

god and worships it; he makes it a carved image, and falls down to it. He burns half of it in the fire; With this half he eats meat; he roasts a roast, and is satisfied. he even warms himself and says, 'Ah! I am warm, I have seen the fire.' And the rest of it he makes into a god, his carved image. He falls down before it and worships it, prays to it and says, 'Deliver me, for you are my god!'"

How can we be so blind as to think that something humans have made with their own hands can do anything for us?

But Satan has other tools. He knows that humans are innately aware of the mighty power of God, the Creator of ourselves and of all that exists. Satan twists this awareness and uses it to deceive the masses. They follow his lead and look for some astounding miraculous power that would be representative of God. They become superstitious, believing in charms and amulets — again, lifeless things. But they believe that the “power” behind them is some “god” or “witch doctor” who does chants and incantations, and pronounces blessings or curses.

Whether these men maintain control over people through fear or superstition, or through the body’s susceptibility to the power of suggestion, would vary from situation to situation. Jesus also warned in Matthew 24:24 that there

would be false religious leaders who would arise “and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.”

“Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Woe to the women who sew magic charms on their sleeves and make veils for the heads of people of every height to hunt souls! Will you hunt the souls of My people .. and will you profane Me among My people ... killing people who should not die, and keeping people alive who should not live, by your lying to My people who listen to lies?’

“Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against your magic charms by which you hunt souls there like birds. I will tear them from your arms, and let the souls go, the souls you hunt like birds. I will also tear off your veils and deliver My people out of your hand, and they shall no longer be as prey in your hand. Then you shall know that I am the LORD” (Ezekiel 13:19-21).

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Idolatry and Witchcraft

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A strong part of the underlying consciousness of humans is the reality of God and of His power. The Scriptures say in Genesis 1:26, “*Let Us make man in Our image ...*” The result was the imprint of moral truths in our souls, as well as the void that can be satisfied only when it is filled with a living relationship with God.

There are those who refuse to believe in the existence of God, and the amazing thing is that many of them spend their entire lives focussed on trying to disprove what they insist doesn't exist! Who, in his right mind, would waste his life fighting a non-existent thing?

But no matter how He is denied and mocked, God doesn't go away. He can be seen in everything around us, because there is no viable explanation for the universe except a Cause mighty enough to create such an Effect.

The Advent of Satan

The arch enemy of God is Satan, a spirit being who was created by God. Ezekiel 28:12-19 describes this one who was “*the anointed cherub who covers ...*” Evidently he was anointed as the ruling angel over the angelic host. God said, “*I established you; You were on the*

holy mountain of God; ... You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.”

Isaiah 14:12-15 further identifies the pride and sin that resulted in Satan's fall from such an exalted position: “*... How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground ... For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; ... I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'*”

Revelation 12:7-9 tells us that “*... war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*”

We are warned, “*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*” (1 Peter 5:8).

Because Satan knows that it is embedded in the human spirit to worship, he has made false religion one of his most effective tools. Histori-

cally, there have been countless “gods” and “goddesses” worshiped throughout the world. Today, after forgiveness of sins and the salvation of the human soul was made possible through the death of Christ on our behalf, Satan has taught endless confusing doctrines and created thousands of phony churches, parading these things as being of God. Such confusion blinds the masses from ever seeing the truth of the strait and narrow way described by Christ in Matthew 7:13,14.

God forbade the making of any image to be worshiped as “god”. Whatever God has forbidden, Satan pushes; whatever good thing God has asked of humans, Satan has tried to twist and destroy with his lies. In the Devil's deception of man, he has made idolatry the heart of the false religions he has created.

God appealed to our common sense by explaining in Isaiah 44:9-20 the foolishness of idolatry: “*Those who make an image, all of them are useless, And their precious things shall not profit; They are their own witnesses; **They neither see nor know**, that they may be ashamed. Who would form a god or mold an image that profits him nothing?*”

He further describes man's use of a tree: “*... he will take some of it and warm himself; Yes, he kindles it and bakes bread; Indeed he makes a*