



The Planter

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March 2006

Know Your Enemy

All The Thanks Belongs To God

“Now thanks be to God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ, and makes manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are to God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life. Who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.” (2Co. 2:14-17).

This proclamation of victory begins with the recognition that all graciousness and thanks belongs to God. This is true because the Lord is become our salvation. (Ps. 118:14). We did not ransom ourselves and we never could have paid our debt of guilt. Yet, while we were living contrary to God and unable to help ourselves, Jesus Christ died for us. (Ro. 5:6). Our deliverance did not result from our doing the right thing or even from our making the correct decision. It was while we were dead in trespasses and sin that God demonstrated his great love for us. For Jesus Christ died for us while we were still sinful. (Ro. 5:8; 2Co. 5:14).

All of our righteous works are as filthy rags before the Lord. (Is. 64:6). We cannot now, or could we ever, overcome sin and death with righteous works or obedience to a set of rules. (Ga. 2:16). Even if we had been able to keep the whole law of Moses, and were considered blameless, it would have at best been counted, as table scraps to be thrown to the dogs. (Phil. 3:6-8). However, while we were contentious and adverse to God, he gave us his uniquely begotten son, Jesus. Moreover, it is through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ that we became God’s friends. This is truly amazing when one considers that very few people would die to save the life of someone else and those who might give their life for another person would probably do it for a good person, but would never consider dying for an enemy. However, it was while we were enemies, adverse to God, that he reconciled us to himself through the death of his Son. (Ro. 5:6-10; 2Co. 5:17-21; Eph. 2:1).

It is God who initiates this good work of redemption and reconciliation within us, and he also consummates it by bringing our full deliverance. (Phil. 1:6). It is by grace that we are being delivered through faith, none of which is our accomplishment, but it is all the gift of God (Eph. 2:8-9). Moreover, it is Jesus, who authored and perfected the faith. (He. 12:2). It is God who divinely influences our hearts and causes the changes to become visible in our lives. God accomplishes it all and nothing is gained through our own efforts, because if it were we would boast in our own accomplishments. Let us recognize that we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus upon the good works that he accomplished, and these works God prepared beforehand so we could walk in them. (Eph. 2:10).

God once said, “*Let the light shine out of the darkness!*” (Ge. 1:3). This is the same God who made his light shine in our hearts by revealing his glory in the presence of Christ. Moreover, God deposited the treasure of the Christ life into our very earthen lives. We are like clay jars that hold a treasure. This illustrates that the power of our deliverance is from God, not from us. (2Co. 4:6-7; Col. 1:26-28). God invested himself into the creation and his investment will not return to him void. Isaiah declared, “*The rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and does not return there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, SO SHALL MY WORD BE THAT GOES FORTH FROM MY MOUTH. IT WILL NOT RETURN TO ME VOID, BUT IT WILL ACCOMPLISH WHAT I PLEASE, AND IT WILL PROSPER IN THE THING FOR WHICH I SENT IT.*” (Is. 55:7-11).

The apostle John received a prophetic thought that gives us understanding of Isaiah's prophecy and Paul's revelation. He wrote, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, AND THE WORD WAS GOD. He was in the beginning with God and all things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF HUMANITY. NOW THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS, BUT THE DARKNESS CANNOT OVERPOWER IT. THAT WAS THE TRUE LIGHT, WHICH ILLUMINATES EVERYONE THAT COMES INTO THE WORLD. AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH, AND TABERNACLED AMONG US. And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the uniquely begotten of the Father, FULL OF GRACE AND OF TRUTH.*" (Joh. 1:1-5, 9, 14). The Word that both Isaiah and John wrote about is the same Light that was revealed to the apostle Paul that first became incarnate in Jesus Christ and now tabernacles in us.

Jesus came as the uniquely begotten seed of promise and revealed God's glory, for he was full of GRACE and TRUTH. (Joh. 1:14). In God's appointed season, the Word fell into the ground of our adamic earthiness and died so it would not abide, as a single seed. This unselfish act of God's love produced a multiplication and increase of the Christ seed. (Ps. 22:30-31; Is. 53:10). Moreover, the seed of Christ guarantees what God began will also come to completion. That is, through the offering of God's uniquely begotten Son, Jesus Christ, many seed are produced to set all creation free from the groan and anguish of corruption. (Joh. 12:24; Ro. 8:19-23; Gal. 3:16, 29). Yes, all thanks be to God, for he alone deserves the praise, honor and glory.

THE TRIUMPHANT PROCESSION

Thus Paul writes, "*Now thanks be to God, WHO ALWAYS CAUSES US TO TRIUMPH IN CHRIST.*" (2Co. 2:14). At first glance one might have a difficult time relating to this statement. For more often, than not, we do not "*feel*" like we are "*always*" triumphant in Christ. The church is filled with envying, strife, and division, which are all carnal and not at all Christlike. The condition existing within the church today is much like the church of Corinth in Paul's day. Moreover, the Judaic teachings of the church often keep us focused on our individual failures and not on the hope that is resident within us. That is, every time we raise our voice in anger we immediately think, "*This is not being triumphant in Christ.*" If for a fleeting moment an unclean thought flashes through our mind, we are taught to instantly condemn ourselves for being a failure. Yes, there are moments that we feel triumphant, but all too often we are hanging our head in shame, asking, "*Where is the triumph that Paul says we always have in Christ?*" On the other hand there are those who choose to simply live in denial of their carnal habits and shortcomings, professing themselves to be what they are not able to manifest.

What Did The Apostle Mean?

It is because of this kind of thinking that I began to search out what Paul could have meant by the statement, "*God always causes us to triumph in Christ.*" The Greek word, translated "*triumph*" in this passage is only found one other time in the entire Bible. That reference is in the Book of Colossians where Paul writes, "*God enlivened us together with Christ Jesus, having forgiven us all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. He has taken IT out of the way, having nailed IT to the cross Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, TRIUMPHING OVER THEM IN THE CROSS.*" (Col. 2:13ff).

The word triumph, used in these two passages, is a Greek military term. It speaks of the victorious procession that took place after a Roman general and his army liberated a region from the oppression of an enemy. While the intention of the Roman army was to defeat an enemy they did not want to slay them all. The goal was to take as many captive as possible and make them slaves. Thus the army would come into an area and conquer their enemy, setting the oppressed free. After the victory was completely won the triumphant general would strip his foes, binding them up in fetters or shackles, and lead them, as captives, behind his chariot throughout the villages and cities of the region, making a open show of them in a VICTORIOUS PROCESSION. In both of these passages this term is used, as a metaphor. It describes how Christ Jesus stripped the powers of darkness of their control over the lives of humanity and now leads them making AN ACCLAMATORY PROCESSION FOR ALL TO SEE.

Did A Dead Man Win The TOTAL Victory?

The Book of Colossians tells us that Jesus triumphed in the cross. Now this is foolishness, as far as the wisdom of this world is concerned. It also becomes a stumbling block to those who are religious minded and believe that there is something they must do to make Calvary a success. (1Co. 1:23). After all, how many really believe *A DEAD MAN* could win the complete victory?

However, the Father took the very thing, which to natural thinking is totally absurd and made it the wisdom humanity lacks. That is, Jesus Christ crucified, to the religious minded, becomes a stumbling block, while to those who trust in the wisdom of the world the cross becomes foolishness. However, to those who are called of God, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is both the power and wisdom of God. Remember. The foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of humanity, and the weakness of God is stronger than fleshly strength. (1Co. 1:22-29). God uses things that are senseless to human reasoning to confound the wise. Who could have believed that Jesus would become a total conqueror through death? This is where faith becomes the necessary element for our salvation.

Every Easter folks flock to church, making record attendance. Each year they hear again the story of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. The reality is, believing Jesus died is not sufficient to bring change to a listeners life. It is a historic fact that a man named Jesus died, and it takes little or no faith to believe history. However, not only was Jesus crucified, but they buried him and sealed the tomb. Then, on the morning of the third day, following his death, he came forth out of the sealed tomb in resurrection.

On a recent Easter Sunday Morning, Pamla and I attended a church service to encourage a minister friend of ours that was leading the worship that day. When the pastor preached his message he titled it, "**THE POWER OF THE CROSS.**" For one hour he preached hard and said, "*There is power in the cross,*" over two dozen times. Every time he made this statement I waited with excitement for him to tell us what the power of the cross is and what it means to our human life. Every time he would back to describing the crucifixion and the horror of it, but not once did he mention the true power of the cross. We need to know something happened at Calvary that involved every human being. Concerning his death on the cross Jesus declared, "*When I am lifted up from the earth, WILL DRAG ALL HUMANITY TO MYSELF.*" (Joh. 12:32-33). Now, it takes **FAITH** for one to believe that they too were crucified on that cross, so long ago. The apostle Paul understood the importance of this point of faith and wrote, "*If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For Christ's love compels us, because WE ARE CONVINCED THAT ONE DIED FOR (and as) ALL, AND THEREFORE ALL DIED.*" (2Co. 5:13-14). You see, what Jesus Christ accomplished at the cross was so powerful that it reached into ages *past* and *future* dragging the whole human race, including you and me, to our own crucifixion. Our old humanity was crucified and died, over two thousand years ago. The true miraculous power is in that the crucifixion is just as fresh for each person, as if it just happened the moment they embrace his death, as their death. (Gal. 2:20-21; He. 10:19-22).

Resurrection Triumph

It is in resurrection that Jesus became the Triumphant General, the King of kings, the Lord of lords. (Ro. 1:4). David declared: "*The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.'*" Therefore, boldly let everyone know that God made this same Jesus, who was crucified, both Lord and Christ over all the earth. (Ps. 110:1; Ac. 2:34-35). What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in **THE LIKENESS** of sinful flesh. By doing this **GOD PASSED SENTENCE UPON SIN IN THE FLESH.** (Ro. 8:3). That is, Jesus took upon himself human characteristics and lived in the circumstances and external conditions of the human race, all the while humbling himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. **THUS, SUFFERING THE PENALTY OF DEATH FOR (and as) ALL WHO HAVE EVER SINNED.** (Ro. 5:12, 21, 6:23, 8:2). For his obedience God highly exalted him and gave him **THE NAME** which is above **EVERY NAME**, so at **THE NAME OF JESUS** every knee will bow, those in heaven, and those on earth, and those under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:5-11).

Moreover, the church needs to catch a vision of this triumphant procession. We need more than the historic story told at Easter time. The doctrine is good, but we really need the revelatory vision etched within our thinking that

unveils what truly took place at Calvary. Yes, we *need* a mural of the Lord *triumphing* through the celestial, terrestrial and subterranean realms indelibly painted upon the walls of our mind, *replacing* the horrific picture of the beating and death that took place at Calvary.

The parade of triumph begins with Christ Jesus, the Word of God sitting upon his white steed, his robe is dipped in blood and on his thigh there is a name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS**. His eyes are like a flame of fire that pierce into the very hidden regions of our soul revealing every thought and intent of the heart. On his head are his many crowns of victory. He is called Faithful and True and rides gallantly before the captains of his army, all of which are riding horses. Behind this triumphant General are his host, all marching in rank, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. (Eph. 6:10-18; He. 4:12-13; Rev. 19:11ff). Following along behind them, in chains and fetters, are every principality, authority, dominion, and throne that have oppressed his creation. As this parade passes, all of humanity, who had been oppressed and enslaved by these adversaries, are seeing and hearing the acclamatory announcements of triumph. The people begin to follow along with banners and tambourines; dancing and shouting for the joy of being set free. (Joh. 8:32-33). Shouting fills the air, while "*Hallelujah!*" and "*It is finished!*" resounds throughout the streets. The procession continues to grow as the sound of the triumph spreads throughout the land.

The triumphant decree announces, "*Sin shall **NO LONGER HAVE DOMINION** over you, for you are not under Law, but under grace.*" (Ro. 6:14). For Christ Jesus "*has appeared once for all, **AT THE CLOSE OF THE AGES**, in order to do away with, (that is, **CANCEL THE FORCE OF SIN**). by the sacrifice of himself.*" (He. 9:26). Yes, the sin of Adam no longer has the power to hold dominion over the people. The Light now shines where darkness held us in its dominion, **FOR GOD HAS DELIVERED US OUT OF THE CONTROL OF DARKNESS**, and it will never overpower the Light. (Joh. 1:5; Col. 1:13). The song of triumph rings throughout the streets of our mind, "**WHERE, O DEATH, IS THY VICTORY? WHERE, O DEATH, IS THY STING?**" (1Co. 15:55).

The Chief Enemy Rendered Powerless

Following along behind this triumphant procession is "**THE GREAT RED DRAGON.**" This chief enemy is in chains, with his tail dragging, limply, behind him. We have known this defeated foe as the Devil and Satan. In his beginning he was the serpent that deceived the woman and caused Adam to transgress at the tree of knowledge of good and evil. (Ge. 3:1ff). This is the one who had deceived the whole world and caused all humanity to roam from safety, truth and virtue. However, through death Jesus Christ rendered the dragon entirely useless and **IT NO LONGER HAS THE POWER OF DEATH**. (He. 2:14, Re. 12:9ff).

It is for this very purpose that the Son of God was manifested, **SO HE MIGHT DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL**. (1Jo. 3:8). That is, Jesus Christ came into the world **TO LOOSEN** and **DISSOLVE** all the works of the devil. Thus, the adversary that had held everyone in captivity through the fear of death, has now been rendered **ENTIRELY IDLE** and **USELESS**. We have been loosed from all of his works. A sound from the heavenly ranks penetrates the earthen realm, declaring, "**NOW salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ HAVE COME, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, HAS BEEN CAST DOWN. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their souls to the death.**" (Re. 12:10).

Those who are hearing of the victory, and getting a glimpse of what has happened, are dancing, leaping and twirling about with joy, as they follow along with this triumphant procession. Excitement fills the air with shouts of praise, as the people experience the great emotion and excitement of the victory.

Getting To Know The Enemy

However, as humanity dances and twirls with the excitement of their new found deliverance, they look up and suddenly find themselves eye to eye with satan, the slanderer and accuser of the brethren. They recognize this is the adversary, who held them for so long in fear of death. This enemy began as the serpent in Eden, but has fed upon the dust of the earth, or adamic carnality, until he grew into a Dragon. (Ge. 3:14; Isa. 65:25). This memory causes

their hearts to fail, for fear of the one who has been so contrary and opposing to everything that is godly. Smugly the accuser can be heard saying, *“You can’t keep your freedom. **YOU CANNOT HONOR SUCH LIBERTY WITHOUT MY HELP.**”*

With apprehensiveness and timidity young converts begin to become overtaken with fear of the future. They begin to question, *“What must **WE DO** to bring this victory to manifestation in our life?”* *“What happens if this enemy becomes free again?”* *“We know the Book of Revelation tell us that the priests of God will reign with Christ for a thousand years.”* (Re. 1:6, 5:10, 20:6). *“However, when the thousand years have expired, **SATAN WILL BE RELEASED FROM HIS PRISON** and at that time he will go out to deceive the nations and gather together a number, as the sand of the sea, to battle with the saints.”* (Re. 20:6ff). *“Now it stands to reason, if satan led a rebellion in heaven he certainly can do it again within the earth. He might even be more successful this time, because in this realm he is not dealing with angels, but with wicked humanity.”*

The Fueling of False Hope

This kind of thinking has fueled such false hope in the saints, as *“the blessed hope,”* or *“escape rapture.”* Remember. We have not been saved to be removed from the difficulties of life, but to overcome all that has previously beset us. For God’s word tells us, *“The righteous shall **NEVER** be removed: but the wicked shall **NOT INHABIT** the earth.”* (Ps. 37:9, 11, 82:8; Pr. 10:30; Mt. 5:5). Scripturally the hope of the church is not found in an escape, but in the Lord. For we are saved by grace through faith, and the word of faith says, *“Blessed is the person who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord.”* (Jer. 17:8f; Eph. 2:8ff). There is definitely a **“BLESSED HOPE”** and it is **NOT** merely the appearing of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, but **“THE APPEARING OF THE GLORY** of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.” This same Jesus, who gave himself for *(and as)* us, **SO HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED AND PURIFY FOR HIMSELF A PEOPLE FOR HIS OWN POSSESSION, ZEALOUS FOR GOOD DEEDS.** (Tit. 2:12ff).

The Roller Coaster Ride of Religious Thinking

In the past I found myself on a roller coaster ride in the park of religious thinking. One moment I was seeing Jesus win the complete victory at Calvary. This would cause me to soar high above the cares of life. It would bring great rejoicing and expectancy into the circumstances that surrounded me. However, in the next moment of time I was looking straight into the face of my fears and doubts. One minute I would be rejoicing in having been set free and in the next moment crying out in fear and shame, saying, *“Someday I am gonna be free from all these bad habits and thoughts.”*

This roller coaster ride of the religious realm correlated in my life with the Feast of Pentecost. It was all I knew for many years. Please understand I am not putting this experience down, for Pentecost added many wonderful things into my experience with Christ Jesus. Furthermore, I believe it is a spiritual requirement in our journey to fulness. (Ex. 23:14-16). However, there was something more to be experienced. Moreover, Father determined that the god of **“GONNA BE”**¹ had to be torn down in my life. The god of *“gonna be”* must be put under our feet, once and for all, to never rear it’s ugly head again.

Understanding What The Devil Is Not

One day I heard the Father say, *“Take a good look at this enemy. Once you understand the true nature of your enemy, you will never again fear.”* This put me on a quest to understand the adversary. In my pursuit of comprehending the devil I discovered that I could **NOT** say, as I have heard so many say, *“There is no Devil. He is just a figment of the imagination.”* The reason I cannot dismiss the existence of a devil is because the Greek Bible clearly speaks of this adversary thirty-five times after the death, burial, resurrection and accession of Jesus Christ.

However, my studies did lead me to understand that I can accurately say, *“**THE DEVIL, AS TAUGHT IN PENTECOSTAL**”*

¹ GONNA BE - Slang for *“GOING TO BE.”*

TRADITION, IS A RELIGIOUS ILLUSION.” Before you stop reading let me explain. The first definition given for “*illusion*,” by the American Heritage Dictionary, is “*an erroneous perception of reality.*” This tells me the devil is very real, however, the religious concepts or beliefs that surround the devil are founded on erroneous or false perceptions of the truth. Therefore, some may need to hear what the adversary is not, before they can begin to consider what this enemy truly is.

Others may ask, “*Why should we be concerned since the Bible tells us that Jesus ‘destroyed’ the devil and his works?*” However, we must take in consideration what the Bible actually says. The book of Hebrews records, “*Since then the children have partaken of flesh and blood, he (Jesus) also himself likewise partook of the same; that through death he MIGHT destroy him who had the power of death (that is, the Devil), and deliver those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*” (He. 2:114-15). Then, John writes, “*He who practices sin is of the Devil, for the Devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was revealed, that HE (Jesus) MIGHT DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL.*” (1Jo. 3:8). Both of these passages tell us that what Jesus accomplished “**MIGHT DESTROY**” the devil and his works. Now one who use the Strong’s, could argue that the word, “*might*,” is not supported in either passage by the original language. Furthermore those, who use enough Greek to become dangerous, might say, the “*aorist tense*” is used and therefore the past tense is implied. However, a further look into the Greek reveals the “*mood*” is “*subjective*” and that tells us that the sentence is a “*possibility*” or “*potentiality.*” That is, the action described may or may not occur, depending on circumstances. Therefore, “**MIGHT DESTROY**” is the preferred rendering of both passages.

Is It Finished Or Not?

We are told God raised Christ Jesus from the dead and seated him at his own right hand in the heavenly realms, high above EVERY principality, authority, power, dominion, and every title of sovereignty used either in this Age or in the Age to come. **GOD HAS PUT ALL UNDER HIS FEET, AND HAS APPOINTED HIM UNIVERSAL AND SUPREME HEAD OF THE CHURCH.** The Church, his body, the completeness of him who completes all within the universe. (Eph. 1:20-23). Then again we read, that after Jesus offered one sacrifice for sin for all time, sat down at the right hand of God. Since that time **HE WAITS FOR HIS ENEMIES TO BE MADE HIS FOOTSTOOL.** (He. 10:12-13). So are all his enemies under his feet or not? Is it really finished?

It is after the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ that we are told, “*God, the giver of peace, WILL (completely) CRUSH SATAN*” *under the feet of the saints.* (Ge. 3:15; Ro. 16:20). It has always been God’s intention for the saints to overcome their adversary. Isaiah declared, “*How beautiful on the mountains are THE FEET OF HIM who brings good tidings, making peace heard; who brings good news, making salvation heard; who says to Zion, Your God reigns!* (Is. 52:7). Then the apostle Paul heralds, “*It is written, How beautiful are THE FEET OF THEM that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*” (Ro. 10:15). Did the apostle simply misquote the writing of Isaiah, or was he inspired to expand the vision of the prophet? I believe the latter is true. For the universal and supreme Head of the Church sits in the throne of God with all under his feet. However, there is the Church, his body, that still needs to realize the complete victory. This is accomplished by of **THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB**, and because of **THE WORD OF OUR TESTIMONY.** Moreover, because **WE DO NOT LOVE AND CLING TO OUR SOUL (mind, will, emotions, desires) EVEN WHEN FACED WITH DEATH.** (Re. 12:11). Moreover, by **ANNOUNCING THE GOOD NEWS OF PEACE, and DECLARING THE GOSPEL OF GOODNESS.** (Ro. 10:15). **SO LET US STUDY THE ADVERSARY TO GET A PROFILE OF THIS ONE WE ARE TO DESTROY BY OVERCOMING.**

Biblical History of the Devil

The term “*satan*” appears thirty-three times in the writings of Hebrew Scripture. The word is derived from the original Hebrew verb which means “*to oppose, attack, accuse.*” The Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek was widely used in the early Christian church. It translated “*satan*” as “*diaboloc*” from which we derive our English term “*devil*” and “*diabolical.*”

None of the passages within the older parts of the Hebrew Scriptures portray satan as the arch enemy of God, or of

humanity. At most, “*satan*” is described as a collaborator who carries out God's adverse instructions. There is no dualism found in the early writings between two powerful supernatural entities: an all-good God and an all-evil *satan*. In fact, God is portrayed as performing, directly and indirectly, both “*good*” and “*evil*” deeds. (See “*The Evil of A Righteous God*” www.promiseed.com/evil.htm).

It was God who created the serpent that becomes known as “*satan*.” (Ge. 3:1; Is. 54:16; Joh. 1:3). God was the One who sent a great genocidal flood that killed off all humanity, but Noah and his family. (Ge. 6:7-8). He sent the plagues upon Egypt and fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah to destroy its residents because of pride, lack of hunger, idleness and because they did not strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. (Ge. 13:10; Ex. 9:13-16; Eze. 16:49). It is God who turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, because she looked the wrong way. (Ge. 19:24-26).

Essentially, the writers of the early Hebrew Scriptures looked upon the Lord as performing both good and evil deeds. A good indication of this is found in Isaiah when he writes, “*I am the Lord and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness. I make peace and create evil. I THE LORD DO ALL THESE THINGS.*” (Is. 45:6-7). Again, Job says, “[*God*] destroys both the blameless and the wicked. When a scourge brings sudden death, he mocks (i.e. laughs at) the despair of the innocent.” (Job 9:22-23). The Prophet Jeremiah asks, “*Who has commanded and it came to pass, unless the Lord has ordained it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and evil come?*” (Lam. 3:37-38).

God Sent a Divine Messenger As “*satan*”

God appeared in a dream to Balaam and told him to go with the princes of Moab to meet Balak. But when Balaam sets out the next morning on his donkey, God is angry with him, and sends an angel to kill him. The angel was invisible to Balaam, but his donkey saw the angel and took evasive actions. So Balaam beat the animal. The donkey asked him why he had beat her three times. Balaam, who doesn't seem to realize that a talking donkey is an unusual occurrence, replies. Then an angel appears and explains that he has come as a “*satan*” (*translated "one who opposes," "withstands," "an adversary"*) to kill him. (Nu. 22:22, 32).

We also find, in the earliest writings, the word “*satan*” is used in reference to *any person acting as an accuser or enemy*. For instance, the Philistines were distrustful of David, fearing that he would be a “*satan*” (*translated "adversary" or "will turn against us"*). (1Sa. 29:4). Then, to Abishai, a son of Zeruiah, David says, “*What do you and I have in common, you sons of Zeruiah? This day you have become my "satan" (translated "adversary" or "opponent")!*” (2Sa. 19:22). King Solomon told Hiram, the King of Tyre, that neither “*satan*” (*translated "adversary," "enemy," or "one who opposes"*) nor disaster could stop him from building the Temple. (1Ki. 5:4). Then, God raised up Hadad the Edomite as a “*satan*” (*translated "adversary," or "opponent"*) against Solomon. (1Ki. 11:14). These are just a few biblical examples of people being depicted as “*satan*.”

Is *satan* Heaven's Emissary?

In the book of Chronicles we find *satan* acted as “*a supernatural evil emissary,*” on God's behalf to influence David to take a census. After the census is taken God becomes angry with David and offers him a choice of one of three punishments: a three year famine; three months of fleeing before the armies of his enemies; or a plague throughout Israel. David chooses the plague and seventy-thousand men die (*plus women and children*). (1Chr. 21:1-14). In Second Samuel, this identical event is described. However, this time, it is God that influenced David to take the census. Although God incited David to number Israel and Judah, his anger still brought a plague upon the Israelites. (2Sa. 21:1-14). The earliest recording of this event is in the book of Samuel and the book of Chronicles came later. At the time of the writing of the book of Samuel it was believed that *ALL SUPERNATURAL ACTIONS (good and bad)* came from God. However, when Chronicles was written over a century later the author viewed God as operating indirectly through his helpers.

Is Satan A Type of Heaven's Chief Prosecutor?

In the book of Job, *satan* is described, as one standing in the midst of the sons of God, *A MEMBER OF THE COURT OF HEAVEN*. God mentions that he is impressed at the behavior of Job, for he is blameless, upright, fears God and hates

evil. Satan attributes Job's commendable behavior to God's protection and blessing. Moreover, satan claims that because Job has not experienced any testing in his life there has been no reason for his behavior to be any less than commendable toward God. He further interjects that Job would soon curse God if he had a string of really bad experiences. So God decides to test Job. He then instructs satan to destroy all that Job possesses. Even after these disasters, Job still does not curse God. So God instructs satan to up the ante by destroying Job's health. Here, *SATAN IS PORTRAYED AS A SERVANT OF GOD WHOSE TASK IT IS TO DUTIFULLY CARRY OUT EVIL DEEDS AT GOD'S INSTRUCTION.* (Job 1:6-22; 2:1-10). Again satan is portrayed as a member of God's council by the prophet Zechariah, when he objects to the selection of Joshua as the high priest. (Zec. 3:1-7).

The Traditional Teaching

The MODERN slant shows God and satan at war with one another. God protecting all that is good and satan projecting all that is evil. Modern theology shows *SATAN ALWAYS ON THE OFFENSIVE*, while *GOD IS ON THE DEFENSIVE*. This in itself should cause some to think.

Traditional teaching claims that before the dawn of time there was an archangel by the name of Lucifer, "*the anointed cherub that covers,*" who was the chief leader of praise and worship in heaven. (Is. 14:12; Eze. 28:14). It is said, he was second in command only to God and held the most coveted position among the angelic hosts. Then, we are told this angel became puffed-up with self-importance and one day decided to organize an insurrection against God in an attempt to usurp his throne. He was so persuasive that he convinced one third of heaven's angels to join the ranks of his rebellion against God. Now, when the Lord learned of the takeover, there was war in the heavens. God, of course, won the battle and cast Lucifer and his angels out of heaven. This theoretically shows us where the world got the adversary that is known as the serpent or dragon, which is also called the devil and satan. (Re.12:9).

What Is The Error?

Now this was the short version of the story of course, but we do not have the time and space to develop such an obvious error. You may ask, "*What is erroneous about this teaching?*" Even as a child I questioned this teaching, but no one was able to answer my questions sufficiently. My questions were, "*Where was God while this was going on in heaven, was he taking a nap or on a hunting trip?*" This childlike curiosity may sound absurd, but when I was a child I thought as a child and spoke as a child. (1Co. 13:11). However, my questions were still valid, because the same teachers that taught me about the angelic rebellion also said God was *OMNIPRESENT* or ever present, in all places at all times. Moreover, they said God was *OMNISCIENT* or all knowing. If these last two teachings are true, **HOW COULD SUCH A PREPOSTEROUS THING HAPPEN BEHIND GOD'S BACK?** Doesn't this bring to question God's being omnipresent and omniscient? How did that which is created outsmart its Creator? If it happened once in heaven, where perfection dwells, what is to prevent it from happening again? Moreover, we are told that God not only won the battle in heaven and cast these angels out, but he cast them down into Tartarus², keeping them in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment. (2Pe 2:4; Jude 1:6). So I ask, "*How did the devil, the chief leader, get free to disrupt human affairs on earth?*" (Jude. 1:6). Is it possible that God could not keep this foe under his control? Isn't God truly *OMNIPOTENT*? That is, doesn't he have unlimited power, as the Bible teachers taught? The interrogation could go on endlessly and with every question God's character and ability comes under suspicion.

²While Hades is the main realm of the dead in Greek mythology, Tartarus also contains a number of characters. In early stories, it is primarily the prison for defeated gods. This was considered to be the lowest region of the world, as far below earth as earth is from heaven. It is described as a dank, gloomy pit, surrounded by a wall of bronze, and beyond that a three-fold layer of night. Along with Chaos, Earth, and Eros, it is one of the first entities to exist in the universe.

In later myths Tartarus becomes a place of punishment for sinners. It resembles Hell and is the opposite of Elysium, the afterlife for the blessed. When the hero Aeneas visits the underworld, he looks into Tartarus and sees the torments inflicted on characters such as the Titans, Tityos, Otus and Ephialtes, and the Lapiths. Rhadymanthus (and, in some versions, his brother Minos) judges the dead and assigns punishment. Encyclopedia Mythica Online.

[Accessed December 13, 2005].<<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/t/tartarus.html>>

If anyone logically considers the modern theology of satan's origin they will either change, considering what the Bible actually teaches, or they will become ensnared and captive to disappointment and misery. (Ro. 8:15, 19ff; 2Ti. 1:7).

However, the religious thinking of modern theology continues, because the average believer is lead about like a sheep. Sheep are those who follow a shepherd to feeding and watering, but never make the effort to search the Scripture to see if what they are feeding upon is true. They trust the shepherd to do all the work for them. It is a shame that so many shepherds are kept so busy that they cannot find the time to continue developing their understanding of God. Moreover, the human heart is so polluted with religious ideas, and desperately frail, that they are never able to arrive at real knowledge of the truth. (Jer. 17:9; 2Ti. 3:7). Human understanding does not and cannot truly comprehend who God is. (He. 11:6).

I remember a comedian, Flip Wilson, his characters were Geraldine and Rev. Leroy, the pastor of the Church of What's Happening Now. He made his fame and living on "*THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT*" jokes. It seems to help so many people to think there is a devil to blame everything on, so they never have to face the real issues of life.

Moreover, much misunderstanding continues, because what was accomplished at Calvary is not fully understood. Some people still believe they must do something to please God before they can participate in the victory. These have not yet learned that works, *EVEN "GOOD" WORKS*, will not produce righteousness.

A Closer Look At Lucifer

There is even a greater difficulty with the traditional teaching concerning satan's origin. This difficulty becomes crystal clear, when a person searches the Scripture to find out *if* what tradition teaches is true. (Ac. 17:11). The first thing I discovered is there is *NO REFERENCE IN THE BIBLE* declaring that the devil and Lucifer are the same being. The truth is the context of Lucifer is in a "*proverb against the king of Babylon.*" (Is. 14:4-22). Moreover, in the same *proverb* the question is asked, "*Is this THE MAN who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms?*" (Is. 14:16). These two references found within the context of the one and only verse that speaks of "*lucifer,*" caused me to consider *THE SUBJECT* is a *human being* and *NOT* a "*fallen angel.*" The only reference that mention satan, as an angels, says he *MASQUERADES*, or disguises himself, as an angel of light. (2Co.11:14). We need to learn what is actually behind this angel of light mask.

A closer look reveals Isaiah was originally written in the Hebrew language. However, when Isaiah was first translated into English the original Hebrew manuscripts were not available. So the translators used the Latin Vulgate to derive the King James Version of the Old Testament. The Latin manuscript uses "*lucem ferre,*" in this passage and *THE TRANSLITERATION OF THE LATIN* produced the word "*Lucifer,*" in the King James Version of the Bible. The Hebrew text found in Isaiah, chapter fourteen, is "*helel, ben shachar*" and transliterates into English "*Helal, son of Shachar,*" which literally translates "*shining one, son of dawn.*" This Hebrew text was the expression used to describe the Babylonian king before his death. The name evokes the golden glitter of a proud king's dress. The Latin name "*Lucifer,*" best translates as "Day star, son of the Dawn," and is used to originally denote the planet Venus, which is known as the Morning Star. Metaphorically, the word is applied to the King of Babylon in this passage, because of his preeminence among the princes of his time. Isaiah used this metaphor for a bright light, though not the greatest light, to illustrate the apparent power of the Babylonian king which had faded. The Latin Vulgate also uses the word "*lucifer,*" for "*the light of the morning*" and "*the signs of the zodiac.*" (Job 11:17, 38:32).

Lucifer Applied To Jesus Christ

Finally, the Vulgate translation uses "*Lucifer,*" *APPLYING IT TO JESUS CHRIST*, the true light of our spiritual life. (2Pe. 1:19). What a beautiful metaphor the first Adam fading from his place of rulership, as the last Adam, Christ Jesus, rises within our heart to enlighten our lives. (Ge. 3:1-11; Joh. 1:4-5, 9; Ro. 5:12).

What About The Third of the Angles?

Further biblical studies reveal there is no reference of “*Lucifer*” or satan drawing a third of the angels into rebellion against God. There is one reference found in the book of Revelation of the “*great red dragon*,” who is also known as the old serpent, the devil, and satan drawing a third part of the stars of heaven with his tail and he casts them into the earth. The problem with using this reference to prove satan drew a third of the angles of heaven is twofold. First, it is found in chapter twelve of the book of Revelation, which was written to show those things which “**MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS**,” not things that came to pass somewhere in past ages. Second, the dragon drew a third part of the stars of heaven, not angels. (Re. 12:3-4). In this context the only “*stars*” located in the heavens were the twelve stars found in the woman’s crown. Thus, a third part of the twelve *stars* is four. These four stars were drawn out of the heavens by the tail of the dragon and cast into the earth. Now, twelve is a number that represents divine order and government throughout the Bible. We see this in the twelve tribes of Israel, twelve disciples; twelve precious stones in the breast plate, twelve foundations in the New Jerusalem and twelve months in the year. Isaiah says, *the prophet that teaches lies* is the tail. (Is. 9:15). Thus, because of the false teachings from the dragon’s tail, the soul (*woman*) loses the vision of universal salvation (*four stars*) causing the soul to wander in an earthen wilderness looking for an answer to her quandary and state of being. (Re. 1:1, 12:9).

What Did Jesus Teach About The Devil?

While the modern church teaches that satan was holy until he “*fell*” from his “*first estate*.” Jesus said, *the devil “was A MURDERER FROM THE BEGINNING, and abode not in the truth, because THERE IS NO TRUTH IN HIM.”* Moreover he said, “*THE DEVIL DOES NOT KNOW WHAT THE TRUTH IS WHENEVER HE TELLS A LIE, HE IS DOING WHAT COMES NATURALLY TO HIM, HE IS A LIAR AND THE FATHER OF LIES.*” (Joh. 8:44). The Greek makes it clear that **THE TRUTH NEVER, AT ANY TIME ABODE IN THIS ONE**. Jesus makes it clear that the devil has existed as a murder and liar from the beginning. The apostle John writes concerning the devil’s origin and says, “*THE DEVIL HAS SINNED FROM THE BEGINNING.*” (1Jo. 3:8).

How Do The Serpent And Law Relate?

The very first mention of satan in the Bible is at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It says, “*Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.*” (Ge. 3:1). It is in this first mention that we discover the serpent is a liar that murders or takes the life of Adam with its lie. I found the location to be of much interest to me. Especially, when I recognized the tree of the knowledge was **BOTH** of *good* and *evil*. In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses explains that **THE LAW and its COMMANDMENT** are not hidden, neither are they far off. For the Law and commandment is not in heaven, or beyond the sea, so some has to fetch it for you. But **THE WORD IS VERY CLOSE, EVEN IN THE MOUTH, AND IN THE HEART, SO YOU CAN DO IT.** (De. 30:11-14; Ro. 10:5-10). Moses goes on to say that with the law he set before the people life and **GOOD**, and death and **EVIL**. He had set **LIFE** and **DEATH**, **BLESSING** and **CURSING** before Israel. He even instructed them to **CHOOSE LIFE**, so both they and their seed would live. (De. 30:11-20). Thus we find the first mention associates the serpent with the law or the knowledge of good and evil.

It is the law that gives us knowledge of **BOTH** *good* **AND** *evil*. It is also the Law that sets before humanity the knowledge of **BOTH** *life* **AND** *death*. David declared, “*The Law of Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of Lord is sure, making the simple wise. The precepts of Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandments of Lord are pure, giving light to the eyes. The fear of Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of Lord are true and righteous altogether, MORE TO BE DESIRED THAN GOLD, EVEN MUCH FINE GOLD; SWEETER ALSO THAN HONEY AND THE HONEYCOMB. AND YOUR SERVANT IS WARNED BY THEM; IN KEEPING THEM THERE IS GREAT REWARD.*” (Ps. 19:7-11). The apostle Paul adds, “*But we know that THE LAW IS GOOD if a man uses it lawfully, knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous one, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for homosexuals, for slave-traders, for liars, for perjurers, and anything else that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God.*” (1Ti. 1:8-11). Moreover, **THE LAW IS SPIRITUAL, THE LAW IS HOLY, and THE**

COMMANDMENT IS HOLY AND JUST AND GOOD. (Ro. 7:12, 14). However, no one is justified by the Law in the sight of God, for, "*The just shall live by faith. But THE LAW IS NOT OF FAITH.*" The person, who practices keeping the law will live in them, but by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in God's sight; because **THROUGH THE LAW IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF SIN.** (Ro. 3:20; Ga. 3:11-12).

Why Study About The Devil?

The Bible never refers to the devil being God's adversary. However, Jesus spoke of the devil, as a enemy, but whose enemy? (Mat. 13:37-43). The apostle Peter encouraged the believer to be sensible, well balanced, and vigilant or cautious at all times, firmly resisting the devil in *THE* faith. Why? Because *YOUR ADVERSARY*, the devil, walks about *LIKE* a roaring lion, seeking someone to seize and devour. (1Pe. 5:8-9).

Thus, we cannot simply dismiss the existence of a devil, as some figment of the imagination. There are those who suggest the "*CARNAL MIND*" is the devil. However, while the Bible teaches the mind of the flesh, with its carnal thoughts and purposes, is *HOSTILE TO GOD*, it never says the mind is satan. The mind's enmity toward God is a result of it not being able to submit itself to God's Law while focusing on the flesh. (Ro. 8:7). This thought of the "*carnal mind*" being the devil has never rang true in my spirit. The apostle Paul declared that he served *THE LAW OF GOD WITH THE MIND*; but with the flesh he served the law of sin. (Ro. 7:25). So does that make the "*flesh*" the devil, of course not, no more than the mind focused on flesh is the devil. However, I can agree the "*carnal mind*," or thinking focused on the flesh, is the devils "*workshop*." That is, it takes a "*carnal mind*," or focus, for the devil to work. Paul warns the believer not to give place or opportunity to the devil. (Eph. 4:27). Remember. The devil, is walking about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to seize and devour. (1Pe. 5:8-9). Therefore we are to put on the whole panoply or parade dress of God so that you may be able to stand firm against all the stratagems or scheme of the devil. (Eph. 6:11). Furthermore, we need to submit ourselves to God and resist the devil, and he will flee from us. (Jam. 4:7).

Our study showed us that the Hebrew word "*satan*" (Strong's #4567), is used 27 times in the Scripture. The Greek equivalent "*satanas*" (Strong's #4567). appears a total of 36 times in the new testament and 19 of those references come after the death, burial and resurrection of Christ Jesus our Lord. Moreover, the Greek word "*diabolos*" (Strong's #1228), or devil is used 40 times in the Greek Scriptures, and 25 of the references are after the resurrection. Now that makes a total of 61 mentions of the devil after the resurrection of our Lord. This should suffice to demonstrate that the satan is something the Christian needs to deal with even after the victory at Calvary.

What Exactly Are We Dealing With?

Is satan an entity? That is, does the devil have a distinct and independent existence apart from God? This question is as old as religion. Agnostics believe satan is simply a symbol, concept or principle of evil and not an actual personality. A census taken in 2002, reveals that 59% of modern American adults, Christian and non-Christian alike, agree with this agnostic thinking.³ This could leave one to question, "*Is the devil a fabricated entity?*"

Others profess satan is a living entity with personality and being, the author and advocate of all evil. He is indeed at war with God over the human race and the arch-enemy of every believing Christian. In more than one meeting I have been asked, "*Do you believe in a literal physical devil?*" Well, I can guarantee that the devil does not run around with a pointed tail, carrying a pitch fork, in red flannel underwear and horns on his head. However, I believe the devil is more than religious mental principal. Let us look and see what the Bible says on the state of this adversaries existence.

What Do You Mean "Spirit"?

The apostle Paul gives us insight into the devil's state of being in Ephesians. He says, "*You were dead in your*

³"Americans Draw Theological Beliefs From Diverse Points of View," Barna Research Online, 2002-OCT-8, at: <http://www.barna.org/cgi-bin/>

trespasses and sins in which you previously walked according to this worldly age, ACCORDING TO THE PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR, THE SPIRIT NOW WORKING IN THE SONS DISOBEDIENT.” (Lk. 22:3; Joh. 13:2; 13:27; Eph. 2:1-3). In the church there is universal agreement that “*the prince of the power of the air*” is satan. The devil is identified as “*THE SPIRIT now working in the sons disobedient.*” Therefore, the devils state of being is SPIRIT. By spirit we are not saying phantom, ghost, or figment of the imagination, but spirit depicts ATTITUDE. The prince of the power of the air, or SATAN, IS THE ATTITUDE NOW WORKING IN THE SONS OF DISOBEDIENCE. (Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6).

In Paul’s day there were two separate groups proclaiming a message from God. Those who were raised under the covenant of Moses. This covenant consisted of the Law and commandments. Jesus said they were “*THE SONS OF THEIR FATHER THE DEVIL.*” How was the devil their father? The devil is the “*SPIRIT*” that accompanies the Law, just as the “*SERPENT*” accompanied the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. These children of Abraham had been birthed of the letter, which brought guilt, criticism, self-condemnation, as well as, the spirit of accusation.

They were the sons of the devil and the sons of God. Jesus spoke to the Jews and said, “*You are of your father, the Devil and the lusts of your father you will do.*” (Joh. 8:44). He was speaking a spiritual truth to those Jews that did not believe on him. This natural seed of Abraham we born under the law. The spirit of the law was evident in and about them, just as it had been at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. However, by this time, what began as a serpent had become a dragon. Let us remember the ancient serpent, who is called ‘the Devil,’ ‘the Adversary’ and satan is first seen with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Re. 12:9). This tree represents the law, which is spiritual, holy, just and good. Now, prior to the Law sin was already in the world, but it was not counted against us when no Law existed. (Ro. 5:13). Therefore, with the law came the knowledge or recognition of sin. This recognition brought forth the spirit of condemnation or the accuser of the brethren. (Re. 12:10). It is interesting to note that the devil is the Accuser of the “brethren” and not the accuser of all humanity. This is because before the law there is no knowledge of sin. Simply, those who do not have the law of God activated within their lives do not recognize what they are doing as anything less than normal, or natural to life. However, once the law becomes a part of their knowledge change becomes necessary to END the Accuser’s voice of condemnation.

The apostle Paul wrote, “*THE GOD OF PEACE SHALL BRUISE SATAN UNDER YOUR FEET SHORTLY. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.*” (Ro. 16:20). Who or what is the God of peace going to bruise under our feet? It is necessary to understand what we are dealing with in this hour. John heard a great voice, in heaven, saying, “*Now has come the salvation and power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ. For the accuser of our brothers is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night. AND THEY OVERCAME HIM BECAUSE OF THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB, AND BECAUSE OF THE WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY. AND THEY DID NOT LOVE THEIR SOUL UNTIL DEATH.*” (Re. 12:10-11). The “*blood of the Lamb*” was freely given and applied to our lives, but “*the word of our testimony*” is something learned and developed. We must know the Adversary to have a testimony that will overcome.

What Does This Have To Do With satan?

Now, there is nothing that exists outside of God’s creation and control. It is clear that “. . . *All came into being through him (God), and apart from him nothing that exists came into being.*” (Joh. 1:1-3). Moreover, the apostle Paul writes, “*The Son of God’s love . . . is the image of the invisible God, FIRST-BORN OF ALL CREATION, because in him were ALL IN THE HEAVENS AND UPON THE EARTH CREATED, the visible and invisible, whether thrones, lordships, principalities, or authorities; all have been created through and for him, and he is before all, and he holds all together in himself.*” (Col. 1:13-17). These verses settle the question of God being the Creator of everything that exists.

Why would God want a devil?

When God created us, he chose us out of himself in the Christ, we were holy and unblemished before him. Then, in love he predestinated our placement as sons through Jesus Christ. This all took place before the ordered arrangement of creation had been disrupted. (Ge. 1:26-28; Eph. 1:4-5). However, the perfection or maturing of

God's sons was a necessary part of the plan. So God lowered the adamic creation into a "dust body," or "form," for the purpose of bringing his sons to maturity. (Ge. 2:7; Ps. 90:3-4).

The process of maturity was made evident in the life first-born son, Jesus Christ. We are told he was brought to maturity through suffering. (Lk. 13:32; Ro. 8:2-6, 29; He. 2:6-11, 5:8-9).

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. (Hebrews 5:8-10)

The divine Light of the Christ has always been deposited within the earthen adamic creation. However, this precious treasure of Christ was not recognizable in these vessels of earth, until Jesus came to demonstrate **THE WAY, THE TRUTH and THE LIFE.** (Joh. 14:2-20). Now, we understand that the treasure of the divine Light of Christ was deposited within these vessels of dust to demonstrate that the grandeur and exceeding greatness of the power is from God and not from ourselves. (1Co. 15:47; 2Co. 4:6-7).

Once we come to this realization what else could be needed? How about a "dustbuster" to clean the house? After Adam's transgression at the tree God said to the serpent, "You will go upon your belly, and **EAT DUST ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE.**" (Ge. 3:14). Moreover, the prophet Isaiah gives us a reminder when he said, "**DUST WILL BE THE SERPENT'S MEAT.**" (Is. 65:25). Snakes **DO NOT** eat dust, so we must look to the Spirit to understand this thought. Remember. Adam's natural composition is dust. The Lord said to Adam, "For dust you are, and to dust you shall return." (Ge. 3:17-19; Ec. 3:19-20). Adam was lowered from the heavens into the dust realm, then God assigned the serpent to devour the dusty part of the Adamic creation. (Ge. 1: 26-28; 2:7; Eph. 1:3-4; 2Ti. 1:9). It would be through this act of the serpent that Adam would become set free to once again rise in the heavens. (1Co 15:44-49). Isaiah also tells us the Lord created the smith, who blows the coals in the fire, to bring out a tool for his work. He the waster was created to destroy. (Is. 54:16). What is being destroyed? Everything that is of the earthen and dusty realm, until all that remains is the "**NEW CREATION HUMANITY.**" (2Co. 5:17-18; 1Ti. 2:5).

How Then Is The Devil An Enemy?

So far it seems the devil does all of God's "dirty work." That is, if God needs some "evil" done, he sends the devil to do it. One might say, "*Satan often plays the part of a 'devils advocate,' between man and God.*" That is, the devil argues against God's cause or position, not as a committed opponent, but simply to make someone consider or think things through in more detail. Thus the question arises, should we consider satan an adversary? If an adversary, then whose opponent and when does satan become that opponent?

Both Peter and James encourage believer to serve one another with humility of mind, for God resists the proud, but give grace to those who are humble. (1Pe. 5:5; Jam. 4:6) Furthermore, if we humble ourselves God will exalt us in our proper season. We often become presumptuous with the knowledge we are given. However, proven knowledge that grows through calm and cheerful endurance far exceeds the presumption of untried knowledge. Next, Peter instructs us to cast all anxiety and care upon the Lord, because he cares for us and will sustain us. He will never let the righteous fall. (Ps. 55:22). Finally, we are to be sensible and on the alert, because **OUR ADVERSARY, THE DEVIL, GOES ABOUT LIKE A ROARING LION TO SEE WHOM HE CAN DEVOUR.** (1Pe. 5:5-10) This is not a new thought concerning the devil, for when the sons of God presented themselves before the Lord in Job's day, the devil also came among them. It was then that the Lord asked Satan, "Where have you come from?" And Satan answered, "**FROM GOING TO AND FRO IN THE EARTH, AND FROM WALKING UP AND DOWN IN IT.**" (Job 1:6-7). Eliphaz the Temanite told Job that **THE ROAR OF THE LION, and THE VOICE OF THE FIERCE LION, as well as THE TEETH OF THE YOUNG LIONS, ARE BROKEN.** The strong lion perishes for lack of prey, and the strong lion's cubs are scattered abroad. (Job 4:10-11) Now, I have heard it preached from the pulpit that the devil is a toothless lion and can only roar. However, the Lord declared that all of what Job's friends said was not correct. (Job 42:7-10)

When Peter described the devil, as an adversary, that is like a "roaring lion" walking around seeking someone to

devour. He was painting a picture in the minds of his readers, but he was not saying the devil is an actual lion, no more than Jesus is actually a “*Lion*,” as described by John in the book of Revelation. (Re. 5:5). So what do we see in this word picture?

I am reminded of a time I went to see Lions in a wild life habitat. It happened to be feeding time and what I observed helped me to understand this passage about the adversary. The male lion was laying in the shade with his female companions when the keeper came by and threw a huge carcass into the area. The three lions continued to lay in the shade until the male gave a loud terrifying roar. It was at that time the female lions raised up and went to the meat and began ripping and eating. They ate in this manner for quite some time while the male lion continued to roar ferociously. When they felt like they had their portion, they drug the huge carcass to the mound where the male lion laid in the shade, continuously roaring. After the female lions carried the remaining carcass to the mound the male lion rose up, batted each of the females away from the carcass and then he began to rip and tear the meat from the carcass, eating as he went. This taught me that the Lion does not roar in the hunt, but in the knowledge that the hunt is finished. When one hears the roar of the lion it means someone is already fallen prey and the hunt is over.

How is it that we are to prevent this from happening? That is, how do we keep our adversary from announcing his victory? We simply withstand him, by continuing firm in the faith; knowing that brethren in other parts of the world are passing through just the same experiences. God, the giver of all grace, has called us to share his eternal glory, through Christ Jesus, after we have suffered for a short time, he will make us perfect, firm, and strong. To him be all power into the Ages of the Ages! Amen. (1Pe. 5:5-11). **More to come . . .**



Pamla's Pause

Most people can recall specific moments in their lives which caused dramatic changes in their perception. Some of these memories are cherished and some we wish we could forget. I can easily recall two things that happened in my life which completely and irrevocably caused change. One was a car accident that gave

me amnesia and removed all memories of my life before the age of 18. The other great event was when I came to the understanding that I, not the devil, was in control of my life. I am not diminishing the importance of how Father revealed his great, unconditional love to me, but I had to come to a place of accepting that the devil was a “lesser god.”

One might ask what I mean by “lesser god” and I would just say that my religion taught me that the devil was ‘out to get me.’ He would do ANYTHING to keep me from God and get my soul into Hell. Now, there will be some who agree with that thought and ask how anyone could believe differently. Yet, there will be some who laugh and say, “How silly, how could anyone believe that?” All I can say is that I lived the first 45 years of my life in fear of the devil and what he was doing to me. Yes, I knew that God was bigger and more powerful, but I was taught that the devil was almost as powerful as God and his one goal was to torment me, along with all mankind. After all, if we were able to defeat God’s plans for my life then he was “all powerful” in his own way. This is why I referred to the devil as a “lesser god.”

It is only when we rid ourselves of old religious mind-sets we are able to move into the abundance Jesus came to give. (John 10:10). It would befit one to not spend time and energy trying to disprove what is revealed in this months teaching. *Instead*, if you see the life you desire within the thoughts Stacy and I have shared, *be* noble and search the scripture with all readiness of mind to find what is true. (Acts 17:11) For, “You were once darkness, but now you are the light of the Lord, walk as children of the light, for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth; Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.” (Eph. 5:9-10)

Pamla