

pany. Starting around the time of the Crusades, the interest of the Roman Church in promoting the earthly Jerusalem as a worldly city of peace has been strikingly parallel to Satan's. Both are drawing the attention of humanity away from our heavenly (eternal) hope and unto an earthly (temporal) hope.

The increasing evil, agitated and brought upon the world by Satan himself, is bringing about the need for 'someone' to exercise authority and control over downtrodden Jerusalem in order to please God and bring peace to it and all the earth. The Vatican is positioning itself to be that someone. Covertly, measures to accomplish this are moving forward.

Concerning this end-time power, prophecy in Daniel Chapter 11 declares: "And he ["the king" in verse 36] shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." (verse 45). This "king" is the Papacy and the "glorious holy mountain" is the city of Jerusalem (Dan. 9:16).

Soon events will transpire that will draw the attention of earth's population onto a 'divine like' being appearing as "an angel of light" and claiming to be the long looked for 'Messiah.'

The devil will use the Papacy and its allies to deceive the nations into believing that the Hope of Israel and the world has at last arrived. Says Scripture: "And I saw three unclean spirits

... For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty ... And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." (Rev. 16:13-14, 16).

In Isaiah 14:13 the Hebrew term translated "mount of the congregation" is the Greek term "Armageddon" This was originally a reference to the "heavenly Jerusalem." As noted earlier, having lost the war at Calvary, Satan plans to gather "the kings of the earth and of the whole world" to old Jerusalem where, enthroned as the professed king of heaven and earth, he will launch his last battle against the true God and His few faithful people who have refused to give their allegiance to this imposter masquerading as God. His attempt to destroy this "little flock" (Lk. 12:32) will be thwarted by the second coming of Christ from heaven (2 Thess. 1:6-10). The "present evil world" will be replaced by God's eternal kingdom (2 Pet. 3:13). ❖

**Published in 2022 by:**



**Adventist Laymen's Foundation  
of Iowa, Inc.  
P.O. Box 665  
Nora Springs, IA 50458-0665**

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## **CHRIST vs. SATAN**

### **■ The Cosmic Conflict Intensifies ■**

A global crisis is upon us! Climate change is affecting the entire world and the pace is growing steadily. Shifts in weather patterns are producing catastrophic conditions that are proving more disastrous by the day. Melting icecaps, rising sea levels, high category hurricanes, torrential floods, runaway wildfires, and record setting temperatures appear to be threatening the planet and life on it with intensified hardship. Unless humanity does something to reverse the situation, scientists allege that our lives as we know them will drastically change for the worse by the year 2100. This seemingly dismal outlook, however, fails to pinpoint the real cause of all this trouble. And that is human sin!

The worldview that is held nearly universally today is thoroughly humanistic. The idea that our moral orientation is responsible for the ills that were just described seem preposterous to most. Yet, truthfully, that is exactly what the real cause of the present crisis is. Humanism, though widespread, does not give us the genuine understanding of our existence. The only authentic account of this 'big picture' is found in Scripture, the Holy Bible.

What many do not realize is that the biblical worldview and our present humanist perspective are totally at odds with each other. Life did not just 'happen' by random chance. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). And while the Creator made humanity "in the image of God" (verse 27), our first parents rebelled against Him and fell under the dominion of another living being identified as "the serpent." (Gen. 3:1-6). What about this "serpent?" Was this just an animal? Why did this creature turn the first created man and woman against their maker?

The mastermind behind the serpent's actions was a powerful, spiritual being who had been created also by God at an earlier time before the creation of humans. Scripture records his beginning, purpose, and downfall:

"Thou art the anointed cherub (angel) that covereth; and I [God] have set thee so ... Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." (Eze. 28:14-15).

Though "perfect" and invested by God with the highest authority given to created beings, at some point something happened to him that brought "iniquity" (lawlessness, sin) into his heart. This angel (Lucifer) is further described as taking the following steps to usurp God's authority, His place of rule, and His worship:

"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 thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars 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." (Isa. 14: 12-14).

Originally, Lucifer wanted to "sit" (be enthroned with power) in the place of God in Heaven. Deceiving a third of the angelic hosts (Rev. 12:4), his dissatisfaction broke out into open **rebellion**:



"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." (Rev. 12:7-9).

Losing the **battle** to rule from "the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12:22), Satan's focus eventually became the

worldly Jerusalem, Israel's capital city. Hoping to secure the heavenly throne by ruling over the world on earth, Satan's aspirations were again thwarted by the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross. This decisive victory secured God's kingdom and His rule forever in heaven and earth. Though utterly defeated, Satan has refused to yield the contest. In desperation, knowing "that he hath but a short time" (Rev. 12:12), the Devil had to modify his 'master plan.' Ruling the world from the earthly Jerusalem is now his all-consuming ambition.

Through false christs, apostles, prophets, and teachers, he has infiltrated the Christian church under a pretended facade of righteousness: "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness." (2 Cor. 11:14-15). Under this deceptive cloak, these evil agencies are re-doubling their efforts to divert the attention of people from the heavenly to the earthly by using old Jerusalem, the former city of God, as a means for doing so.

Down through the ages of the gospel era, this satanic work continues to be carried forward by the great prophesied anti-christian power foretold all through the Bible. This false church, with a "man" at its head, has for centuries been identified by students of God's Word as the Roman Catholic Pa-