who defines what is good and proper for the kingdom? Is it not the king? For a theocracy, is it not God?

¹ http://www.Bibleplus.org/endoftime/First_Book_of_Adam_and_Eve.pdf

² Psalms 48:2 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, [is] mount Zion, [on] the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

If you were to make up a game, are you not entitled to make up the rules by which one succeeds in or wins the game? Since God is the Creator of this earth, is He not entitled to make up the rules by which one may be reinstated to immortality, to eternal life?

If we want to be part of God's eternal kingdom, if we want to be transformed from beings of mortal flesh into the bright glorious immortal beings that was Adam's first state and that is the resurrection body that Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 15 and that John talks about in Revelation, then we need to hold to the words/testimonies of Jesus and obey God's laws and commandments!

Following is a sample list of deceptive teachings or philosophies that Satan works together with mankind to make the Jesus useless or reduce His priority, testimony, commandments in our lives. You will likely be able to come up with others.

1. Evolution - the lie and delusion of evolution removes the beauty and the importance of Christ as the Creator. Corollary: the belief that the earth is millions of years old, when the word of God (in the ancient manuscripts) states that God will restore Adam to his Eden after 6000 years of transgression)
2. Atheism that there is no God and therefore no Jesus Christ.
3. Agnosticism which teaches that we don't need to believe in a god, including Jesus Christ.
4. Pantheism. God is everywhere in nature, God is in everything, including you. In fact, you are god, therefore you do not need Jesus.
5. Mother nature as a goddess. Jesus is not needed as the Creator.
6. Hinduism. Many gods, but not Jesus, or add Jesus as a god to the many.
7. Shintoism and worship of ancestors. Ancestors take the place of Jesus.
8. Jewish religion which denies Jesus as the Messiah. They still look for another.
9. Islam which teaches that Jesus Christ was not the Son of God but simply a prophet removing him from the Godhead and through whom we are saved.
10. The teaching of intelligent design without incorporating Jesus Christ as the Creator.
11. Peace through enlightenment, yoga, antidepressants, marijuana, etc. These may bring a temporary feeling of peace that only lasts until that cause or stimulant is removed. True peace can only come through Jesus and all these others are distractions that remove one's focus and dependency on Jesus.
12. Reincarnation (the belief in a cycle of death and rebirth based upon your merits) removes the necessity of a Creator. If one is reincarnated, then the concepts of resurrection, judgment, hell, heaven, etc., are moot.
13. The teaching that all roads or spiritual paths lead to God and that anyone who believes otherwise is arrogant. Jesus said that the **only** way to the Father is through Him, and that strait (confining and restrictive) is the gate and narrow is the road that leads to life and few find it, while wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to eternal death and many go in by it. There is only one true way to eternal life and all the others lead to worship of one of Satan's demonic angels and thus to death.
14. The teaching that you can become a god or as God. (Brigham Young, a leader in Mormonism wrote, "As God was, so are we now; as he now is, so we shall be" 1849). Saying or role playing that you can become a god or goddess. The teaching that Jesus and Satan were brothers, debasing and putting the Creator on equal footing as the created. Both of these reduce the importance and deity of Jesus.
15. The substitution of demigods or cartoon characters such as the Marvel comic characters for that of Jesus or God. After all who needs Jesus when they have a Superman or Thor who makes no claim to

set moral standards or boundaries for the people they watch over? And who are subject to the same human vagaries and short comings.

16. Sorcery, that humans can accomplish unauthorized feats through the power of the evil ones, incantations, blood of children, casting spells, etc., negating the involvement of Jesus in doing miracles.
17. The substitution of Santa Claus with god-like characteristics. (He knows when you are sleeping, awake, good or bad, keeping records).
18. The elevation of Mary to the role that Christ has, in essence becoming a substitute for Christ. People pray to Mary and the Saints as opposed to praying directly to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ. This bypasses the beauty and sanctity of praying in the most powerful name in the universe, that of Jesus Christ. Jesus said that one can only get to the Father through Him.
19. Neglecting to end our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ lessens His importance.
20. Rejecting or refusing to believe God's messengers that He sends to us.
21. The priest as an intermediary to whom we confess our sins rather than going directly to the Father in the name of Jesus.
22. The priest who is able to create the Creator through the transmutation ritual of the mass reduces the importance of Jesus Christ and allows the created to become a creator of The Creator.
23. Pilgrimages to shrines and "sacred" places as a substitute for a real relationship with Jesus. Touching and venerating relics for potential healing rather than going to Jesus, the Master Healer directly.
24. The teaching of Christ-consciousness as a substitute for the person of Jesus Christ. This is a nebulous concept that is a smooth teaching as opposed to teaching the reality of the personhood of Jesus Christ.
25. The teaching that there is no need of obedience to the commandments of Jesus, that we *cannot* overcome sin in our lives, that grace covers everything even sins we hold on to and continue practicing. This reduces the importance of the power of Jesus in our lives to help us overcome sin. No one who holds onto cherished or "darling" sins, especially those of lifestyle, will be saved.
26. The teaching that all God's commandments are important except the fourth one, which states, "Remember." Remember Jesus as the Word of God, the Creator of heaven and earth. And so a spurious sabbath which God has NOT sanctified, whether Sunday or Friday is put forth as an acceptable substitute.
27. The teaching that none of God's commandments are important, that humanity and angels are perfect and incapable of sinning and thus ALL will have eternal life and immortality. This totally dispenses with the words of God that there is a coming Judgment Day, when all will have to give an account for the deeds done while in the flesh. "We all (including believers) will have to stand before the judgement seat of Christ."
28. The teaching that sin is unavoidable due to our fallen nature and not by choice and therefore sinful behavior is excusable and God won't hold us accountable for it. The truth is that we are born with a fleshly nature, not a sinful one, and are not accounted as sinners until we have reached the age of accountability. We CAN overcome sin in our lives through the power of Jesus that is available to us.
29. The teaching that prayer time or studying the word of the Lord is useless or not needed, or that being so busy or distracted that prayer or study time is neglected. This negates the reality that Jesus wants to be our friend, that we should communicate with Him as with a brother.
30. The teaching of "once saved, always saved," in the wrong context; i.e. that what one does after confession and claiming Christ as their Savior doesn't matter. The truth is that the Bible has three definitions of the word that is translated as "save:" 1) except, 2) helped, 3) transformed at Christ's

second coming from mortal being into immortal beings. When you see the word “save” or “saved,” determine from the context its proper meaning. Here are some examples: Peter called out, “Lord save me” (i.e. help me). “All who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (i.e. helped). “For by grace are you saved” (i.e. transformed into immortality) “through faith not of works, lest any man should boast.” “He who overcomes shall be saved” (i.e. transformed). Understand the difference: “once transformed, always transformed,” but not “once helped, always transformed.”

31. The teaching that “God is on trial” rather than sinful beings. This effectively reverses the true roles, removing Jesus from the godhead and places us on the judgment throne as a member of the godhead. Rather, we are to “Fear God and give Him glory.”
32. The teaching that if we just live a good life, we will be saved. Where is Jesus in this?
33. The teaching of universalism, that all will be saved no matter what they have done.

All these effectively remove Jesus from the picture and are Satan's attempt to render Him, His commandments, His words and testimonies useless. I am sure there are others that you can come up with.

True religion values Jesus, sees Him as the Way, the Truth and Life. It sees Him as the good Shepherd, the Door, the Water of Life, the Bread of Life, our High Priest, the Creator, our Redeemer, our Judge. It sees Him as the Creator, our Savior and Friend. It acknowledges that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

I appeal to you today,

- Will you make Jesus of highest priority in your life?
- Will you seek to know His word, His testimonies and hold onto them, even unto the giving up of your life?
- Will you obey God’s commandments, studying to know what those are?

If so, would you raise your hand? God will see you. He will help you. Let us bow our heads for prayer and pray together:

Our Father Who is in heaven, Jesus Christ, our Creator and Redeemer, we confess that we have been deceived by Satan’s teachings, we have believed what is wrong. But we come to you to ask for forgiveness, to ask Jesus to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Help us to hold Jesus of highest priority on our lives, to hold onto His word and His testimonies. Reveal to us your commandments and help us to obey them through the power of your Holy Spirit. Write your laws in our hearts. Apply to us the merits of the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross of calvary to save sinners. Help us to stand pure and true before you, faithful even unto death. And grant that we may see Jesus, face to face. We ask this in Jesus name and through His power, Amen.

TRUTH

Matthew 7:13-14 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide [is] the gate, and broad [is] the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because **strait [is] the gate, and narrow [is] the way, which leadeth unto life**, and few there be that find it. [strait means confining, constrictive]

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the **bread of life**: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

John 6:51 I am the **living bread** which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Matthew 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together **in my name**, there am I in the midst of them.

Matthew 18:4-5 Whosoever therefore shall **humble himself** as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child **in my name** receiveth me.

John 14:13-15 And whatsoever ye shall **ask in my name**, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall **ask any thing in my name, I will do [it]**. **If ye love me, keep my commandments.**

Bonus Quotation

Ignorance and self-sufficiency go hand in hand. The law of God has been given for the regulation of our conduct, and it is far reaching in its principles. There is no sin, no work of unrighteousness, that escapes the condemnation of the law. The great statute book is truth, and truth only; for it delineates with unerring accuracy the history of Satan's deception, and the ruin of his followers. **Satan claimed to be able to present laws which were better than God's statutes and judgments, and he was expelled from heaven.** He has made a similar attempt upon earth. Ever since his fall he has put forth efforts to deceive the world, to lead men to ruin, that he might be revenged upon God because he was overcome and thrust down from heaven. His efforts to **put himself and his devices where God should be,** are most persevering and persistent. He has taken the world captive in his snare, and many even of the people of God are ignorant of his devices, and they give him all the opportunity he asks to work the ruin of souls. **They do not manifest a burning zeal to lift up Jesus, and proclaim to the perishing multitudes, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"** (John 1:29).

Those who are unacquainted with the laws of God's government as expounded upon the mount, are unacquainted with the truth as it is in Jesus. Christ revealed the far-reaching principles of the law; He expounded every precept, and exhibited every demand in His example. He that knows the truth as it is in the law, knows the truth as it is in Jesus; and if through faith in Christ he renders obedience to the commandments of God, his life is hid with Christ in God.

The knowledge of the claims of the law would crush out the last ray of hope from the soul if there were no Saviour provided for man; but the truth as it is in Jesus, is a savor of life unto life. God's dear Son died that He might impute unto man His own righteousness, and not that he might be at liberty to break God's holy law, as Satan tries to make men believe. Through faith in Christ, man may be in possession of moral power to resist evil.

Selected Messages, Vol. 1, Ellen White, pp. 316, 317