

Pentwater Bible Church

Christmas Message
December 20, 2020



The Nativity by Geertgen tot Sint Jans. cir 1490

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher



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SATAN TRIED TO STOP THE MESSIAH FROM COMING

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As we celebrate the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to this earth it is important that we become aware of the intense heavenly struggles that took place to block His arrival. Satan has made many attempts to stop our Lord from arriving on earth as a man to accomplish His task. Christ delivered us from Satan's slavery to living freedom when we believe in Him as our savior. The measure of the wealth of God's unmerited favor to every believer is the cost of Christ's blood. It was accomplished not "out of" but "according to" the wealth of His grace. We are redeemed through His blood from our sin. Christ prevailed and, because of this, today we can celebrate His birth.

When Halal a.k.a Lucifer fell he became Satan ("adversary" in Hebrew) and polluted the heavenly realm with the sin he brought in to God's presence (Isaiah 14:13-14). He then entered the Garden of Eden, and through lying, enticed Eve to defy God. In this manner Satan became "the father of lies" because he originated lying (John 8:44). This single act brought sin into the earthly realm and into the heavenly realm as well. Eventually Satan convinced one-third of the angels to follow him and rebel against God Almighty (Revelation 12:4).

Jehovah God sent Himself, in the body of a man, to atone for the sins of the world. As a suffering servant, His suffering reached a level of pain before and during the crucifixion that we couldn't imagine as He bore the sins of the world and the spiritual realm as well (Isaiah 49-57). In the cosmic realm Satan tried all he could to prevent Christ's crucifixion. But Christ battled with the powers of darkness, and won the war (Luke 22:53). The death He experienced cleansed the heavenly tabernacle, which Lucifer polluted with his sin and fall, as well as providing for the salvation of all who would believe the gospel of Christ (Hebrews 9: 23-26; II Corinthians 5: 21). This is why the Lord Jesus had to come to earth. He had to go to the cross and provide the cleansing of the heavenly and earthly realms. Satan has not given up and we see many instances in Scripture where he tried to stop the Messiah from arriving to accomplish His task. Satan's tactics would include lying about what God says, and polluting the Messianic family line with occultism if he could not kill them. Satan would also use the lust for political power to destroy the Jews as well as turn rulers and members of the chosen seed family against each other in another attempt to kill off the seed line of the Messiah. It is some of these efforts by Satan that we will examine and see how the Christ prevailed. We must remember that Satan is the force behind all evil in this world.

SELECTED SCRIPTURAL ACCOUNTS OF SATAN'S ATTEMPTS TO STOP GOD'S PLAN

THE CORRUPTION OF ADAM'S LINE (GENESIS 6)

The apostle Paul, who recognized that demonic warfare was taking place in the spirit world, warned us that we were the objects of their wrath (Ephesians 6: 10-13). After Satan's success in the Garden of Eden, the next attack by Satan to prevent the coming of the Messiah was the series of events recorded in Genesis 6:1-5. Jewish scholars clearly understood this passage to be a union of angels and humans, which produced a corrupt line of humans known as the Nephilim. This was the cause of the Great Flood, to eliminate these monsters and restart the human line through which Jesus would come. The Lord Jesus warned His disciples that similar events would transpire when He was about to make His second coming to the earth and told them, and us, not to be deceived (Matthew 24: 4, 37).

ABRAHAM'S SEED (GENESIS 12, 20)

Attempts to eliminate the family line that would produce the Messiah centered on Abraham, the patriarch of the Jews. Abraham foolishly endangered the Messianic line by lying twice about his relationship to Sarah his wife. At two different times, once in Egypt (where he went against God's direction), and a second time in Gerar of Canaan, the kings of these realms had taken her into their harem unaware that she was already married to Abraham. Twice both of them could have been killed when the truth was found out, but the Lord provided the means of escape both times.

THE POPULATING OF CANAAN (GENESIS 12:6)

Abraham sojourned in Canaan at the Oaks of Terebinth, which was a well-established place of intense pagan worship and occultic practices. Although Abraham was in close physical proximity to this center of pagan worship, he did not participate with them. Instead God came to him and made the everlasting Abrahamic Covenant with him. This revelation and intervention preserved the purity of the Messianic line.

FAMINE (GENESIS 42)

Famine came into the world and again threatened to terminate the family line of Abraham's grandson, Jacob, in Canaan. They would have died out had the Lord not intervened and caused the events that brought Joseph and then the rest of the family down to Egypt to survive and then thrive.

DESTRUCTION OF MALE LINE (EXODUS 1)

Satan, through Pharaoh Thutmose II, enslaved the Jews to stop the Messianic line from developing. Enslavement was only partially effective so Pharaoh decided to enact a more aggressive policy of infanticide. The king's instructions were explicit to the midwives: male babies were to be killed and female infants kept alive. The midwives, who feared

God, disobeyed Pharaoh and under threat of death delivered the male babies alive to preserve the seed line.

PHARAOH'S PURSUIT (EXODUS 14)

As the Hebrews left Egypt in the Exodus following a series of miracles brought on by God, Pharaoh chased them with his army. As Pharaoh's armed troops approached, the Jews became fearful because they were trapped between the Red Sea and a vicious foe behind them. Then the angel of God, who guided them, moved from the front of the Israelites to the rear to protect them from the charging Egyptians. The angel shifted from guide to guardian! All through that night the pillar of cloud, which also had moved to the rear to be between the two camps, brought such darkness that military advance was impossible for the Egyptians. That night God performed another miracle by splitting the sea by a strong east wind and drying the sea floor. While the wind kept the sea floor dry and the sea split, the Israelites walked through the sea bed to dry land on the other side. However when the Egyptians came after them, God commanded the sea to return to its original state and drowned the entire Egyptian army. Again the Messianic line was preserved.

AGAINST DAVID'S LINE (II SAMUEL 7)

King David decided on his own that he would build the Lord a temple. It is clear from the context that this refers to a literal house and not a dynasty. This was premature in the Lord's timing; in fact it was not God's will for David to build Him a temple at all. If David forged ahead with Nathan, the prophet's, authorization it would have been contrary to God's plan. Satan had obviously tricked Nathan into thinking that this was the Lord's will. Nathan initially had a favorable response to David's desire but this was changed by the Lord's visit to him. Because the Lord Himself intervened, Nathan rescinded his words to David. David was instructed not to build the temple at this time, but his son after him would have the honor of doing so.

David was of the family of Judah, the great-grandson of Abraham who was given the pledge that the Messiah would come through him (Genesis 49:10). Instead of David building a Temple, God would build a royal house, which would be a dynasty of kings that originated with David. It would be a kingdom that would never end; the kingdom and its throne would be permanent, a realm over which the Son of David (The Lord Jesus) would reign forever. So again Satan attempts to lead God's people astray, but the Lord intervenes to make sure the Messianic line is preserved for the kingdom reign.

JEHORAM KILLS HIS BROTHERS (II CHRONICLES 21)

As King Jehoram of Judah came to power, he killed his brothers along with others of the royal family, perhaps because of his close ties with the wicked rulers of the northern Israel. He too would suffer a cruel death after a brief reign of only eight years. Despite

Jehoram's personal evil, however, the LORD did not destroy the nation, for he remembered his everlasting covenant with David, that David's line would continue forever. Satan tried again to stop the family line by causing Jehoram to kill his brothers, but not the entire Messianic line. God intervened and killed Jehoram and allowed Jehoram's sons to remain alive.

ARABIANS SLEW ALL BUT AHAZIAH (II CHRONICLES 22)

Satan sent a group of Arabians to Jerusalem to kill the sons of the King Jehoram to break the Messianic line, and only Ahaziah the youngest survived. As a king he was wicked and died in battle with Jehu's army, the king of the Northern kingdom. The king's servants buried him in Jerusalem (2 Kings 9:28). In addition to murdering the two kings, Jehu almost annihilated the royal families of both Israel and Judah (2 Chron. 22:8; 2 Kings 10:1-14). The Lord preserved another Satanic attempt to destroy the seed line by preserving the life of Ahaziah's youngest son Joash.

ATHALIAH KILLS ALL BUT JOASH (II CHRONICLES 22)

Jehu was in power in the north; and there was no male survivor in the Davidic dynasty except Joash, an infant son of Ahaziah back in Jerusalem. Ahaziah's wicked mother Athaliah took the throne and started a bloody massacre to exterminate the royal family, which would have ended the Messianic line. Then Jehosheba, Ahaziah's sister, hid her baby nephew from the queen, and spared the infant Joash's life, Ahaziah's son. He was kept in safety until the six years of Athaliah's reign ended (841-835 B.C.).

BLOOD CURSE ON JECONIAH

The kings of the southern kingdom had declined in morality, and one of the most interesting enigmas in Scripture emerges from the blood curse that God pronounced on Jeconiah (also known as Coniah):

Jeremiah 22:28-30

²⁸ Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? ²⁹ O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. ³⁰ Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah (KJV).

The Messiah was prophesied to come from the royal line of David, but with a blood curse on the royal line of Jeconiah this could not happen. God always keeps His word. How can the Messiah come from the royal line that is now subject to a blood curse? God gives us the answer through the differing genealogies of Christ recorded in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Matthew, as a member of the Tribe of Levi, focuses his gospel on the Messiahship of Jesus and presents Him as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Thus, Matthew

traces the legal line from Abraham through David, then through Solomon to Jacob the father of Joseph, the legal stepfather of Jesus.

On the other hand, Luke traces the bloodline from Adam (the first Man) through to David and his genealogy from Abraham through David is identical to Matthew's. But after David, Luke departs from the path taken by Matthew and traces the family tree through *another* son of David (the second surviving son of Bathsheba), Nathan, down through Heli, the father of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary was a virgin and therefore not subject to the blood curse. Even though the text of our Bibles in Luke chapter three say Joseph is the son of Heli, he clearly can't have two fathers; Heli is Mary's father. Scriptural evidence to explain the substitution is given in Numbers 27:1-11 and 36:1-12.

Jesus Genealogy According to Matthew			Jesus Genealogy According to Luke		
1. Abraham	15. Solomon	29. Shealtiel	1. God	27. Hezron	53. Addi
2. Isaac	16. Rehoboam	30. Zerubbabel	2. Adam	28. Ram	54. Melchi
3. Jacob	17. Abijah	31. Abiud	3. Seth	29. Amminadab	55. Neri
4. Judah	18. Asa	32. Eliakim	4. Enosh	30. Nashon	56. Shealtiel
5. Perez	19. Jehosaphat	33. Azor	4. Kenan	31. Salmon	57. Zerubbabel
6. Hezron	20. Jehoram	34. Zadok	6. Mahalalel	32. Boaz	58. Rhesa
7. Ram	21. Uziah	35. Achim	7. Jared	33. Obed	59. Joanan
8. Amminadab	22. Jotham	36. Eliud	8. Enoch	34. Jesse	60. Joda
9. Nahshon	23. Ahaz	37. Eleazar	9. Methuselah	35. David	61. Josech
10. Salmon	24. Hezekiah.	38. Matthan	10. Lamech	36. Nathan	62. Sem
11. Boaz	25. Manasseh	39. Jacob	11. Noah	37. Mattatha	63. Mattathias
12. Obed	26. Amon	40. Joseph	12. Shem	38. Menna	64. Mahath
13. Jesse	27. Josiah	41. Jesus	13. Arphaxad	39. Melea	65. Naggai
14. David	28. Jeconiah		14. Kenan	40. Eliakim	66. Hesli
			15. Shelah	41. Jonam	67. Nahum
			16. Eber	42. Joseph	68. Amos
			17. Peleg	43. Judah	69. Mattathias
			18. Reu	44. Simeon	70. Joseph
			19. Serug	45. Levi	71. Jannai
			20. Nahor	46. Matthat	72. Melchi
			21. Terah	47. Jorim	73. Levi
			22. Abraham	48. Eliezer	74. Matthat
			23. Isaac	49. Joshua	75. Heli
			24. Jacob	50. Er	76. Mary
			25. Judah	51. Elmadam	77. Jesus
			26. Perez	52. Cosam	

Normally inheritance came through the sons. The daughters of Zelophehad had petitioned Moses for a special exception to the inheritance law since they were the only surviving relatives in their family. This was granted to them when they entered the land under Joshua. The one exception to the law in which inheritance is permitted through the daughter is if no sons are available, and she married within her tribe. The pure blood of Christ relies upon this peculiar exception granted to the family of Zelophehad in Numbers chapters 27 and 36. Heli, Mary's father, apparently had no sons, and Mary married within the tribe of Judah. Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, of the house and lineage of David and carrying legal title to the line, but without the blood curse of Jeconiah. The Greek text of the Luke passage is marked to indicate that Heli is Mary's father. Joseph clearly cannot have two fathers.

HAMAN'S ATTEMPTS (ESTHER 3)

Mordecai was the single Jew in the Persian King Xerxes' court. Mordecai's job was to represent the Jews and translate the king's orders for the Jewish community. Haman, also

close to the king, wanted to kill Mordecai for not bowing to him when ordered to do so, because Mordecai said that he, a Jew, does not bow to Haman.

In the story, Haman and his wife Zeresh instigate a plot to kill all of the Jews of ancient Persia. Haman attempts to convince King Xerxes to order the killing of Mordecai and all the Jews of the lands he ruled. Killing Mordecai would not solve Haman's problem because a new Jewish representative will take his place and will also not bow to him. So Haman decided to kill the whole nation of Mordecai, including Mordecai himself, and then there will be no need for a new Jewish representative, who might not bow to him. The plot is foiled by Queen Esther, the king's recent wife, who herself is a Jew. Haman is hanged from the gallows that had originally been built to hang Mordecai. The Lord used Esther to intervene and save the entire Jewish nation and thereby preserve the Messianic line to Jesus.

JOSEPH'S FEARS (MATTHEW 1)

In the ancient days of the Jewish marriage practices, the engagement was considered to be an integral part of the marriage. So much so that any sexual activity during or outside of the engagement period was considered adultery, which could be punishable by death. When Joseph heard that Mary was pregnant by the Holy Spirit he wanted to privately and quickly break the engagement. This would have given Jesus the status of bastard and therefore disqualified her baby from a Jewish legal perspective as the Messiah. Satan had obviously convinced him that Mary's story of being visited by the angel Gabriel and pregnant with the Holy Spirit was unbelievable. It was only through God's intervention that Joseph believed the story and stayed with Mary, which gave Jesus a Jewish legal mother and father in an earthly sense. Satan's plot was again foiled.

HEROD'S ATTEMPTS (MATTHEW 2)

King Herod was an insecure man. He was also not Jewish. He was from Edom and was a half-Jew at best. The occupying Romans put him on the throne. One of the worst persecutions that Herod orchestrated was the killing of the young male children as recorded by Matthew chapter 2. Herod was threatened that a true King of the Jews would replace him when the Magi met with him to locate the baby Jesus so that they could worship Him. Scripture explains that Herod was troubled and all Jerusalem with him over the Magi's visit. This is not grammatical hyperbole. The ancient Magi were a hereditary priesthood of the Medes credited with profound and extraordinary religious knowledge. Herod consulted his chief priests and scribes to find out what the Scriptures said about the location of the birth of the Messiah. He relayed the Bethlehem location (Micah 5:2) to the Magi then followed that with a request for them to come back to him to verify the Messiah's location. This was under the guise of Herod "worshipping" Him too. When the Magi were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, he realized that he

had been tricked and ordered all male children less than two years of age in Bethlehem and its environs to be slain. Joseph, Jesus' stepfather was also warned in a dream and went to Egypt for safety.

CONCLUSION

There are many more attempts that could be demonstrated from Scripture where Satan tried to stop the birth of the Messiah. He was not able to prevail and we are clearly shown that the Lord God will *always* prevail and His enemies will not. Our Lord was born on exactly the day the Lord prophesied in Daniel 9:27. Here the Bible predicts that the Messiah will be on earth in 483 years from the time of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem after the last siege of the Babylonians in 586 B.C. King Artaxerxes issued that decree to Nehemiah in about 444 B.C. Some believe that this decree was made at an earlier date. In any event, counting out the exact timetable of the 183,880 days described in Daniel chapter 9 puts the timing of the appearance of the Messiah within Jesus' lifetime. Satan could not stop Jesus from coming and nobody will stop Him from coming back.