

Satan's Systems

Systems Engineer

Recall Satan's declaration in Isaiah 14:14: "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; *I will make myself like the Most High*" (emphasis mine). The fall of man allowed Satan to set up his own world that thrives on the power of sin to deceive and inflame the carnal passions of man. Satan's temptation of Jesus in the wilderness includes the following account:

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" (Matthew 4:8–10)

It is important to understand that Satan himself is deceived. He thinks he controls the kingdoms of this world and sets men in authority, but he does not. "God is the King of all the earth ... God reigns over the nations ..." (Psalm 47:7–8). God judges the nations with equity and guides them upon the earth (Psalm 67:4). Nevertheless, Satan continues to take advantage of the fall of man by masterfully infiltrating the kingdoms of this world with his systems that are powerful because of the deceitfulness of sin.

The following Scripture passages provide perspective on Satan's world and the power of the gospel:

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case *the god of this world* has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Corinthians 4:4; emphasis mine)

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following *the course of this world*, following *the prince of the power of the air*, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. (Ephesians 2:1–3; emphasis mine)

For though we [believers in Christ] walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ ... (2 Corinthians 10:3–5)

Satan is “the god of this world” and he is referred to as the “prince of the power of the air” because he holds power over the communication realm of those who are spiritually dead in sin. He blinds the minds of unbelievers and leads them along “the course of this world” which is absent the knowledge of God. The believer, alive in the light of Jesus Christ, constantly faces false information against the knowledge of God.

The apostle John warned us:

Do not love the world of the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15–17)

Satan desires to keep people trapped in their fallen sin nature by enhancing their unhealthy love for the things of this world. Mammon and religion are the two systems he uses to keep them there. The first enables the acquisition of them whereas the latter provides the deceptive cover to make people think they are right with God, inflaming their pride in self-justification.

Satan is not omniscient or omnipresent, but he does have a network of evil spirits (fallen angels) under his dominion. They promote the ideology of the systems while man provides the physical infrastructure for them. The interesting thing about these systems, as we shall see, is that they both have elements of good in them. This gives Satan the element of disguise while allowing them to gain widespread acceptance.

To summarize how this works: Satan’s goal is continued enslavement to sin, the systems are the wholesale methods of entrapment, and man creates the infrastructure for these to accommodate his love of sin. The system and the man-made infrastructure tend to become so intertwined that they appear to be the same. Also, both systems often become so intertwined that they appear to be the same. *They were designed this way because Satan’s ultimate goal is to bring everything together in the complete worship of him* which the book of the revelation of Jesus Christ reveals. Together, these systems were set up to create

socially acceptable ways to not follow God while appearing to. They were designed to be consuming alternate paths to following the voice of God.

Mammon

Mammon, the English translation of the Greek word, *mamonas*, was a common Aramaic word for “riches.” This definition comes out in Jesus’ declaration:

“If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous *wealth* [mammon], who will entrust to you the true *riches*?” (Luke 16:11; emphasis mine)

Wealth is not inherently evil, however, the potential benefits from having it can entice to sin. People are driven to serve it as they seek “the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life.” It is thus a powerful tool that Satan uses to keep people off God’s path.

Let us examine the *full context* of Jesus’ teaching surrounding mammon; doing so elucidates Satan’s use of mammon as a system:

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. *You cannot serve God and money [mammon].*”

“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was

not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6: 19–34; emphasis mine)

(Note that the English Standard Version translates mammon as “money.” I prefer to use the term “money” when referring to it practically and “mammon” when referring to the spiritual system.)

Jesus’ summary point was to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” Conversely, Satan has an informational flow in his system of mammon designed to get man to “seek first the kingdom of self and your own desires.” It is all about directional leadership. The eye is a portal to the soul. The eye is what sees and desires. Satan’s network provokes it with images to lure the imagination to unhealthy desires, lusts, and pride. These may “speak” to our imagination. We must shut them up! An unhealthy desire for money fills the soul with darkness and enslaves it. The apostle Paul warned:

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. (1 Timothy 6:10)

God reaches out in love. We are to be led by His voice. God’s “word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105). *If we are obeying His voice, our heart will have already followed*, and we will be walking firmly in the light of Christ. In the proper pursuit of Him, our treasure will be in heaven and our economic status will not matter.

God has *designed* a road with material supplies for those who follow Him. This is why Jesus’ referred to elements of nature. Birds and flowers reveal the graceful design embedded in Creation for provision. There is nothing man can do, even great and wealthy men like Solomon, to better the provision that God has ordained for those that order their lives after Him. Provision has been created for man in Christ and it comes with peaceful contentment. Understanding this, reveals the Satanic intent behind the system of mammon: motivate man to seek his own desires, a futile dark path paved with anxiety.

The system of mammon does not come upon a man all at once for if he was to see the end from the beginning, he may seek to serve God. It comes upon him slowly, one life decision after another. *As a man learns how to serve mammon, he learns how not to serve God.* Mammon can thus become a heavy burden that is hard to get out from under.

Discerning Mammon

Believers often stumble over money as if it is the problem. It is *never* the problem. The issue with money is not the material aspects, it is leadership and motivation. When a man loves God above all and *obeys His voice over all*, then there is nothing wrong with money. However, when money captures his heart and *begins to speak and direct his life*, then there is a problem. If money keeps a believer from doing what God says, then he is the problem, not money.

Mammon is a broader, transcendent system that uses money to give life to desires to produce motivations. In one respect, money can become like an idol that the system animates, not unlike ancient idols that people worshipped believing that they were animated by spirits who would bestow certain benefits upon them in exchange for their worship. If these motivations are followed contrary to the Spirit of God, then the system takes a leadership role in the believer's life, which is sin.

Wealth can be used to glorify and honor God. Expensive items can reveal the creative gifts given to man by God. At the same time, some would defame the name of their (supposed) Lord for \$10, yet alone those who allow a high paying job derail an alternative calling from God. Without discernment from the Holy Spirit and fruit inspection, you cannot know if a person is serving God or mammon by the outward appearance.

When persecution comes against Christians, its initial form is often economic. Satan's network imposes the pressure of mammon so those whom are weak in the Lord may compromise the truth. Many of us have had to choose obedience to the Lord—putting our faith in Him for provision—over selling out for a lifestyle that subjugates God to money. The system of mammon essentially works its sting in one of two ways. It *infects believers* by causing them to compromise their relationship with God to maintain or secure money and it *keeps sinners* who fashion their lives after its dictates enslaved to it and separated from Jesus Christ.

Religion

In his letters to the Colossians and Galatians, the apostle Paul introduced a concept called the “elemental spirits” or “elemental principles” of the world. Let us examine the relevant Scriptures concerning this:

See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to *the elemental spirits of the world*, and not according to Christ. ...

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head, ...

If with Christ you died to *the elemental spirits of the world*, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations—“Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh. (Colossians 2:8, 16–19a, 20–23; emphasis mine)

In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the *elementary principles [spirits] of the world*. ...

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn your back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles [spirits] of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? You observe days and months and seasons and years! I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain. (Galatians 4:3,8–11; emphasis mine)

Elementary spirits or principles need to be defined. There is scholarly debate about whether or not there is a connection to demonic spirits, as implied by Paul’s statement “you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods,” or whether this concept simply refers to rudimentary religious practices. I think it is both which also strengthens the usage of both “spirits” and “principles” as English translation descriptive variants. Allow me to explain.

Paul was writing to believers who were previously enslaved to demonic spirits portrayed as “gods” that were often associated with the elements of nature. The worship of these gods was accompanied by religious rituals. Elsewhere Paul explained:

Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. . . . they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator (Romans 1:22–23, 25)

There is no doubt that the world’s religious systems, which keep people from eternal salvation, have a Satanic origin. Satan’s religious systems deceive people into creation worship and religious activities that attempt, in vain, to put a veneer of godliness on man’s fallen nature. His network pulls people into religious systems that hopelessly enslave them into trying to make something “good” out of their corrupted nature and the fallen creation.

On the other hand, a people who recognize and are convicted of their sinful nature often begin following religious practices out of a *sincere* desire to atone for it. These actions are not done under the leadership of demonic spirits, however, the religious systems that they look to for help are engineered by Satan. Furthermore, some weaker believers are also drawn back to worthless religious traditions for various reasons, which was the primary focus in Paul’s letters. This explains why there are both demonic elementary spirits and elementary (religious) principles.

Satan provides the intellectual framework for the world’s religious systems—ensuring that they keep people from the freedom, simplicity, and salvation that can only come through Jesus Christ. This is clearly juxtaposed with Jesus’ own assertion:

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)

Satan has craftily structured the world’s religious systems to be enemies of the Son of God. This aspect comes out in John’s teaching concerning the spirit of the antichrist:

Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. I write to you,

not because you not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? *This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.* Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life. (1 John 2:18–25; emphasis mine)

John's focus was on knowing Jesus Christ through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Notably, he mentioned how many false teachers came out of the real church after rejecting the truth.

Paul went into more detail about Satan's apostles:

But I am afraid that *as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning*, your thoughts all be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims *another Jesus* than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a *different spirit* from the one you received, or if you accept a *different gospel* from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough. ... For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. *So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.* Their end will correspond to their deeds. (2 Corinthians 11:3–4, 13–15; emphasis mine)

The “light” component is essential to Satan's religions. His leaders consequently “disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.” The elementary principles they promote have “an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion” to gain widespread acceptance and adoption by the world. Although they are painted as forces of good, they are really *systems* characterized by enslavement (of the soul), complexity, and fruitless man-made doctrines and requirements. They are given plenty of freedom from the demonic realm to care for the physical needs of people *as long as they do not interfere with them actually knowing the real Jesus Christ.* It is critical to recognize that Satan has many false apostles under the influence of demonic spirits that preach a different Jesus.

Jesus provided the following warning:

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? So every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the

diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, *and do many mighty works in your name?*’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you *workers of lawlessness.*’” (Matthew 7:15–23; emphasis mine)

Jesus called these people “workers of lawlessness.” The Greek word, translated here in English as “lawlessness,” is *anomia*. Paul used the same word to refer to the antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:3,7). Notice Jesus said these people will say to him, “Lord, Lord, did we not ... do many mighty works in your name?” These are people that are focused on works but they are not born-again (John 3:3). It is no coincidence (to speak as a man) that the teaching in the second paragraph comes directly after that in the first. These people are the fruit of false prophets. They are striving to enter heaven with good works but they do not know the real Jesus. They have another Jesus. They are like the scribes and Pharisees that Jesus rebuked saying: “So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and *lawlessness*” (Matthew 23:28; emphasis mine).

Some born-again believers are part of compromised, so-called “Christian” religious networks that are in this realm. It is hard for them to accept the Satanic nature of these systems. It is important to keep in mind that Satan himself will not hesitate to use the Bible as part of the deception, for his desired end (hell) justifies any means. When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness he quoted Psalm 91:

And he [Satan] took him [Jesus] to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written,

“He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.” (Luke 4: 9-11)

Willfully taking the Word of God out of context and using it for selfish pursuits fails the “fruit test” that Jesus instructed us to use. This is a prominent sign of false Christian religious systems.

Some of the key markers of a false religious system are:

1. the leadership of man (often by coercion),
2. a motivation of fear for not adhering to protocol, and
3. doctrines that do not hold up to the whole counsel of God.

These are in direct contrast with:

1. the leadership of Jesus Christ through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit,
2. a motivation of faith and dedicated service to the King, and
3. sound Biblical interpretation (through the Holy Spirit).

I will not dwell further here on following the real Jesus Christ since it is the foremost substance of True Vine Life.

The Quintessential Example

Roman Catholicism puts on a great show all around the world but is a system that is directly opposed to the real Jesus Christ. It provides a convenient global network for many who refuse to reckon with the truth of God's word and still want to maintain that they can be good enough to atone for their sin. Its Satanic theology is diametrically opposed to the grace of God and the Biblical fact that righteousness can only come through faith in Jesus Christ. It is structured so that a man can appear to know God, *thus justifying himself*, yet die in his sin and spend eternity in hell.

Moreover, Roman Catholicism appears to have been the target of Paul's warning:

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, who *forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods* that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer. (1 Timothy 4:1–5; emphasis mine)

Roman Catholicism is the quintessential example of a counterfeit "Christian" religion that Satan has set up to keep people bound by the deception of elemental principles. Its overwhelming scourge of perversion is an obvious failure of Jesus' fruit test (Matthew 7:16–20)!

Roman Catholicism's religious nature is outward and obvious. Conversely, Satan also has religious systems that are just as "religious," but far more subtle. The theory of evolution has been absorbed by the scientific community. This false atheistic lie that cloaks itself in science, yet lacks observable truth, undoubtedly came from Satan but man has run wild establishing the educational infrastructure. The heart of the matter is that Evolution gives people that love sin a convenient lie to use to reject God. In this case, both systems actually work together. On one hand, atheism is a religion (belief system)—even though it lacks the traditional religious configuration—but on the other hand it is also a system of mammon because professors continue to teach the false theory for fear of losing their job (money) and position (intellectual pride).

Conclusion

The more one observes these systems through the lens of the Holy Spirit, the more one sees that they have a common Satanic designer who desires to control the souls of men, keeping them from the glory of Jesus Christ who is the image of God. Satan wants to be like the Most High. He wants to be the God of man and his systems are aligned to this end.