

THE FIRST PREDICTION OF DEATH: GOD'S MESSIAH VS. MAN'S MESSIAH MARK 08:31-33

Introduction – Utopia

Man aches and searches for Utopia, for a messiah, for a saviour who can bring Utopia to earth. But there is a critical point to note. God's Messiah and man's messiah differ. (Mk. 8:27-9:50; 9:30-32; 10:32-34; Mt. 16:21-23; 17:22-23; 20:17-19.)

- I. The way of God's Messiah (v. 31).
- II. The way of man's messiah (vv. 32-33).

I. *Mark 08:31 Messiahship of Jesus Christ; Death and Resurrection*

The way of God's Messiah. The disciples had just made the profound confession that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God. At this point Jesus launched a new stage. He began to indoctrinate them into the way of God's Messiah, for God's Messiah was not man's messiah (Mk. 8:27-9:50). Note several things.

1. The phrase "He then began to teach them" is significant. Mathew says, "From that time on"; that is, from the time of the profound confession that Jesus is the Messiah - beyond question the Messiah - something significant happened. A new stage was being launched. He revealed with a powerful thrust that the "Son of the living God" was going to be killed and raised again from the dead. Never before had this happened. Never again would it happen. History would be made. "Jerusalem...you who killed the prophets" would now commit the ultimate crime: Jerusalem would kill God's own Son (see Mt. 23:37).
2. Jesus had been telling His disciples about His death and resurrection for some time. But they had not understood. First, the idea of a suffering Messiah differed radically from their own idea of the Messiah (See *Christ, Messiah*, Mt. 1:18, Part 1, Page 1; *Baptism of Jesus and John*, Mt. 3:11, Part 1, Page 2; *Prophecy Fulfilled*, Mt. 11:5; *Messiah and Judgement*, Mt. 11:6; *Jesus, No Publicity*, Mt. 12:16). And second, the revelation had been hidden in pictures and symbols.

John 2:19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

John 3:14 "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up."

John 6:51 “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

The difference now was that Jesus no longer spoke in pictures and symbols. He told them in simple and direct words (Mt. 20:18-20; Lk. 18:31-33). A new stage in the revelation of God's plan for the world was now to take place: God's Son was to die and be raised again for the sins of the world. God's plan for saving the world was to take place through a suffering Messiah, not a conquering Messiah. God's Messiah was not going to deliver a materialistic world into the hands of His followers. Contrariwise, He was to die, and His death was to usher in the Kingdom of God, making it possible for His followers to live eternally in the very presence of God Himself (See Jn. 3:16; Jn. 5:24f).

3. The words *must* [dei] *suffer* are strong. *Must* is constraint, an utter necessity. (See *Death of Jesus Christ*, Acts 2:23.) It was absolutely necessary by the very nature of the case for Jesus to suffer. God is love and man is corruptible, so God, in love, must provide salvation for man. But God is also just, so He must provide salvation in such a way that justice will be done. The penalty must be paid; death must be carried out. Some *Ideal Man* must die for man so that His *Ideal Death* can stand for and cover all men (see notes, *Son of Man*, Jn. 1:51; *Justification*, Rom. 5:1). There is only One Ideal Man: Jesus, the Son of God. The Son of God must become the Son of Man, the Ideal Man:
 - => He must live a perfect life providing for the world the Ideal Righteousness or Ideal Life.
 - => He must die, providing for the world the Ideal Death.
 - => He must arise from the dead, providing for the world the Ideal Resurrection.
4. The words “suffer many things” include much more than just the sufferings surrounding His death. This is often overlooked. Hebrews 5:8 makes this clear: “All though he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered.” However, the point is not seen unless one acknowledges the truth of the word *Son*, that is, Jesus' deity. Jesus is *the Son of God* who left the very presence of God. He left heaven with all the majesty and splendour, glory and worship, praise and honour due Him. He is *the Son of Heaven*, but He became the Son of a woman. He belonged in heaven, but He was present on earth. He had ruled in the perfect, incorruptible world, but He was now a servant in this imperfect and corruptible world. Every sight, sound, touch, taste – every experience and awareness was a world of distance from what He had known. He suffered through every moment

and through every experience. Every experience drained “power” out of Him, for He always had before His face the truth and glory of heaven and the sin and corruption of earth.

5. Jesus' prediction of His resurrection is clear to us because we can look back upon it. But it was never clear to His disciples. Why? Very simply, it was to be a new experience. No one had ever risen from the dead, not a person who was never again to die. It had never happened before; it was unprecedented. Perhaps the disciples believed somewhat like Martha, that there was to be a future resurrection of all men (Jn. 11:24-26). Such a belief was an expression of the hope that is within every man, the hope to continue, on in some form of existence. Such a belief is easy to hold. But to think of an immediate resurrection, to think of a person's arising from the dead today is difficult (just think about it). The idea of the Messiah's dying and arising from the dead would be almost unimaginable to those who had not been taught the truth.

Just what the disciples thought Jesus meant by “being raised again” is not known. The fact that they did not fully understand is clear from the fact that their spirits were crushed when He was killed. But some of His followers seemed to grasp more of a real bodily resurrection than others. This is clear by an immediate remembrance of His words after His resurrection. For example, there was John who did believe immediately (Jn. 20:8-9); there was Mary Magdalene who was shown that He had risen (Mt. 28:6). However, others were slower to understand and believe (Mk. 16:11; Jn. 20:24-25).

Acts 26:22-23 But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen – that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles.”

1 Cor 15:3-4 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance : that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

2 Cor 5:15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

1 Pet 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.

MATHEW 11:05 PROPHECY FULFILLED

Jesus was referring to Scripture here. He was telling John that He was fulfilling the predictions of the prophets (Isa. 35:5-6; 61:1-2; see Psa. 72:2; 146:8; Zec. 11:11). Note, however, that Jesus stressed the personal ministry and *not the political*. He omitted the phrases of Isa. 61:1 that could be interpreted that He was a political leader: “proclaiming freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.” He needed to get John’s attention away from the wrong concept of the Messiah to the true concept. He was reaching out in the power of the Spirit to individuals, saving and restoring them, not reaching out to mobilize people for the deliverance of Israel from Roman enslavement. □

MATHEW 11: 06 MESSIAH AND JUDGMENT

Jesus was saying that the Messianic blessing and judgment were coming. Today is the day of salvation, the day of Messianic blessing. Tomorrow will be the day of Messianic fire, the day of judgment against all those who are offended in Christ. The Messianic fire of judgment was John’s concern. He did not see Christ’s judging the world. But Christ assured John: “Blessing is coming; and *judgment is coming*. Do not be offended because you do not understand everything about me.” □

MATHEW 12:16 JESUS, NO PUBLICITY

Why did Jesus withdraw and charge the people not to make Him known?

1. Jesus wished to avoid confrontation with those who sought His life. His hour had not yet come. He did not wish to provoke the religionists to a deliberate conflict putting Himself in premature peril.
2. Jesus did not wish to be pushed forward by public acclaim to assume kingship of the nation. He understood His mission. He had come first to be the Suffering Servant, and He knew that the people were inflammable, aching for deliverance from the Roman conquerors. Too much promotion of His miracles might cause an uprising. He had to prevent an uprising so that He might carry out His mission of dying for the world as the Suffering Servant. Jesus needed time to teach the people what true Messiahship meant. The people thought the Messiah was to overthrow the Roman conquerors

and establish Israel as one of the great nations of the world. Jesus had to show that the Messiah's kingdom was spiritual, not material; present and future, not just present; permanent and eternal, not just mortal and temporal.

3. Jesus needed to teach humility. He refused to make a spectacle, to "be seen of men" (v. 19).
4. Jesus wished to give an example of the principle He had laid down: "When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another" (Mt. 10:23). □

ACTS 02: 23 THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. Acts 02:23

This verse is saying a most significant thing. Jesus' death was planned by God *due to man's wickedness*. God planned Jesus' death, planned for Him to die upon the cross, but He planned it *because of man's wickedness*. Note two points.

1. Jesus was crucified and slain by wicked hands. Men are sinful, wicked, depraved, and selfish.
 - => They want to go their own way.
 - => They want to do their own thing.
 - => They want to control their own lives.

Therefore, they rebel and fight against God, against surrendering to God, against...

- following God's way
- doing God's thing
- allowing God to control their lives

It was this corruptible nature of man that rebelled against God's Son and crucified Him.

2. The "set purpose and foreknowledge of God" saved man. God knew man, what was in man (see Jn. 2:23-24). He knew exactly what men would do to His Son. He knew they would kill His Son. But in the counsel and advice of His knowledge – in consideration of all the possibilities – God knew something

else as well: the way of death, the way of the cross was the best way to save men. And being God, He was bound to choose the best way. So God determined to use the best way possible, the death of His Son to save the world.

John 03:14-16 *“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

Rom 5:6 *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.*

Rom 5:8 *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Gal 1:4 *Who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.*

Heb 9:28 *So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

1 Pet 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

3. The Scripture dealing with God's purpose.

a. God's purpose concerns Christ.

Acts 2:23 *This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.*

Acts 4:28 *They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.*

b. God's purpose concerns believers and salvation.

Acts 13:36 *For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed.*

Heb 6:17 *Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.*

Eph 1:11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.

c. God's purpose concerns God's plan for the world.

Acts 20:27 For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

d. God's purpose concerns those who reject Him.

Luke 7:30 But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John. □

II. **Mark 08:32–33 Messiahship**

The way of man's messiah. Note the word *plainly* (parresia). It means openly, unmistakably, frankly, without hesitation (Mk. 8:31). Jesus literally indoctrinated His disciples with the fact and meaning of His death. He talked about it so much that it shook the apostles, so much so that they had Peter to confront Christ. Note three points.

1. Natural man rejects God's Messiah. He rebels at the idea of the cross. He wants another way other than the cross. This is what Peter was doing: rebelling against the idea that *God's Son* was to die, that His blood was to be shed for the sins of the world (1 Pet. 2:24). Peter could accept Jesus as *the Son of the living God*, but not as the Suffering Saviour. Such an idea was repulsive and unacceptable to him. Therefore, he tried to stop the idea. Peter did two things.
 - a. Peter *took Him* (proslabomenos). The Greek is strong. It means *caught hold*. Peter took hold and grabbed Jesus. Peter bodily took Jesus aside for a conference.
 - b. Peter *began to rebuke* [epitiman] *Him*. This again is strong. It is not just a wish, but a forcible attempt to stop the idea of the Suffering Saviour: "This shall never happen to you! (Mt 16:22). This must not and cannot happen to you." *God forbid* is the equivalent idea. Peter was out to stop the cross. He was urging Jesus to be the Messiah of power, fame, and sensation that the Jews were expecting (Mk. 8:27-9:50; 8:30; Mt. 1:1; 1:18; 3:11; 11:1-6; 11:2-3; Lk. 7:21-23). Peter was urging Jesus to follow his own human schemes instead of God's way. And by such, he was tempting Jesus with the very same compromises that Satan used to tempt Jesus, the compromises of power, fame and sensations (Mt. 4:1-11).

Peter was zealous for God, but He was mistaken and ignorant in his zeal. He did not understand that God was planning to save the world through the death of His Son (Mk. 8:31).

Peter's behaviour is the way of the world. It is the natural, carnal, worldly mind. Man just rebels and recoils against the idea of a Suffering Saviour who dies for the sins of the world, a Suffering Saviour who demands the same sacrifice and denial of His followers. Such an idea is unacceptable and repulsive.

Thought 1. The natural man's idea of God and of God's plan for man is seen in three concepts.

- 1) Some think the path of life is an indulgent love. God is seen as a giving, loving, indulgent *grandfather type* of person. He is seen as One who tolerates (and rewards by accepting) even the worst behaviour, no matter how much human suffering and devastation is wrought by the hands of a person. To think of the cross and the blood of Christ as an emblem of suffering is repulsive. The cross is viewed only as an emblem of love, not of sin and shame. The way of love is thought to be the path of life that man is to follow.
- 2) Some think that comfort and pleasure are the path of life and God's way. God again is viewed only as an indulgent *grandfather type*. His will for man is to have *the good life* of things: comfort and pleasure, ease and plenty, health and leisure. And again the cross is only an emblem of love and care for the world, not of suffering and sacrifice and self-denial. Its shame and pain and agony and its purpose of reconciling a world lost in sin and depravity are denied.

Luke 8:14 *"The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature."*

Luke 12:19 *'And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"*

1 Tim 5:6 *But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.*

2 Pet 2:13 *They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, revelling in their pleasures while they feast with you.*

Isa 47:8-9 *"Now then, listen, you wanton creature, lounging in your security and saying to yourself, 'I am, and there is none besides me. I will never be a*

widow or suffer the loss of children.' Both of these will overtake you in a moment, on a single day: loss of children and widowhood. They will come upon you in full measure, in spite of your many sorceries and all your potent spells."

- 3) Some feel that triumph, victory, power, and reigning supreme are God's way. This was the idea of most Jews in Christ's day. It was Peter's concept of the Messiah (See *Christ, Messiah*, Mt. 1:18; *Baptism of Jesus and John the Baptist*, Mt. 3:11; *Prophecy Fulfilled*, Mt. 11:5; *Messiah and Judgement*, Mt. 11:6; *Jesus, No Publicity*, Mt. 12:16). Applying man's ideas to his emotional and mental state of being, as well as to his physical and material being, is revealing. The ideas show how some view the concepts of *Self-Image*, *Self-Improvement* and *Personality Development* as being God's plan and path for man. Again, the idea of suffering and sacrifice and self-denial is rejected.

Mat 20:25-27 *Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave."*

John 5:44 *"How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God."*

1 Cor 8:2 *The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know.*

1 John 2:16 *For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world.*

Rev 3:17 *You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.*

Psa 49:12 *But man, despite his riches, does not endure; he is like the beasts that perish.*

Prov 16:18 *Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.*

Prov 26:12 *Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.*

2. Natural man is of Satan. The literal meaning of the name Satan is *Adversary* (See *Satan*, Rev. 12:9). Calling Peter "Satan" was stern, yet such sternness was necessary. Peter was tempting Christ with the very same temptation Jesus had

faced in the wilderness (Mt. 4:8-10). All the world's glory that could be His flashed across His mind. The loyalty and allegiance of men without the cross was again being suggested to Him. How this must have cut the heart of Jesus! This time the temptation was coming from one of His own disciples. When a man refuses to accept God's plan for life, he becomes an adversary to God. He opposes God's will. In essence the man says that he knows what is best: he is *wiser* than God. Think! When a man does not accept God's plan for life, the crux of what he says to God is, "The cross is not necessary. Jesus' death to save the world is a useless plan. It is not needed."

This is what Peter was doing and saying. He was opposing God's plan for life, that is, opposing the salvation of the world through the death of God's Son. Peter was saying that he was wiser than God. Note: Jesus abruptly turned to Peter before Peter could say anything else and stopped him in his tracks. He charged Peter with being Satan, with being under the authority of Satan, with speaking for Satan. He had become as Satan, an adversary against God's plan for His Son and for the salvation of the world.

Acts 13:10 "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?"

John 8:44 "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

Eph 2:2 In which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

1 John 3:10 This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

3. Natural man sets his mind on material things, not on the things of God. The words *you do not have in mind* (ou phroneis) mean to think, to mind. Peter did not have his mind, his thinking, in line with God's mind and thoughts.

His tastes were different from God's tastes. Peter's thoughts and tastes were worldly and self-pleasing, not spiritual and not pleasing to God. He was using

human reasoning, not God's reasoning. The death of God's Son by shedding His blood for the sins of the world was distasteful to Peter. In his mind such a concept was unfit for God.

Note Jesus' words to Peter and how true they are: "You do not have the things of God, but the things of men." The death of Jesus reveals man's true nature, a nature that uses natural and worldly reasoning instead of spiritual reasoning.

Rom 8:5-7 *Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.*

Eph 4:17 *So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.*

Phil 3:18-19 *For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.*

Col 1:21-22 *Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.*

Titus 1:15 *To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted.*

Psa 94:11 *The LORD knows the thoughts of man; he knows that they are futile.*

Jer 4:14 *O Jerusalem, wash the evil from your heart and be saved. How long will you harbour wicked thoughts?*

Thought 1. Jesus was tempted to bypass God's will for His life. And note: the temptation came from a disciple. We are often tempted to bypass God's will, and unfortunately, the temptation often comes from friends! They may mean well; they may want to save us from the difficult path of trouble, sorrow, and trials. Nevertheless, their suggestion to bypass the cross is not of God. It is of Satan.

Thought 2. Note Peter's testimony after Jesus' death and resurrection.

1 Pet 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you.

1 Pet 1:18-19 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

1 Pet 1:21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

1 Pet 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

1 Pet 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.

1 Pet 4:1 Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. ■

REVELATION 12: 09 SATAN

*The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. **Revelation 12:09***

Satan is called “the great dragon...that ancient serpent.” His name is *Lucifer*. He was probably one of the highest angels ever created by God, but he fell because of selfishness and pride (Isa. 14:12; cp. 1 Tim. 3:6; Rev. 12:3-4; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; 1 Pet. 5:8). He is “an angel of light” with such deceptive and seductive power that even some ministers follow him, ministers who “masquerade as servants of righteousness” (2 Cor. 11:14-15). Throughout Scripture Satan is described as follows:

1. He is “the god of this world” who blinds men’s minds (2 Cor. 4:4).
2. He is “the prince of this world” (Jn. 12:31; 14:20; 16:11) and “the ruler of the kingdom of the air” (Eph. 2:2; 6:12).

3. He is Satan, which means the adversary (1 Chr. 21:1; Job 1:6; 2:1-6; Zec. 3:1; Mt. 4:10; Mk. 1:13; Lk. 4:8; Jn. 13:27; Acts 5:3; 26:18; Rom. 16:20).
4. He is the devil, which means the slanderer (Mt. 4:1, 5, 8, 11; Lk. 4:2-6, 13; 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 20:2).
5. He is the deceiver of the whole world (2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9).
6. He is the tempter (Mt. 4:3; 1 Th. 3:5).
7. He is the evil one (Mt. 6:13; 13:19, 38).
8. He is the father of lies (Jn. 8:44).
9. He is the accuser of our brothers (Rev. 12:10).
10. He is a murderer (Jn. 8:44).
11. He is called Beelzebub (Mt. 12:24; Mk. 3:22; Lk. 11:15).
12. He is called Belial (2 Cor. 6:15).
13. He is called Abaddon (Rev. 9:11).
14. He is called the angel of the Abyss or bottomless pit (Rev. 9:11).
15. He is called Apollyon (Rev. 9:11).
16. He is called the enemy (Mt. 13:39).
17. He is called the gates of Hades (hell) (Mt. 16:18).
18. He is called an enormous red dragon (Rev. 12:3).
19. He is called a lying spirit (1 Kng. 22:22).
20. He is called that ancient serpent (Rev. 12:9; 20:2; cp. Gen. 3:4, 14; 2 Cor. 11:3).
21. He is called the dominion of darkness (Col. 1:13).
22. He called the prince of devils (Mt. 12:24).
23. He is called the ruler of this dark world (Eph. 6:12).
24. He is called the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient (Eph. 2:2).
25. He is called the evil spirit (Mt. 12:43).

Satan's purpose in making war against God is twofold.

1. Satan's purpose is power and worship, to receive as much of the power and worship of the universe as possible (Isa. 14:12-17; Ezk. 28:11-17). He goes about this in three ways.
 - => He opposes and disturbs God's work in the world (Isa. 14:12-17; Ezk. 28:11-17; Job 1:6; 2:1-6; Mt. 4:10; Mk. 1:13; Lk. 4:8; Rev. 12:7-9).
 - => He discourages believers through various strategies (Lk. 22:31; Eph. 6:10-12).
 - => He arouses God's justice against people by leading people to sin and to deny and rebel against God. And when they do, God's justice has to act and judge people to the fate of their choice: that of living with Satan eternally (Mt. 12:25-26; Jn. 13:31-32).
2. Satan's purpose is to hurt and cut the heart of God. Why? Because God has judged and condemned him for rebelling against God. Therefore, Satan does all he can to get back at God. The best way he can do this is to turn the hearts of people away from God and lead them to sin and to follow the way of evil.

However, Christ has broken Satan's power by two acts (Jn. 12:31-32; 16:11; 8:44; Col. 2:15).

1. By never giving in to the devil's temptation (Mt. 4:1-11) and by never sinning (2 Cor. 5:21). Christ overcame sin. He was righteous: He was perfect.
2. By destroying the devil's power of death. Christ was not held by physical or spiritual death (Heb. 2:14-15). He arose and ascended to God's right hand.

It is for this reason that the Bible says "the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 Jn. 4:4); and again. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). □