

SATAN:
THE GREAT
DECEPTION!

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DISCLAIMER

This document was not intended to be a book, but a personal manual compiled for teaching purposes. I do not hold this study to be a definitive work on the subject of

“*Satan*,” nor do I make any claim to being a satisfactory writer. I can only hope to be effective enough to bring this subject out of the darkness and expose it to a sufficient amount of light that the truth will be revealed.

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SATAN: THE GREAT DECEPTION!

INTRODUCTION

Our perception of the spiritual realm is instilled in us at a very early age. By the time we reach the age where we begin to establish person opinions and ideas, we have been subjected to years of indoctrination concerning the stories, myths, and figures that exist in the spiritual realm. An example is a song they we were taught as children in our “*Sunday Schools*.”

One two three, the devils after me,
Four five six, he’s always throwing bricks,
Seven eight nine, he misses every time,
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen!

Concepts born of tradition and paganism are so deeply implanted in “*Christianity*” that they are rarely, if ever, questioned. What is accepted of “*Satan*” is set forth in the proposition that “*Satan is as much a name for a fallen angel, as Peter and Paul are for two of Jesus’ disciples.*” Those who choose to continue in this study will find that this statement is based on thin air.

“*Satan*” recognized as a supernatural being that stands in opposition to every purpose of God. He is held to have been an angel and equal to Michael and Gabriel. At some point, for reasons never specified, he rebelled against God. Consequently, God stripped him of his lofty position and cast him from His presence. However, he was not cast out alone as it is held that he had followers who continue to serve him to this very day. While God stripped him of his exalted position and cast him from His presence, He did not strip him of his supernatural powers as he is held to possess the power to influence all men, everywhere, at any given time; hence, he retained many of the characteristics of God. It is also held that “*Satan*” possesses the ability to work miracles but only for the purposes of deception. The origin of Satan is immediately beset by problems. Heaven is said to be a place of perfect purity and that no sin dwells there. Can this be true if an angel of stature living in that realm had somehow determined to rebel against God? Who or what tempted him to do so? If sin had taken place in heaven, what is to prevent it from happening again?

An open and honest examination of the commonly accepted view of “*Satan*” will reveal that he is a pagan myth, who has been given characteristics of God - he is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent.

“He is suppose to know the thoughts, words and actions of all men; that he is in all parts of the world at the same time; and effects things by his power, little inferior to God Himself. God is the only being in the universe who is able to control him. He can assume any form, shape, or color; and though an angel of darkness, can transform himself into an angel of light. One would almost think, that he had greatly increased his powers by his sin and rebellion, for no good angel is ever presented as possessing such extraordinary powers, as

the Christians ascribe to the Devil. If his powers have been curtailed by his rebellion against God, what must they have been before it?

One of the first things he engaged in was to tempt our first parents to sin, and thereby ruined them and all their posterity. Ever since, he has been seducing every son and daughter of Adam to all kinds of sin, fomenting all sorts of mischief, and producing misery in our world. He is suppose to be walking about seeking whom he may devour. He deceives the whole world, and accuses the best of men before God. He infuses evil thoughts and desires into men's minds, and is ever ready to assist them in the execution of their wicked purposes, and the gratification of their sinful lusts and passions. He is supposed not only to inflict many severe bodily diseases, but to harass the mind, so as to drive persons to distraction and suicide. He is believed to be the cause of all Job's afflictions, to have bound a woman eighteen years with an infirmity, and urged Judas on in his course of wickedness until he betrayed Jesus, and was finally led to hang himself. He is also allowed to blind men's minds about the gospel, and harden their hearts, and is at work in the heart of every child of disobedience. He not only picks up the seed of the word when sown, lest man should believe it and be saved, but those who do believe it, are the objects of his particular malice, whom, though he cannot ruin forever, he is determined to render as miserable as possible. All wicked men are his, and his care is directed to keep them under his power and dominion. Some marvelous accounts have been given, of his torturing and tormenting good people, and of some who sold themselves soul and body to him." An Inquiry Into The Scriptural Doctrine Concerning The Devil And Satan; Walter Balfour, pp. 15 & 16, published in 1827.

"Satan" is commonly accepted as being a tempter and deceiver who possesses the power to influence the unsuspecting to rebel against God. His influence is held as being the cause of every war, criminal act and sin committed since the creation of man.

The rebellion and fall of "Satan" and his minions is held as predating the Genesis account of the creation, which conveniently explains the lack of information concerning his fall. As his fall predates the creation account, he is conveniently situated to be the serpent that influenced Eve in the Garden of Eden.

In seeking to understand any biblical document or account, we must be governed by the rules of literature and view passages in context – to whom was the letter addressed, when was it written, why was it written, and how would the people being addressed have understood the language and/or the events being addressed. An example is found in the International Bible Encyclopedia under the heading of "Affliction."

AFFLICTION

I. Sources of Affliction.

- A. *God. The Hebrew mind did not dwell on secondary causes, but attributed everything, even afflictions, directly to the great First Cause and Author of all things: "Does evil befall a city, unless the Lord has done it?" (Amos 3:6); "I form light and create*

darkness, I make well and create woe [i.e., calamity], I am the Lord, who do all these things" (Isa

- B. 45:7). Thus, all things, including calamity, were referred to the divine operation. The Hebrew when afflicted did not doubt the universal sovereignty of God; yet, while assuming this sovereignty, he was sometimes tempted to accuse Him of indifference, neglect, or forgetfulness. Cf. Job passim; Isa 40:27; 49:14; Ezek 8:12; 9:9.

While Job is most often cited as an example of one who faithfully endures suffering, what is often missed is that Job remains steadfast despite recognizing that his misfortunes were from God.

Amos 3:7

*Surely the Lord God does nothing
Unless He reveals His secret counsel
To His servants the prophets.*

Amos, a prophet of God, declares that God does nothing without first revealing it to His prophets who will then reveal His message to the people. This poses some interesting questions. “Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord” (Is. 1:18).

If “*Satan*” exists and can exercise influence over God’s creation, why are there no warnings of his influence and guile given to the people in the Hebrew Scriptures? Why were Adam and Eve not cautioned against his influence? Did God deliberately withhold information that may have prevented their ruin? Why did God choose to destroy the people of Noah’s day or those of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah if their conduct was due to the seductive influence of “*Satan*” – a creation of God? This would be like incarcerating the children of a grade school who had come under the influence of a drug dealer, while allowing the drug dealer to continue plying his trade on the young and innocent. Would not the solution be to eliminate the source of the problem? Does it seem reasonable that a loving, righteous God would punish the people of His creation while allowing the responsible party - one of His own creation who had previously rebelled against Him - to continue his ruinous rampage that began before His creation of man? How do we reconcile the fact that God does not tempt any man (Js. 1:13), but allows a rebellious angel of His own creation to do so? Does He not hold some accountability for allowing this to happen? On the other hand, if “*Satan*” has the power assigned to him by myth, why did he not answer the challenge of Elijah and light the fire for the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:17ff)? While some would answer this question by stating that God prevented him from doing so, where is this stated? Would not the arbitrary binding and loosing of “*Satan*’s” powers be another indictment against God, who refuses to restrict “*Satan*’s” influence on His creation? Suffice it to say that the commonly held doctrine of “*Satan*” defies reason.

The Genesis record testifies that God is the creator of all things - the land, the sea, and all the creatures that live and the plants that grow. Heaven is His dwelling place, and all its spiritual beings are of His creation. Therefore, if “*Satan*” really is a fallen angel, he is a creation of God. If God has, in fact, cast him to the earth, and allows him to create havoc with His creation, then He, as his creator, bears the responsibility for his actions.

Does “*Satan*” exist in the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all other places of God’s creation? According to the myth, the answer is in the affirmative. How are we to reconcile this reasoning with the fact that God cannot and does not countenance wickedness and evil in any form? If “*Satan*” is a fallen angel who was created by God and dwelt in the heavenly realm, then evil can exist in heaven and God’s refusal to deal with him in a manner necessary for the sake of His people make’s him complicit in his evil.

1 John 1:5

And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

1 Timothy 6:16

who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.

James 1:17

Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.

1 Peter 1:15, 16

*15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;
16 because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."*

Anyone who has participated in a class where “*Satan*” has entered the discussion has heard the following logic expressed. “*If God created all things, then God created “Satan.” If “Satan” is the personification of evil, then God created evil. Therefore, how does a just God hold man accountable for his actions, if he is corrupted by an entity created by Him? In such a case, would not God, Himself, hold some accountability?*” The common response is the short and concise statement: man is created a creature of choice; therefore, he is free to choose between following “*Satan*” or God. Some go so far as to suggest that “*Satan*” is necessary for man to have a choice between good and evil - if there is no “*Satan*,” there is no evil - if there is no evil, only good remains - if only good remains, then man is no longer a creature of choice and cannot be judged or qualify for the reward of everlasting life. We can only conclude that while the premise of man being a creature of choice is sound, it does not answer the logical questions regarding man’s choices being influenced by some creation of God that is the personification of evil.

This study is based on the simple premise that God is not a source of confusion (1 Cor. 14:32). The object of our study is to engage in an examine the doctrine of “*Satan*” by appropriately translating the Hebrew and Greek terms rendered as “*satanas*” and “*diabolos*” and view them in the context where they are found. Our study will reveal that translators are pre-disposed to protecting the status quo and their pre-conceived convictions, rather than remaining faithful to the process of translation.

Jeremiah, a prophet of God, stated that the heart of man is more deceitful then all else.

Jeremiah 17:9

*"The heart is more deceitful than **all else**
And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"*

The phrase "*all else*," is all encompassing; therefore, "*Satan*" is included. If Jeremiah spoke correctly, we can only conclude that the heart of man is even more deceitful than "*Satan*." This being the case, what is the need and purpose of this great tempter and deceiver?

In the days of Noah, God did not bring any charge against "*Satan*" but based His assessment of man on the disposition of his heart, which is said to be continually devoted to the pursuit to evil.

Genesis 6:5

*Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of **his heart was only evil continually**.*

Genesis 8:21

*And the Lord smelled the soothing aroma; and the Lord said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, **for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth**; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.*

James does not associate the enticement to sin with the mystical presence of a "*fallen angel*," but with man himself.

James 1:14

*But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed **by his own lust**.*

Lust: Grk. *epithumias* - a longing, especially after that which is forbidden.

Own: Grk. *idias* - pertaining to self, i.e., one's own; by implication – private or separate.

James is clearly in agreement with Jeremiah concerning the deceitfulness of the heart, as he stated that man's temptation and failure is a product of his own lust. Jesus also stated that the source of evil lay within the heart of man.

Mark 7:15, 21-23

*15 **there is nothing** outside the man which can defile him **if it goes into him**; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man.*

*21 "For from within, **out of the heart of men**, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,*

22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.

23 "All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

Paul echoed Jesus when he listed the sins that were prevalent among those that were relying upon the "*flesh*" (their ability to find righteousness through the physical aspects of the Law). Paul declared that sin came into the world through Adam, not "*Satan*." Had "*Satan*" been instrumental in the fall of Adam and Eve, would he have not been the source of sin's entrance into the world?

Galatians 5:19, 20

*19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,
20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions,
factions,*

Romans 5:12

*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and
so death spread to all men, because all sinned —*

Therefore, we find that Jesus, James, and Paul placed the responsibility for failure directly upon the individual, with no mention of man being influenced by a mythical “fallen angel.”

When speaking to Cain, God stated that sin lay in wait for him, not “Satan.” It is to be noticed that God also told Cain that he could master sin, which Paul declares to be a part of our nature.

Genesis 4:7

*"If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, **sin is crouching at the door**; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."*

Romans 7:17

*So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but **sin which indwells me**.*

Peter also associates the “adversary” (“Satan”?) with the disposition of man’s heart.

Acts 5:3-4

*3 But Peter said, "Ananias, **why has Satan filled your heart** to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land?*

*4 "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? **Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart**? You have not lied to men but to God."*

The definite article appears before the term “adversary;” hence, we read: “*Why has the adversary filled your heart...*,” which is parallel to: “*Why is it that **you have conceived this deed in your heart**.*”

The perception that “Satan” has the power to perform deceitful wonders cannot be upheld as only God is said to possess such power. If He has given such power to “Satan,” then He is responsible for its use and result.

John 3:2

this man came to Him by night, and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

John 9:33

"If this man were not from God, He could do nothing."

The wonders of the wicked are said to be “*false*” wonders; hence, they are not true wonders.

2 Thessalonians 2:9

*that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of **Satan**, with all power and signs and **false wonders**,*

While the works of “*Satan*” are held to be fully evil, the myth holds that they do not necessarily appear as such, as he is held to be able to present himself as an angel of light. This is not in keeping with John 10, which denies the forces of evil as having such power.

John 10:21

Others were saying, "These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?"

While the list of contradictions is far more extensive than what has been presented, they are sufficient for our purpose. What are God’s people to do when confronted by such obvious contradictions? Are we to close our minds and insist that we are correct, or are we to examine

the scriptures to determine if these things are true? While most would say that we must study the scriptures, this can be problematic as the terms “*satanas*” and “*diabolos*” are not translated but transliterated into the terms “*Satan*” and “*devil*.” Another problem is our ability to achieve a level of objectivity that will allow us to disavow with what we have come to accept as truth. John Anderson, in his book entitled “*Satan: An Authorized Autobiography*” rightly states that “*One must be willing to be wrong before he/she can become right.*” Consequently, this study will only benefit those who are so inclined.

Each of us were exposed to stories of “*Satan*” and “*demons/devils*” before we reached the age of independent reasoning. Hence, we all approach the Bible with our bags packed full of pre-conceived ideas and perceptions. Some of our convictions are loosely held, which allows them to be remolded by various “*church doctrines*,” while others are so firmly embedded that they are cast in concrete. While our individual studies may cause us to abandon or modify certain perceptions, our religious affiliations will encourage us to hold firmly to others, while adding other myths that various “*church*” systems have adopted as “*sound doctrine*.”

While the place and importance of the King James Version cannot be disputed, the restrictions King James placed upon his translating committee have been largely responsible for perpetuating the myths and fairytales established by the early “*church*” fathers who were educated in rhetoric and philosophy and sought to make “*Christianity*” acceptable to their pagan brethren. There is no question that the instructions issued by King James were given for the purpose of insuring that the authority of the Church of England and his position as its head would remain secure. The problem is that the authority of the “*church*,” whether that of England or Rome, is largely dependent on myths, rather than fact. The first six of the fifteen conditions issued by King James are as follows.

1. The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the Bishop’s Bible, to be followed, **and as little altered as the original will permit.**

2. The names of the prophets and the holy writers, with other names in the text, to be retained, as near as may be, accordingly **as they are vulgarly used.**
3. **The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, as the word church not to be translated as congregation.**
4. When any word hath diverse significations, **that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the eminent fathers**, being agreeable to the propriety of the place and the analogies of faith.
5. The division of chapters to be altered either not at all, or as little as may be, if necessity so require.
6. **No marginal notes at all to be affixed**, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek words, which cannot, without some circumlocution, so briefly and fitly be expressed, in the text.

The above instructions ensured that traditionally held concepts, such as “*church*,” “*soul*,” “*hell*,” “*baptism*,” “*Satan*” and “*the devil*” would remain secure. Unknown to King James, his instructions were followed by succeeding generations of translators which has resulted in these myths being carried over into every Bible translation ever undertaken.

Our study will take place in three parts. The first part will examine the verses where the Greek term “*satanas*” (Satan) appears. The second part will examine the scriptures where the term “*diabolos*” (devil) appears. The third part will examine the subject of “*demons*.” Each verse will be examined in the context in which it appears. When properly translated and examined in the context of the people and conditions being addressed, we will find that they are free of any mention of “*Satan*.” There is no dismissing the fact that there are some who hold tradition to be of greater value than truth, despite truth bringing freedom from enslavement. For them, this study will be of no benefit.

John 8:32

and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. "

SATANAS

1. Slanderer, tempter, deceiver, adversary, destroyer, false accuser, opposer, one who is contrary or against all, to stand against.
2. Name given to the prince of the devils. Another name is *diábolos*, devil. In his name as Satan, he is the opposer, the adversary of both believers and unbelievers.

Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament

Borrowing from Hebrew and Aramaic meaning literally 'adversary.'

Louw and Nida Greek-English Lexicon

The above definitions are for the Greek term “*satanas* which is translated as “*Satan*.” Number one is the actual definition of the term and reflects the understanding of the people of the apostolic

period. Definition number two reflects the evolution of the term due to its common application. An example of “*word evolution*” is seen in our term “*gay*.” If one were to consult a dictionary that was published prior to the 1960’s, the term “*gay*” would simply express joy, happiness, or a carefree disposition. When “*gay*” began to denote a homosexual or alternate lifestyle, its original meaning was all but eradicated. Dictionaries were revised to illustrate the new meaning of the term. At some point, in the not-too-distant future, those who are exposed to old stories, poems, or songs, such as the “*Three Gay Cabelleros*,” will view such works as addressing those of an “*alternate*” lifestyle. This is the same crisis of understanding we confront when examining mistranslated terms in our Bibles. As the apostolic writings were addressed to first century people living in a certain area, we must limit our understanding accordingly. Hence, only definition number one is applicable.

The term “*Satan*” is actually a “*loanword*,” twice removed. A “*loanword*” is essentially a “*transliteration*” rather than a translation. A “*transliteration*” changes the foreign spelling of a word to create a term whose spelling and pronunciation is compatible with another language. This was done with the Greek term “*baptizo*” which, if translated, would be “*to immerse, to plunge, to dip, to get completely wet*.” However, the directives given by King James necessitated that the translators of the King James Version protect the baptismal practice of the Church of England; therefore, they “*transliterated*” the Greek word “*baptizo*” by dropping the “*o*” and adding the letter “*e*,” which gave it an English appearance and pronunciation. This made the term generic and applicable to any mode or practice one may wish to employ.

To arrive at the term “*Satan*,” a double “*transliteration*” was necessary. The Hebrew term is “*ha-Saa-Ta’an*,” and its meaning is in accord with definition #1. Between the 3rd and 1st centuries BCE, the Hebrew writings were translated by stages into the Greek language Version known as the Septuagint. During this process it was found that there was no Greek equivalent for the Hebrew term “*ha-Saa-Ta’an*,” hence, they transliterated the Hebrew term

into the Greek word “*satanas*.” “*Satanas*” was later transliterated into the English word “*Satan*.” Hence, the term “*Satan*” is not a translation, but a term that was created to perpetuate a myth. Therefore, if one wishes to view a given text as it was written, the term “*Satan*” must be replaced by one of the terms listed in definition number one - slanderer, tempter, deceiver, adversary, destroyer, false accuser, opposer, one who is contrary or against all, to stand against.

Our study will show that the apostolic writings do not use the term “*satanas*” of a spiritual entity, but of people, objects or circumstances that are in opposition to the purpose of God. There are two main applications of “*satanas*” in the apostolic writings – those who opposed the way of Jesus and man himself.

1. The “*adversary*” to the way of Jesus is often the chief priest, who represents the corruption of religious leaders of Israel. Jesus often accused these people of being consumed with greed and the lust for power. Jesus accused them of being the children of their fathers, who were liars and false accusers and persecuted and killed the prophets. They proved Jesus to be correct, as they falsely accused Jesus to the death, and slandered, persecuted, and killed those who accepted him as the anointed of God. Adversaries would also include those, such as Saul of Tarsus, who persecuted the saints

and the Judaizing teachers who were acting out of a misguided sense of loyalty to God in their effort to bind circumcision and the Law on the "gentiles" of the way of Jesus. These people were "adversaries" of the apostolic message and God's purpose in Jesus. Hence, they are rightly identified as "diabolos" (slanderers/ false speakers) and "satanas" (adversaries of God). It is to be noted that the apostolic letters never record any persecution of the saints, lest it was carried out or instituted by the "Jews" who refused to accept Jesus as the one of promise

Luke 13:17

*And as He said this, all **His opponents** were being humiliated; and the entire multitude was rejoicing over all the glorious things being done by Him.*

Luke 21:15

*for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of **your opponents** will be able to resist or refute.*

1 Corinthians 16:9

*for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and **there are many adversaries.***

Philippians 1:28

*in no way alarmed by **your opponents** — which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.*

2. Paul used himself as an example when describing man as having two natures - one that desires to serve God and the other disposed toward self-gratification (Rom. 7). He refers to these two natures as the "outer" man and the "inner" man – the "flesh" and the "spirit." He declares them to be at war with one another. The nature disposed to seeking physical gratification is "satanas," as it is in opposition to the determination of the inner or spiritual man to serve God.

Galatians 5:17

For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

Romans 7:14-25

14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

15 For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

16 But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.

17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Romans 8:7

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. NKJV

3. The pagan gods and/or their systems of worship are also “*satanas*,” as they stand in opposition to God and the way of righteousness.
4. The least recognized adversary (*satanas*) is the covenant of Law, which Paul said was against the people of the circumcision and was the power of sin and death.

Romans 7:9-11

9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;

10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;

11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

Colossians 2:14

*having canceled out the certificate of debt **consisting of decrees against us**, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*

1 Corinthians 15:56

*The sting of death is sin, and the **power of sin is the law**;*

5. The least likely “*satanas*” is God, who is opposed to all forms of evil.

Our first consideration will be the appearance of the term “*satanas*” in the Hebrew Scriptures, where the term is often rendered correctly.

Numbers 22:22, 32

*22 But God was angry because he was going, and the angel of the Lord took his stand in the way as an **adversary** against him. Now he was riding on his donkey and his two servants were with him.*

*32 And the angel of the Lord said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out as an **adversary**, because your way was contrary to me.*

In the above verses we find the term correctly translated as “*adversary*.” God was an “*adversary*” to Balaam who was determined to go his own way.

The above verses demonstrate that the term “*adversary*,” can represent a two-edged sword. On the one side God is the adversary to those who are determined go their own way, while from God’s perspective, they are the “*adversary*.”

1 Samuel 29:3, 4

3 Then the commanders of the Philistines said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" And Achish said to the commanders of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or rather these years, and I have found no fault in him from the day he deserted to me to this day?"

*4 But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with him, and the commanders of the Philistines said to him, "Make the man go back, that he may return to his place where you have assigned him, and do not let him go down to battle with us, lest in the battle he become an **adversary** to us. For with what could this man make himself acceptable to his lord? Would it not be with the heads of these men?"*

Verse 4 is the first time that “*satanas*” is used of a human being. The commanders of the Philistines were distrustful of David, as they feared that he might revolt against them and become their “*adversary*” in battle.

2 Samuel 19:22

*David then said, "What have I to do with you, O sons of Zeruiah, that you should this day be an **adversary** to me? Should any man be put to death in Israel today? For do I not know that I am king over Israel today?"*

In the above verse, David questions the disposition of sons of Zeruiah, who were opposed to his decision to show mercy to Shimei. It is to be noted that this verse has the plural form of the term, which denotes the existence of more than one “*Satanas*.”

1 Kings 5:4

*But now the Lord my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither **adversary** nor misfortune.*

The above verse records David commenting on the nation experiencing a period of peace, as no “*opposition*” (enemy) was besetting him.

1 Kings 11:14, 23-25

*14 Then the Lord raised up an **adversary** to Solomon, Hadad the Edomite; he was of the royal line in Edom.*

23 God also raised up another **adversary** to him, Rezon the son of Eliada, who had fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah.

24 And he gathered men to himself and became leader of a marauding band, after David slew them of Zobah; and they went to Damascus and stayed there and reigned in Damascus.

25 So he was an **adversary** to Israel all the days of Solomon, along with the evil that Hadad did; and he abhorred Israel and reigned over Aram.

Hadad the Edomite and Rezon the son of Eliada were “satanas” (adversaries) as they “opposed” the rule of Solomon and became enemies of Israel.

1 Chronicles 21:1

Then **Satan** (adversary) stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel.

2 Samuel 24:1

Now again the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and it incited David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."

Excepting the book of Job, the above verse is the first time that “satanas” is rendered as “Satan.” While the text of First Chronicles appears to “pin the blame” on “Satan,” the text of 2 Samuel identifies God as the “adversary” that stood up against Israel. The anger of the Lord was due to David’s lack of trust in His protection, which caused him to take a census to determine its military might.

1 Chronicles 21:8

And David said to God, "**I have sinned** greatly, in that **I have done this thing**. But now, please take away the iniquity of Thy servant, for **I have done very foolishly**."

David made no excuses, nor did he place the blame on a “fallen angel” named “Satan.” He simply and honestly placed the responsibility for his actions upon himself.

Ezra 4:6

Now in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an **accusation** against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

Referring to an “adversarial” document as an “accusation” is appropriate. In this case “Satanas” was a written document, rather than a supernatural being.

Psalms 38:19, 20

19 But **my enemies** are vigorous, and they are strong; And those who hate me wrongfully have multiplied.

20 Those also who render evil for good, They are my **adversaries**, because I follow what is good. KJV

In the above text, the “adversaries” were those who were enemies of David. The term is in the plural form which indicates the existence of more than one “Satanas.”

Psalms 71:13

*Let those who are **adversaries** of my soul (life) be ashamed and consumed;
Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor, who seek to injure me.*

The entirety of Psalm 71 is David lamenting that he had enemies who desired his death. The term rendered as “soul” simply means life, breath of life, that which animates the body. The mortal nature of the “soul” is seen in the phrase “who seek to injure me.” This also identifies the “satanas” as being human enemies of David.

Psalms 109:4, 6, 20, 29

*4 In return for my love they act as my **accusers**;
But I am in prayer.
6 Appoint a wicked man over him;
And let an **accuser** stand at his right hand.
7 When he is judged, let him come forth guilty;
And let his prayer become sin.
20 Let this be the reward of my **accusers** from the Lord,
And of those who speak evil against my soul.
29 Let my **accusers** be clothed with dishonor,
And let them cover themselves with their own shame as with a robe.*

As the term is in the plural form it prohibits an understanding of “Satan,” the “fallen angel.” The nature of the “adversary” is seen in verse 6, which identifies the “satanas” as “wicked man.”

Zechariah 3:1, 2

*1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and **Satan** standing at his right hand to **accuse him**.
2 And the Lord said to **Satan**, “The Lord rebuke you, **Satan**! Indeed, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?”*

This is the last appearance of the term rendered as “Satan” in the Hebrew Scriptures. As in the book of Job, the term is not properly translated except for of the phrase “to accuse him.” Some Bible versions have a footnote that indicates a translation of “be his adversary.” In the Septuagint, the term “diabolos” (slanderer, false accuser) replaces the Hebrew term rendered as “satanas.” If the term is properly translated as “adversary,” the meaning becomes obvious. A reading of Zechariah 3 through 5 reveals that Tatnai and Shethar-boznai were the “adversaries” being addressed. The nature of their “opposition” is seen in 4:6.

Ezra 4:6

Now in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

“SATAN” IN JOB

The term “*Satan*” appears fourteen times in the book of Job. In the Septuagint - the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures - the Hebrew scholars used the term “*diabolos*,” which denotes a “*false accuser*” or “*slanderer*.” In either case, the term is commonly understood as referring to a “*fallen angel*” known as “*Satan*,” or “*the Devil*.” Translating the original language as “*Satan*” in Job and “*adversary*” in all the other books of the Hebrew Scriptures demonstrates inconsistency on the part of the translators. Their efforts have led to the common perception that “*Satan*” had, or has enormous power, depending on one’s view of “*Satan*.” If we accept that the “*ha-Saa-Ta’an*” is a mythical “*fallen angel*” devoted to the promotion of evil and the destruction of God’s creation, then, based on what is revealed in the book of Job, we must also accept that his powers of persuasion are able to influence God. While this seems unreasonable, it is, nonetheless, undeniably expressed by the words of God. On the other hand, if Satan possesses power, the text indicates that he can only use it if he receives God’s permission to do so.

A careful reading of the book will demonstrate that it has a regimen which indicates that it is most likely an allegory, rather than an account of an actual person and event. As the calamities of the book unfold, each disaster has a single escapee that is left to bring the news to Job. At the end of the book, all of Job’s possessions are precisely doubled, with no variation, and the numbers of his offspring are the same as in the beginning. Job is left to live out his days in peace, without any indication that his diseases had been healed. Job is the only person to have suffered such an experience, as the scriptures do not indicate that “*Satan*” ever troubled such notables as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, etc. Not only were these men of faith not directly afflicted by “*Satan*,” there is no indication that they ever knew of his existence. Does it seem reasonable that Job was the only person attacked by “*Satan*”?

Was the “*ha-Saa-Ta’an*” of Job representative of an evil being or merely evil personified? The Hebrew language uses the definite article, which renders the term a common noun, not a proper noun. As such, the term indicates the function of an entity that is not identified. This is seen in Young’s Literal Translation of the verse.

Job 1:6

*And the day is, that sons of God come in to station themselves by Jehovah, and there doth come also **the Adversary** in their midst. YLT*

The importance of the definite article is seen in the statements – “*I bought bread from the baker*” and “*I bought bread from Baker*.” The presence of the definite article indicates the nature of a source that is not identified. The absence of the definite article indicates the proper name of the person from whom the purchase was made.

As we begin our examination of Job, we must bear in mind that understanding requires us to view “*ha-Saa-Ta’an*” according to its proper definition and give serious consideration to the context of the book and the immediate context of individual verses. Job is part of the Hebrew

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writings commonly referred to as the “*Old testament*.” These compositions were not written or compiled into the structure that appears in our Bibles until the time of the Babylonian captivity. While the stories and historical events of the “*Old Testament*” existed in some form for decades

and centuries, they were not in an organized format until the time of Ezra. Nor was this the final draft as the Hebrew Scriptures have been subject to editing until the 10th century CE.

The Masoretes were a group of Hebrew scholars who worked for 400 years to collect all the versions of the Old Testament and refine them into an authoritative text. Meaning “*preservers of tradition*,” they consisted of two families, Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali, who worked in the city of Tiberias on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee from the Fifth Century through the 10th Century.

Rabbi Jordan Parr, of Temple Beth El, and Dan Johnson, head elder of the Emet HaTorah Church, say the Masoretes should be better known because their accomplishment was paramount. “*Various versions of the Bible were circulating throughout the Jewish world and they vocalized it, or put vowels where there had only been dots and dashes, and added chapters and verses*,” Rabbi Parr said.

“Scribal errors had crept into the hand-written copies like typos. When a scribe looked at a scroll and copied onto a new one, it was easy for his hand to slip and make an honest mistake that went unnoticed and then was recopied. Their work became the standard Bible around the world.”

The Hebrew writings only use the term “*ha-Saa-Ta'an*” in the context of the disposition of men, God, or His angels (messengers). There is no evidence that we are to view Job as being an exception to the term’s common application throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. We must also bear in mind that the Israelites based their service to God on the Torah and their traditions which record nothing of a “*fallen angel*” named “*Satan*.” An open and honest reading of the book will demonstrate that the villain(s) was a human “*adversary*,” who possessed no power beyond that of human endeavor.

Job 1:6

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.

It is commonly held that “*Satan*” appeared before God in the heavenly realm; however, the text makes no mention of heaven or the heavenly realm. If heaven is a place of purity, how could evil appear before God? The language simply states that “*sons of God*” – the faithful - were assembling before God and the “*adversary*” was among them. Therefore, the “*adversary*” had an earthly presence, and was of the same nature as those assembling before God.

What was taking place is found in Genesis 4 through 6. Genesis 4:16-24 records that Cain took a wife and had children and lists his descendents. That record does not state that any of Cain’s lineage worshipped God, while it does state that those of the seed of Seth began to do so. Hence, those of the lineage of Cain held an “*adversarial*” disposition toward those of the lineage of Seth.

Genesis 4:25, 26

25 And Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for, she said, "God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel; for Cain killed him."

26 And to Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord.

Genesis 5 is a record of the generations of Adam through Seth up to Noah who are the “sons of God” noted in Job.

Genesis 6:1, 2

1 Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them,

2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.

After a time, the “sons of God” (those of the seed of Seth) began to look upon the daughters of men (the seed of Cain) and took them as wives. Hence, the “adversary” came to be among the “sons of God” as they assembled themselves before the Lord. Cain and his seed were condemned to roam the earth, which relates to the statement that the “adversary” had been wandering the earth.

Genesis 4:12

*When you cultivate the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you; **you shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth.***

Job 1:7

*And Jehovah saith unto the Adversary, 'Whence comest thou?' And the Adversary answereth Jehovah and saith, '**From going to and fro in the land, and from walking up and down on it.**' YLT*

The “adversary” believed that Job’s righteousness was due to God’s protection and generosity. He believed that if God were to withhold His blessings, Job’s dedication to Him would change. To expose the error of the “adversary,” God gave Job into his hands, with the stipulation that Job could not be physically harmed.

Job 1:12

And Jehovah saith unto the Adversary, 'Lo, all that he hath [is] in thy hand, only unto him put not forth thy hand.' And the Adversary goeth out from the presence of Jehovah. YLT

In the second appearance of the “adversary,” God is persuaded to allow Job to be physically afflicted, but not killed.

Job 2:6, 7

6 And Jehovah saith unto the Adversary, 'Lo, he [is] in thy hand; only his life take care of.'

7 And the Adversary goeth forth from the presence of Jehovah, and smiteth Job with a sore ulcer from the sole of his foot unto his crown. YLT

Job 2:6

So the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life." NASU

The sequence of events, as well as rendering the Hebrew terms as “Satan” and “power,” has led to the conclusion that “Satan” possessed the power necessary to bring all the recorded calamities upon Job. However, if we examine the text and the language, we will find that this is far from being an accurate assessment. The Hebrew term rendered as “power” refers to the “*open hand of a human being*” and symbolized the right of possession or the receiving of a privilege. As the “adversary” had an earthly presence and assembled with God’s people, God gave Job over to a human “adversary.” This enabled the Sabeans and Chaldeans to carry out successful campaigns of theft, destruction, and murder; therefore, the “adversary” had an association with these people, who were wandering bands that roamed the land and were not the people of God. It is significant that such people were known as “*Shaitan*,” and continue to be so called today. Bear in mind that prior to these events, they had been prevented from having success against Job, as God had “*hedged him about*,” which is to say that He protected him and his family and all his possessions (1:10).

Job 1:14-19

14 that a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them,

15 and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

*16 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "**The fire of God fell from heaven** and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you."*

17 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you."

18 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house,

19 and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died; and I alone have escaped to tell you."

While the Sabeans and the Chaldeans were afflicting Job, it is to be noted that the fire of destruction came down out of heaven; hence, God had also become Job's "adversary." As stated in the second appearance of the "adversary," the wind was an act of God.

Job 2:3

*And Jehovah saith unto the Adversary, 'Hast thou set thy heart unto My servant Job because there is none like him in the land, a man perfect and upright, fearing God and turning aside from evil? and still he is keeping hold on his integrity, **and thou dost move Me against him** to swallow him up for nought!' YLT*

Whether Job's loss was at the hands of the Sabeans and Chaldeans, or the result of a supernatural or natural catastrophe, they all emanated from God, who had moved against Job with the intent of ruin. If we follow the reasoning that "*Satan*" had incited God to act against Job, we can only conclude that "*Satan's*" influence reaches into heaven, itself. On the other hand, as God had moved against Job, He became Job's "*adversary*." Previously, we presented examples of God being cast in the role of an "*adversary*" - when He moved David to number Israel and when His angel stood in opposition to Balaam (pgs. 14, 15).

Job 2:7

And the Adversary goeth forth from the presence of Jehovah, and smiteth Job with a sore ulcer from the sole of his foot unto his crown. YLT

The above verse makes it appear as though "*Satan*" possessed the power to inflict a physical disease upon Job. However, the "*adversary*" did not say "*allow me to stretch out my hand.*" In both the appearances before God, the "*adversary*" asked God to "*put forth thy hand,*" which places that power in the hands of God.

Job 1:11

*"But **put forth Thy hand** now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse Thee to Thy face."*

Job 2:5

*"However, **put forth Thy hand**, now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse Thee to Thy face."*

Scholars agree with the opinion offered by Adam Clarke in his commentary on Job.

*[Sore boils] Bishchiyn raa±, "with an evil inflammation." What this diabolical disorder was, interpreters are not agreed. Some think it was the leprosy, and this is the reason why he dwelt by himself, and had his habitation in an unclean place, without the city, (Septuagint, *exo tes poleos*,) or in the open air: and the reason why his friends beheld him afar off, Job 2:12, was because they knew that the disorder was infectious. Adam Clarke's Commentary, Job 2:7.*

If the disease was infectious, it is quite possible that a human "*adversary*" arranged to have Job exposed to the disease. On the other hand, the "*adversary*" had asked God to stretch out His hand, which places the power in the hands of God. If the "*adversary*" did possess the power to inflict a disease upon Job, he received it from God, and it must be limited to the incident at hand. Bear in mind that the gospel attributed to John declares that the "*Jews*" held that only God can perform works that are contrary to nature.

John 3:2

this man came to Him by night, and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

There is another view that is probably the most correct. Let's say that I hire an individual to steal an artifact that I covet. While that individual is the one who steals the object, it can be accurately stated that I was the one who had done so. This is the concept of "agency" which is used profusely throughout the scriptures. In inflicting the various miseries upon Job, God stated that He had been incited to do so by the desires of the "adversary" (Job 2:3); therefore, God was acting in the capacity of their "agent." While God inflicted these miseries, the "adversary" was the responsible party, which makes the statement that the "adversary...smote Job with sore boils," to be in accord with the customary language and phrasing of the Hebrew people.

At this point we must consider whether we want to accept tradition, which the book of Job describes as "speak as the foolish women speak," or to be in accord with the scriptures. While our tradition holds that "Satan" is a "fallen angel" who is responsible all the ills in our lives, this is not the disposition of Job. From the beginning of his misery to the end, Job saw his condition, whether good or bad, as being in accord with the will and hand of God.

Job 1:21

And he said,

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there.

*The Lord gave and **the Lord has taken away**. Blessed be the name of the Lord."*

Job 2:9, 10

*9 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? **Curse God and die!**"*

*10 But he said to her, "**You speak as one of the foolish women speaks**. Shall we indeed accept good **from God** and **not accept adversity?**" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.*

The term rendered as "curse" (vs. 9) never held such a meaning. While many lexicons state that it can mean either a blessing or a curse, can one term define opposites? The term means to bless or praise. Job's wife was astounded that he could continue to praise God while suffering misery to the point unto death. The term rendered as "God" is not the term reserved for Almighty God, but a generic term used to refer to any recognized form of deity. Therefore, Job's wife, lays the blame for their troubles on one God and advocating that he transfer his loyalty to a different god. This same term is used when expressing Job's concern for his sons. Job was not concerned that they may have "cursed" God but may have blessed/praised a false god.

Job 1:5

*And it came about, when the days of feasting had completed their cycle, that Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, "Perhaps my sons have sinned and **cursed (blessed) God** in their hearts." Thus Job did continually.*

Chapters 4 and 5 record the discourse of Eliphaz, the Temanite, regarding the calamity that had come upon Job. The text addresses the ways and power of God in the affairs of men, and associates Job's condition with the discipline of God. At no time is there a mention of "Satan," or his involvement in the affairs of men.

Job 5:17, 18

17 "Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproves,

*So do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.
18 "For He inflicts pain, and gives relief;
He wounds, and His hands also heal.*

The above verses are taken from Job's response to Eliphaz. He concurs with the position of Eliphaz, as he understands that his present distress has come from God.

Job 6:4

*"For the arrows of the Almighty are within me;
Their poison my spirit drinks;
The terrors of God are arrayed against me.*

In his pleadings with God, Job acknowledges that God is the source of his distress.

Job 7:20

*"Have I sinned? What have I done to Thee,
O watcher of men?
Why hast Thou set me as Thy target,
So that I am a burden to myself?*

Throughout the book, Job repeatedly places the disposition of the righteous and the wicked with God and declares Him to be the source of his present distress.

Job 9:22-24

*22 "It is all one; therefore I say,
'He destroys the guiltless and the wicked.'
23 "If the scourge kills suddenly,
He mocks the despair of the innocent.
24 "The earth is given into the hand of the wicked;
He covers the faces of its judges. **If it is not He, then who is it?***

The prophets Amos and Isaiah concur that God is the source of man's afflictions.

Amos 3:6

*If a trumpet is blown in a city will not the people tremble?
If a calamity occurs in a city has not the Lord done it?*

Isaiah 45:7

*The One forming light and creating darkness,
Causing well-being and creating calamity;
I am the Lord who does all these.*

Job's question is significant - If the despair of the innocent is not the will of God, then who? The answer to his question is found in 12:16, which declares that both the deceived and the deceiver belong to God.

Job 12:16

*"With Him are strength and sound wisdom,
The misled and the misleader belong to Him.*

Clearly, Job did not recognize anyone, other than God, as being endowed with the power to accomplish what he was experiencing. Not once in the entire book does Job or any of his contemporaries place any power or blame with "Satan." The entire book is a testament to the fact that the ancients recognized that God, and God alone, was responsible for all their experiences.

Job 12:7-10

*7 "But now ask the beasts, and let them teach you;
And the birds of the heavens, and let them tell you.
8 "Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you;
And let the fish of the sea declare to you.
9 "Who among all these does not know
That the hand of the Lord has done this,
10 In whose hand is the life of every living thing,
And the breath of all mankind?*

Job 16:9-14

*9 "His anger has torn me and hunted me down,
He has gnashed at me with His teeth;
My adversary glares at me.
10 "They have gaped at me with their mouth,
They have slapped me on the cheek with contempt;
They have massed themselves against me.
11 "God hands me over to ruffians,
And tosses me into the hands of the wicked.
12 "I was at ease, but He shattered me,
And He has grasped me by the neck and shaken me to pieces;
He has also set me up as His target.
13 **"His arrows surround me.**
Without mercy **He splits my kidneys open;**
He pours out my gall on the ground.
14 **"He breaks through me with breach after breach;**
He runs at me like a warrior.*

Job 19:6, 21

*6 Know then that **God has wronged me,**
And has **closed His net around me.**
21 "Pity me, pity me, O you my friends,
For the hand of God has struck me.*

Job 42:11

*Then all his brothers, and all his sisters, and all who had known him before, came to him,
and they ate bread with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him **for all***

the evil (bad things) that the Lord had brought on him. And each one gave him one piece of money, and each a ring of gold.

The book of Job makes no mention of the “adversary” after the first two chapters of the book. Neither is there any mention of the “adversary” being punished or rebuked. However, the same cannot be said of Job’s friends.

Job 1:6, 7

6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.

7 The Lord said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it."

The original language states that when the people came to present themselves before the Lord, the “adversary” came with them. The term “earth” does not appear in verse 7, which merely states that the “adversary” had been going to and fro. There are several verses which state that when the people came before a priest, altar, tabernacle or temple, they were coming before the Lord; hence, this is an earthly gathering of men which establishes that the “adversary” had an earthly presence. This allows the possibility that Job’s “friends” were the “adversary,” and they made accusations against him out of jealousy. There are several verses that indicate that Job came to view his friends, as being against him.

Job 19:19, 28, 29

19 "All my associates abhor me, And those I love have turned against me.

28 "If you say, 'How shall we persecute him?'

And 'What pretext for a case against him can we find?'

29 "Then be afraid of the sword for yourselves,

For wrath brings the punishment of the sword,

So that you may know there is judgment."

Viewing the book of Job objectively and viewing “*ha-Saa-Ta'an*” as denoting an “adversary,” we find no basis for understanding the involvement of a supernatural “fallen angel,” or any evidence that such a being exists. Therefore, the concept of “*Satan*” must be pre-determined and inserted into the text.

The book of Job is a story that demonstrates that God can bless or curse and will reward those who remain faithful. While Job’s friends rightly held that all the various dispositions of man are from God, they erred in associating Job’s present distress with sin. They failed to recognize that God causes the rain to fall upon the just and the unjust. The force of the book lies in the fact that Job rightly recognized that his present distress emanated from God, and despite this knowledge, he remained steadfast in his commitment to Him. If we introduce an evil, supernatural being into the story, endow it with power, and place the disposition of Job upon him, the object of the book becomes lost. There is a vast difference in the message contained in the example of Job’s steadfast faith, if he maintained it despite knowing that he was suffering at the hands of God, or if he is seen as suffering at the hands of an evil entity, endowed with power to bring calamity.

Freidrich Jahn, in his comments on Psalm 102:9, suggests that the text of Zechariah 3 and Job 1 & 2 were written in a manner that was intended to mirror the disputes and judicial hearings of the period. The judges were seated on the floor, with legs crossed. A secretary was present to record the proceedings along with any agreements or judgments reached. The parties in dispute stood before the judge or judges, with the “*accuser*” being referred to as “*ha-Saa-Ta’an*” (adversary). The “*ha-Saa-Ta’an*” stood to the right of the accused, who often appeared with hair in disarray and clad in a garment of mourning.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

Genesis 3:1-7

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"

2 And the woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.'"

4 And the serpent said to the woman, "You surely shall not die!"

5 "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

9 Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?"

10 And he said, "I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."

11 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

12 And the man said, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate."

13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

14 And the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly shall you go, And dust shall you eat All the days of your life;

15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

With few exceptions, the entire “*Christian*” community holds the “*serpent*” to be “*Satan*” with no consideration given to two undeniable facts. There is nothing in any manuscript of Genesis that suggests the presence of a “*fallen angel*” with evil intentions; nor is there any evidence in any

manuscript of the documents we know as the “Old Testament” that places him in the garden. The Garden of Eden symbolizes the heavenly realm where no evil exists. It was not until Adam and Eve violated the prohibition against eating of the tree of knowledge that evil entered the garden. When we place “*Satan*” into the story, we give him the characteristics of God!

The prohibition against eating of the “*tree of the knowledge of good and evil*” is given to Adam; yet, without explanation, “*Satan*” knows of it, and has the power to either transform himself into a serpent or take possession of one. As he is alive and well in the Garden of Eden and is held to exist in our present time, he is eternal. Also, he is said to be everywhere, tempting all men since the time of the creation, he is omnipresent. Does this not suggest God like qualities?

Question: If “*Satan*” did assume the form of a “*serpent*,” or took possession of one, why did God curse the “*serpent*” who was obviously a powerless victim? Is this the judgment of a wise and just God? This is the equivalent of incarcerating all the drug using children at a grade school, while allowing the known drug dealer to continue plying his trade on the grounds of the school. Can Eden be paradise if “*Satan*” is present?

While it is the common perception that the “*serpent*” was “*Satan*,” the manuscripts of Genesis do not contain any reference to such an evil entity; nor do any of the books attributed to Moses. The children of Israel regarded the Torah – the five books attributed to Moses - to be sacred as they were God breathed. The children of Israel had no understanding of the entity we refer to as “*Satan*” as the Hebrew writings do not contain any warnings or definitive statements that would remotely suggest the existence of such a being. Therefore, to introduce “*Satan*” into the Genesis story, or any other portion of the Hebrew writings, is to give those writings a meaning that the people, to whom they were written, did not hold.

The first indication that something is amiss is that understanding the “*serpent*” to be “*Satan*” requires us to be inconsistent. God curses the serpent, but it is “*Satan’s*” head will be bruised, not that of the “*serpent*.” If we set aside the myth of “*Satan*” and view the fall of Adam and Eve from a Hebrew perspective, we will find that the text of Genesis 3 presents some very meaningful alternatives.

It is to be noted that the text does not state that “*the serpent was more crafty than **any other** beast of the field.*” The unwarranted insertion of the word “*other*” is the result of “*eisegesis*,” which denotes interpreting a text according to a previously held conviction. Its insertion is for the purpose of indicating that the “*serpent*” was a beast of the field. The original language simply states that “*the serpent was more crafty than **any** beast of the field*” (vs. 3). Therefore, the “*serpent*” possessed an intelligence that was superior to all the beasts of the field but was not necessarily of their number. Hence, whoever or whatever the “*serpent*” was, it or he was “*more crafty*” than any beast of the field. This is a very telling statement. “*Satan*” is held as being “*more crafty*” than any man; yet, the Genesis account makes no statement to that effect as man is not included in the phrase “*any beast of the field.*” Therefore, in seeking the identity of the “*serpent*,” we cannot exempt man from consideration as the Genesis account states that man was given dominion and rule over “*every living thing that moves on the earth*,” as well as possessing the ability to “*subdue*” them.

Genesis 1:28

And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Before proceeding, we should bear in mind that science has determined that snakes are of lesser intelligence than other “*beasts of the field*,” as they are unable to learn or function above their nature.

As the story of the Garden of Eden is part of the sacred writings of the Hebrew people, it is necessary to understand the manner in which these people and their writings used the terms “*serpent*,” “*dragon*” and “*viper*.” We find that these terms are often interchangeable and used metaphorically to denote the disposition of men who are less than honorable.

Job 26:13

*"By His breath the heavens are cleared;
His hand has pierced the **fleeing serpent**.*

Isaiah 27:1

*In that day the Lord will punish
Leviathan the **fleeing serpent**,
With His fierce and great and mighty sword,
Even Leviathan the **twisted serpent**;
And He will kill **the dragon** who lives in the sea.*

Isaiah 51:9, 10

*9 Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord;
Awake as in the days of old, the generations of long ago.
Was it not Thou who **cut Rahab in pieces**,
Who pierced **the dragon**?
10 Was it not Thou who dried up the sea,
The waters of the great deep;
Who made the depths of the sea a pathway
For the redeemed to cross over?*

In the above verses, Job and Isaiah refer to the Lord’s slaying of the “*dragon*” which is also referred to as the “*twisted serpent*.” Isaiah 51 identifies this event as taking place at the time that the Lord separated the sea for His people; hence the reference it to Pharaoh, who was in pursuit of God's people. Isaiah equates the piercing of the dragon with cutting Rahab in pieces (vs. 9). This is given clarification in Isaiah 30:7, where he identifies Rahab as Egypt.

Isaiah 30:7

*Even **Egypt**, whose help is vain and empty.
Therefore, **I have called her**
"**Rahab** who has been exterminated."*

Thus, the “*dragon*” and the “*twisted serpent*” represent Pharaoh who, in turn, represents Egypt who’s might the Lord destroyed at the parting of the Red Sea.

Isaiah 14:28-31

28 In the year that King Ahaz died this oracle came:

29 "Do not rejoice, O Philistia, all of you,

Because the rod that struck you is broken;

*For from the **serpent's** root a **viper** will come out,*

*And its fruit will be a **flying serpent**.*

30 "And those who are most helpless will eat,

And the needy will lie down in security;

I will destroy your root with famine,

And it will kill off your survivors.

31 "Wail, O gate; cry, O city;

Melt away, O Philistia, all of you;

For smoke comes from the north,

And there is no straggler in his ranks.

In the above text, the breaking of the rod refers to the deaths of Kings Uzziah and Ahaz. In their campaigns against the Philistines, they had been as a rod of iron. God, through Isaiah, warns the Philistines that the death of Ahaz would not be an occasion for rejoicing as from his (the serpent’s) root would be born another “*serpent*” that would inflict even greater damage on their nation.

“That is, though Uzziah is dead, yet there shall spring up from him one far more destructive to you than he was; one who shall carry the desolations of war much further, and who shall more effectually subdue you. Most commentators have concurred in supposing that Hezekiah is here referred to, who 'smote the Philistines even unto Gaza and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city' (2 Kings 18:8).” Barnes' Notes, Isaiah 14:29

Therefore, in these verses, God, through Isaiah, refers to the kings of Judah as “*serpents*” which denotes the manner they were viewed by their enemies.

Amos 9:1-4

1 I saw the Lord standing beside the altar, and He said,

"Smite the capitals so that the thresholds will shake,

And break them on the heads of them all!

Then I will slay the rest of them with the sword;

They will not have a fugitive who will flee,

Or a refugee who will escape.

2 "Though they dig into Sheol,

From there shall My hand take them;

And though they ascend to heaven,

From there will I bring them down.

3 "And though they hide on the summit of Carmel,

I will search them out and take them from there;

*And though they conceal themselves from My sight on the floor of the sea,
From there **I will command the serpent** and it will bite them.
4 "And though they go into captivity before their enemies,
From there **I will command the sword** that it slay them,
And I will set My eyes against them for evil and not for good."*

The prophecy of Amos announced the destruction and captivity of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Amos used the term “*serpent*” in reference to the Assyrians who God had chosen to bear the sword of His wrath. They were as serpents in the eyes of those being defeated by them.

Matthew 3:7

*But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You **brood of vipers**, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"*

Matthew 12:34

*"You **brood of vipers**, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.*

Matthew 23:33

*"You serpents, you **brood of vipers**, how shall you escape the sentence of hell?"*

In the above verses, John and Jesus use the term “*vipers*” when speaking of the vile nature of religious leaders of Israel, whose corruption placed them in “*opposition*” to the will of God.

There is little difference between a “*viper*” and a “*serpent*,” save for one being more venomous than the other. In Mt. 23:23, Jesus used both terms in a single application, which indicates that the two terms are interchangeable.

The Garden of Eden

Luke 10:19

*"Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon **serpents and scorpions**, and over all the power of **the enemy**, and nothing shall injure you.*

Ezekiel 2:6

*"And you, son of man, neither fear them nor fear their words, though thistles and thorns are with you and you **sit on scorpions**; **neither fear their words nor be dismayed at their presence, for they are a rebellious house.***

Jesus used the term “*scorpions*” when characterizing the enemies of His disciples, while Ezekiel used the term in reference to discomfort and calamity.

Therefore, while the terms “*serpents*” and “*vipers*” often have literal applications, they were also used metaphorically to describe men who are toxic to others. Some are serving God’s purpose while others are enemies of God and/or His people. Therefore, if our view of the Genesis story is to be consistent with the scriptures, we must view the term “*serpent*” as either a physical serpent,

or as being used metaphorically of a human being who is “*poisonous*” to others. The Hebrew writings use the term in no other way.

The curse that God places on the “*serpent*” - *on your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life* - has led to the conclusion that the serpent had legs and lost them due to the curse. In the interest of consistency, we must ask what happened to the “*serpent's*” ability to speak, as this is not mentioned as being taken away? A search of the Hebrew writings will reveal that crawling in the dust was a Hebraic expression that denoted a change in one's position. It can refer to being exalted from a lowly position, or to being demoted from a position of respect to one of humiliation.

1 Kings 16:1, 2

*1 Now the word of the Lord came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying,
2 "Inasmuch as I exalted you from the dust and made you leader over My people Israel, and you have walked in the way of Jeroboam and have made My people Israel sin, provoking Me to anger with their sins,*

Some might understand that God is telling Jehu that he, like Adam, had been created from dust; however, the Hebrew term that is rendered as “*exalted*” implies a “*lifting up*” or “*exaltation*.” Jehu’s “*lifting up*” is recorded in Second Kings.

2 Kings 9:5, 6, 11

*When he came, behold, the captains of the army were sitting, and he said, "I have a word for you, O captain." And Jehu said, "For which one of us?" And he said, "For you, O captain."
6 And he arose and went into the house, and he poured the oil on his head and said to him, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'I have anointed you king over the people of the Lord, even over Israel.'
11 Now Jehu came out to the servants of his master, and one said to him, "Is all well? Why did this mad fellow come to you?" And he said to them, "You know very well the man and his talk."*

From the above verses, we learn that Jehu was a captain in the army and subject to a master. Therefore, God’s reference to raising him from the dust refers to Jehu being raised from a position of servitude to that of ruler over Israel.

Psalms 44:24, 25

*24 Why dost Thou hide Thy face,
And forget our affliction and our oppression?
25 For our soul (vitality) has sunk down into the dust;
Our body cleaves to the earth.*

In the above verses, the phrase “*sunk down into the dust*” symbolizes the state of depression suffered by those who felt that they had been abandoned by God.

Psalms 72:9

*Let the nomads of the desert bow before him;
And **his enemies lick the dust.***

Psalms 113:7

*He raises **the poor from the dust,**
And lifts the needy from the ash heap,*

Psalms 119:24, 25

*24 Thy testimonies also are my delight;
They are my counselors.
25 My soul (vitality) **cleaves to the dust;**
Revive me according to Thy word.*

In each of the above verses, the references to “*dust*” refers to a disposition of low circumstance.

Isaiah 29:1-4

*1 Woe, O Ariel, Ariel the city where David once camped!
Add year to year, observe your feasts on schedule.
2 And I will bring distress to Ariel,
And she shall be a city of lamenting and mourning;
And she shall be like an Ariel to me.
3 And I will camp against you encircling you,
And I will set siegeworks against you,
And I will raise up battle towers against you.
4 Then you shall be brought low;
From the earth you shall speak,
And **from the dust** where you are prostrate,
Your words shall come.
Your voice shall also be like that of a spirit from the ground,
And your speech **shall whisper from the dust.***

Ariel, “*the lion of God*,” is a reference to Jerusalem. Isaiah uses the term “*dust*” to depict the low circumstances that would come upon those of the exalted city.

Isaiah 47:1

*"Come down and sit in the dust,
O virgin daughter of Babylon;
Sit on the ground without a throne,
O daughter of the Chaldeans.
For you shall no longer be called tender and delicate.*

In the above verse, we find that to “*sit in the dust*” denotes a “*coming down*.” God, through Isaiah, was foretelling the demise of the mighty nation of Babylon and her complete and utter humiliation.

Isaiah 52:1, 2

I Awake, awake,

*Clothe yourself in your strength, O Zion;
Clothe yourself in your beautiful garments,
O Jerusalem, the holy city.
For the uncircumcised and the unclean
Will no more come into you.
2 Shake yourself **from the dust**, rise up,
O captive Jerusalem;
Loose yourself from the chains around your neck,
O captive daughter of Zion.*

The above text announced the restoration of Judah, who had gone into Babylonian captivity. While in Captivity they were a humiliated people, which is the equivalent of living in the “*dust*.”

Lamentations 3:14-18

*14 I have become a laughingstock to all my people,
Their mocking song all the day.
15 He has filled me with bitterness,
He has made me drunk with wormwood.
16 And He has broken my teeth with gravel;
He has made me **cower in the dust**.
17 And my soul has been rejected from peace;
I have forgotten happiness.
18 So I say, "My strength has perished,
And so has my hope from the Lord."*

In the above text, Jeremiah laments the humiliating circumstances that he has been called upon to endure which he equates with “*cowering in the dust*.”

Micah 7:17

*17 They will **lick the dust like a serpent**,
Like reptiles of the earth.
They will come trembling out of their fortresses;
To the Lord our God they will come in dread,
And they will be afraid before Thee.*

In the above text, Micah states that the enemies of God’s people would “*lick the dust*,” **just as the serpent**. It seems reasonable that Micah, who was an Israelite, was making a reference to the curse placed upon the “*serpent*” in the Garden of Eden. Therefore, two conclusions are presented. As the text is revealing the degradation of the enemies of God’s people, the curse upon the “*serpent*” was one of humiliation and degradation, not the loss of legs, etc. Secondly, if the serpent was “*Satan*” why did Micah not state this? Perhaps, like Paul, he understood the villain to be a serpent.

2 Corinthians 11:3

But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

The above verses demonstrate that the Israelites used and understood references to being in, crawling in, or eating the “*dust*” as denoting abasement. We must not lose sight of the fact that it was for the understanding of the Israelites that the Genesis story was written. Therefore, we are obligated to honor their view of the Genesis story which depicts the abasement of a serpent that had an intellect that was superior to any beast of the field.

The scriptures often used the term “*serpent*” to depict those, who were contrary to the purpose and/or will of God or are of an evil disposition. The Genesis story depicts the “*serpent*” as speaking. The only other creature in God’s creation with the gift of speech is man. Therefore, setting aside the concept of “*Satan*”, and considering the use of the term “*serpent*” in the Hebrew writings, we can only conclude that the term is used metaphorically of a human being.

Adam and Eve were created with the same frailties as any other human being. Hence, they possessed the same frailties as Paul who states that he has two opposing natures – the outer and inner man or the carnal and spiritual man. The outer or carnal nature is opposed (an adversary) to the disposition of the inner or spiritual nature.

Romans 7:7-10, 14-23

*7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; **for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet."***

*8 But sin, taking opportunity through **the commandment**, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.*

*9 And I was once alive apart from the Law; but **when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died;***

10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;

14 For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

15 For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

16 But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good.

*17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, **but sin which indwells me.***

*18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, **in my flesh;** for **the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.***

*19 For the good that I wish, I do not do; but **I practice the very evil that I do not wish.***

*20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, **but sin which dwells in me.***

*21 **I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good.***

22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

*23 but **I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.***

As with Paul, Adam and Eve could not know sin until God gave them the prohibition against eating of the “*tree of knowledge*.” As per Paul, that prohibition produced a covetous desire for forbidden fruit. It is not without significance that Paul, speaking many centuries after the event in the Garden

of Eden, referenced the temptation of Eve and made no mention of “Satan” but refers to the tempter as a “*serpent*.”

2 Corinthians 11:3, 4

3 But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

4 For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.

Paul’s concern is that the faithful of Corinth might be swayed by those who were false. In calling their attention to the temptation of Eve, he obviously believed that her tempter was a false person and, conversely, those who were tempting the saints of Corinth were as deadly as “*serpents*.”

As there were only two people in the garden, we are left with only two conclusions, as to the identity of the serpent. The first is that the “*serpent*” is representative of Eve’s “*carnal nature*” (sin that indwelt her flesh), which Paul described as warring against the “*inner man*” that desires to do what is right. As we have found, the Hebrew writings often use the term “*serpent*” to denote an evil nature. The conversation between Eve and the “*serpent*” symbolized the war taking place within Eve. Mental arguments are a common human trait, and a part of everyday life. We are all aware of the arguments that take place in our minds when we try to justify doing what we know is not right. As is common in written material, the argument taking place in Eve’s mind is depicted as a conversation between Eve’s inner nature and the deadliness of her carnal nature. In the end, she became as Paul who stated that he often succumbed to the pressure of his carnal nature.

Some object to this scenario because of the use of the masculine pronoun “*he*” in verse 1 – “*And he said to the woman...*” However, this pronoun does not appear in the manuscripts, but was added by the translators for what they deemed was necessary for “*clarification*.”

The second alternative is that Adam is the “*serpent*” (evil influence). Paul, states that Jesus did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.

Philippians 2:6

who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

While it is commonly held that Paul was speaking of the willingness of Jesus to surrender his deity and become human, he often made a comparison between the first Adam and the Second Adam – Jesus. Hence, he was speaking of Jesus not being as Adam who desired to be like God. The Genesis account leave no doubt that eating of the “*tree of knowledge*” would allow Adam to fulfill that desire.

Genesis 3:5

For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

Genesis 3:22

and the Lord said, “the man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil.”

While Adam desired to be as God, he is apprehensive of God’s punishment. As a precaution, his cowardice leads him to entice Eve to eat of the fruit that he might ascertain the consequences before he partakes. This is illustrated in verse six, where the language indicates that he is present when she eats the forbidden fruit – *“She also gave some to her husband who was with her.”*

That Adam is the “*serpent*” is allowed in verse 1, where it is recorded that the “*serpent*” said to the woman. Adam is the only presence in the Garden of Eden with the ability to speak to Eve! As the Genesis story was written after the event took place, the vile natures of Adam and Eve would be depicted as a serpent.

An important piece of evidence the places Adam in the disposition of a serpent is stated by Paul.

Romans 5:12

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned —

Paul did not attribute the entrance of sin into the world to “*Satan*,” nor did he attribute it to Eve. He places full responsibility on the “*man*” – Adam. If the “*serpent*” had been “*Satan*,” then he would have been responsible for sin coming into the world. The only way Eve gains a degree of exoneration is if she is acting under the influence of Adam, her husband. In seeking understanding, we cannot ignore the disposition of women who were subordinate to men – first to their fathers then to their husbands who bore the burden and responsibility for their actions.

The casting of the “*serpent*” into the “*dust*” is God’s reaction to the failure of Adam and Eve. Did Adam and Eve possess the carnal nature addressed by Paul before partaking of the Tree of Knowledge? Yes! Prior to eating of the Tree of Knowledge, did that nature cause any problems, or alter their relationship with God? No! Prior to the establishment of the prohibition against eating of the tree of knowledge their carnal nature was not problematic as there was no established commandment to violate. The only rebel by violating the one establish commandment – do not eat of the tree of knowledge. Therefore, the casting into the dust indicated the circumstances they would find outside the Garden of Eden, and the enmity that would exist between God and man due to his carnal nature.

Genesis 3:15

*And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel.”*

The bruising of the heel is generally understood as referring to “*Satan*” causing the death of Jesus, while His resurrection was a bruise to the head (mortal wound) of “*Satan*.” Once again, this view

requires bringing “Satan” into the text with no reason for doing so. We need to bear in mind that this story, as well as all the stories of the Hebrew writings, were given to the children of Israel for their understanding. Paul states that the entirety of the Hebrew writings were the basis of sound teaching and training in righteousness.

2 Timothy 3:15, 16

15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

Paul is speaking of the writings that Timothy was taught by his grandmother, which was before any of the apostolic letters were written. Hence, Paul was referring to the Hebrew writings. As the Israelites and their sacred writings had no understanding of an evil entity known as “Satan,” we need to question the myth. There is no question that “Satan” comes to us at an early age through various methods of transmission, which results in us being predisposed toward his existence. We must consider that neither Jesus nor his apostles ever made a reference that would connect Jesus and the serpent in the garden of Eden.

As the serpent represents the carnal nature (evil influence) of Adam or Eve (depending on which conclusion one accepts), we can only conclude that the statement “*between you and the woman*” addresses the continuing enmity between good and evil. As illustrated by Paul, man would always face condemnation due to his failure to control his carnal nature. Mankind would not be free from the condemnation of his carnal nature until the offering of Jesus allowed God to set aside the failures emanating from the weakness of man’s nature and base righteousness on the thought and intent of the inner man – the heart/mind.

Romans 7:24-8:1

24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

*8:1 There is **therefore now no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

The enmity between the two natures is seen in the story of Cain and Abel. Cain allowed his carnal nature to rule him and slew his brother who was obedient to his inner nature. This caused God to banish Cain. In giving birth to Seth, Eve stated that she had received a replacement for righteous Abel.

Genesis 4:25, 26

25 And Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for, she said, "God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel; for Cain killed him."

26 And to Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord.

What is to be noted is that the writer deviates from the established norm and associates Seth with Eve, rather than his father - Adam. Hence, he and his righteous lineage were the seed of woman. Unrighteous Cain, according to custom, was the son of his father, Adam – the serpent.

We find that through Seth, men began to call upon the Lord. This is not said of Cain or righteous Abel. Therefore, the death of Abel was a bruise to the heel, while Seth bruised the head of the lineage of the serpent (Adam) - Cain. The scriptures clearly document the enmity that continually existed between the linages of Seth and Cain, with God's people emerging victorious.

On the other hand, while the children of Abraham were held in Egyptian bondage they were at the mercy of their “*adversaries*,” however, God fulfilled His promise when He crushed the heads of those who were abusing His people.

Psalms 74:13, 14

13 Thou didst divide the sea by Thy strength;

Thou didst break the heads of the sea monsters in the waters.

14 Thou didst crush the heads of Leviathan;

Thou didst give him as food for the creatures of the wilderness.

In Romans 7, Paul laments the fact that the lustful desires of his carnal nature often overcame his desire to do right which, under the Law, resulted in condemnation. He states that his deliverance from the condemnation of his carnal nature came through the offering of Jesus. Therefore, Jesus crushed the “*adversarial nature*” of man that held him in bondage.

Romans 7:24, 25

24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

While the different scenarios appear to be reasonable, there remains one stone unturned. God places three curses, one upon Adam, one upon Eve, and a third upon the “*serpent*.” This suggests that there is a third party involved. Therefore, it is necessary to consider a third alternative when attempting to determine the identity of the “*serpent*.” While this alternative will not find an abundance of fertile soil among modern theologians, it is, nonetheless, worthy of consideration, and, quite likely, the most reasonable.

Before engaging this topic, we must understand that Moses did not write the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures. While the stories existed in one form or another, they were not assembled into the compositions found in our Bibles until the time of the Babylonian captivity.

The opening chapters of Genesis reflect the typical style of ancient writings; hence, they are steeped in symbolisms, metaphors and ancient poetry that are found in other Hebrew writings. These chapters represent only a portion of the folklore that circulated among the people for centuries before appearing in written form. Contrary to the accepted view, these chapters were not intended to be a scientific account of creation. As many scholars have learned, any attempt to make a verse-by-verse reconciliation of these chapters will end in failure.

While Adam and Eve are commonly held to be the first and only people living at the time of the creation, they only represent the beginning of the Hebrew people. Cain feared being cast out as he feared those who might seek to kill him, and he took a wife. Who were the people he feared and where did he find a wife? Who were the people that lived in the city he built?

Genesis 4:14-17

14 "Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

15 So the Lord said to him, "Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold." And the Lord appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one finding him would slay him.

16 Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

17 Cain had relations with his wife and she conceived, and gave birth to Enoch; and he built a city, and called the name of the city Enoch, after the name of his son.

While it is commonly held that he married his sister, the record indicates that Adam and Eve had no children other than Cain and Abel, until after Cain kills Abel and is banished. Secondly, there is no mention of Cain having a wife until after he is banished.

Genesis 4:1, 2, 25

1 Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord."

2 Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

25 Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for, she said, "God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel, for Cain killed him."

Cain is banished from the presence of God which were those of the lineage of Adam and Eve. This forces him to dwell among those who were not God's people. As they are "adversaries" of God, and in opposition to His purpose, they are "serpents" – men of evil intent.

Why build a city if there are no people to inhabit it? There were obviously people living at the time, who were not worshippers of God, which is demonstrated by the statement that it was through Seth that men (plural) began calling upon the name of the Lord.

Genesis 4:26

To Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord.

After listing the genealogy of Adam, the Scriptures make a very telling statement.

Genesis 6:1, 2

*6 Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them,
2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.*

Notice that the intermarriage involves two distinct divisions of people – the sons of God and the daughters of men (those who did not recognize God). In that same context, we find another group of people which supports the existence of other people other than Adam and Eve.

Genesis 6:4

The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came into the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

The phrase “*those days*” refers to the days when “*men began to multiply*” (vs. 1), which was the time when God’s people began mixing with those who did not recognize Him. These were “*mighty men of old,*” which indicates that they pre-dated the time when “*men began to multiply.*” They were a culture that had existed long enough to have established a reputation among others as they were “*men of renown.*”

Placing of an angel to guard the entrance to the Garden of Eden indicates that entry into the garden was not impossible. Therefore, it is possible that one of these people of evil intent, who did not recognize God, could have entered the garden and convinced Adam and Eve that they were foolish in their obedience.

Genesis 3:24

So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

The curse of enmity between the seeds is certainly applicable, as there has always been continuing enmity between the wicked and the righteous. There can be no doubt that influencing the rebellion of Adam and Eve had caused God’s plan to go awry, but not irreparably so.

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Matthew 4:1-11	Mark 1:13	Luke 4:1-13
<p><i>1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.</i></p> <p><i>2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.</i></p> <p><i>3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son</i></p>	<p><i>13 And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.</i></p>	<p><i>1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness</i></p> <p><i>2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days; and</i></p>

<p>of God, command that these stones become bread."</p> <p>4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"</p> <p>5 Then the devil took Him into the holy city; and he had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple,</p> <p>6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give His angels charge concerning You'; and</p> <p>'On their hands they will bear You up,</p> <p>Lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'"</p> <p>7 Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"</p> <p>8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory;</p> <p>9 and he said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me."</p> <p>10 Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'"</p> <p>11 Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.</p>		<p>when they had ended, He became hungry.</p> <p>3 And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."</p> <p>4 And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"</p> <p>5 And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.</p> <p>6 And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.</p> <p>7 "Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours."</p> <p>8 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"</p> <p>9 And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here;</p> <p>10 for it is written,</p> <p>'He will give His angels charge concerning You to guard You,'</p> <p>11 and,</p> <p>'On their hands they will bear You up,</p> <p>Lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'"</p> <p>12 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"</p> <p>13 And when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.</p>
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When recording the temptation of Jesus, the account attributed to Luke uses the term “*diabolos*,” which is commonly rendered as “*Devil*;” The account attributed to Mark uses the term “*satanas*” which is commonly rendered as “*Satan*.” The account attributed to Matthew uses both terms. Therefore, we can conclude that the writers viewed the two terms as being interchangeable. This will become more evident when we examine the application of these terms in the Revelation. Rendering these terms as “*Satan*” and “*Devil*” is dishonest as the Greek terms are general in nature as they refer to the character or nature of an individual or a group of individuals. Furthermore, neither “*Satan*” nor “*devil*” is a translation, but a transliteration undertaken to ensure the propagation of a myth. The appearance of these two terms in any text merely demonstrates that the translators placed greater importance on their personal conviction of a fallen angel, known as the prince of darkness, than they were in creating an accurate translation. Question: If “*Satan*” is crafty and subtle while remaining inconspicuous, why did he openly appear to Jesus? Would his presence not make the snare extremely obvious and easier to avoid, especially to one who is the Son of God?

In one temptation, the Matthew narrative states that “*the Devil*” took Jesus to a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the earth/world. He then offers to give them to Jesus. This is obviously figurative language as the earth is an orb, which makes it impossible to view all its kingdoms from any mountain, regardless of its height. On the other hand, the Greek term rendered as “*earth*” is “*kosmos*” which rarely refers to the planet. The term refers to an “*existing or orderly arrangement*,” and commonly refers to an arrangement associated with the people being addressed. As Jesus came to his own, the arrangement of record is the arrangement established between God and the children of Israel at Mount Sinai. Therefore, the temptation involved the brethren of Jesus and the land they had been given by God. Allowing that the tempter was “*Satan*,” it would not have been much of a temptation as Jesus was a “*Jew*,” and schooled in the Law and the prophets. Therefore, he would have known that God rules in the kingdoms of the men.

Daniel 4:25

....the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whomever He wishes.

Romans 13:1

Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

We also find “*Satan*” requesting that Jesus prove himself to be the Son of God by throwing himself from the peak of the temple. The object behind this temptation was the expectation of the “*Jews*” that their Messiah would come down from the heavens, with some believing that he would come swooping down upon the worshippers from the heights of the temple. If this would prove one to be the hope of Israel, what would prevent “*Satan*” from carrying out his greatest deception, by doing this himself, or through the power that he is said to possess? After all, according to the myth, “*Satan*” is indestructible, able to take on various forms (such as a “*serpent*”), and capable of oral communication as demonstrated by his appearances to Jesus and Eve.

A proper translation would have the Mark narrative stating that an “adversary” or “oppressor” tempted Jesus, while the Matthew and Luke narratives would record that it was a “slanderer” or “false accuser.” To understand what is being reported, we must understand that Jesus was a man and was tempted in the same manner as all men.

Acts 2:22, 23

22 *"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, **a man** attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know —*

23 ***this Man**, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.*

Romans 5:15

*But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the **one Man, Jesus Christ**, abound to the many.*

1 Corinthians 15:21, 22

21 *For since by a man came death, **by a man** also came the resurrection of the dead.*

22 *For as in Adam all die, so also in **Christ** all shall be made alive.*

Galatians 4:4

*But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth **His Son, born of a woman**, born under the Law,*

Hebrews 4:15

*For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been **tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin***

We also bear in mind that Jesus, being a man, had the same disposition as Paul and all other men - an “adversarial” nature that “opposes” the desire to do right.

Romans 7:14-23

14 *For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.*

15 *For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.*

16 *But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good.*

17 *So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me*

18 *For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.*

19 *For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish.*

20 *But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.*

21 *I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good.*

22 *For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,*

23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

The term rendered as “*tempted*” (Mt. 4:1) means “*to be proven or tried by enticement to sin*” or to “*experience solicitation to sin.*” James stated that man is tempted by his own desires, which is in keeping with Paul’s presentation in Romans 7, where he places man’s carnal nature in opposition to the disposition of a mind dedicated to doing what is right.

James 1:13, 14

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

Therefore, based on the teachings of Paul and James, we can conclude that “*diabolos*” and “*satanas*” characterize the “*adversarial*” nature that resides in all who are of flesh and blood. As Jesus was of flesh and blood, he experienced man’s natural desires which led to the temptations and desires of his carnal nature. What is demonstrated in the temptation of Jesus is that sin is not in temptation, but in submission.

The trial of Jesus took place immediately after His baptism. It was at this time that the Holy Spirit descended on him, as it did on the apostles in Acts 2:1ff. Hence, it was at the time of his

baptism that Jesus received the power of God to work signs and wonders. He was immediately led into the wilderness to be subjected to the most rigorous conditions. After being weakened by his ordeal, he was tested to ascertain whether he would succumb to his carnal nature and use the power he had been given for his personal benefit or remain steadfast in the determination of his “*inner*” nature to use his power to glorify God. After fasting and being without drink for forty days, the “*adversarial nature*,” that is part of all men, was insisting that he use his power to deliver himself from his present circumstances. Unlike Paul and the rest of humanity, Jesus was able to control the desires of his adversarial nature.

Jesus, the second Adam, was very much the opposite of the first Adam. Adam dwelt in paradise, and when faced with a choice, he chose the path that would make him equal with God. Jesus, while in extreme distress, repeatedly faced the same temptation. Unlike Adam, he did not find equality with God a thing to be grasped.

Genesis 3:5, 22

5 "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

*22 Then the Lord God said, "Behold, **the man has become like one of Us**, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"*

Philippians 2:6

who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

SATANAS IN THE GOSPELS

Matt 12:24-27

24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons."

25 And knowing their thoughts He said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself shall not stand.

26 "And if Satan (adversary) casts out Satan (adversary), he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?

27 "And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Consequently they shall be your judges.

The above incident is also recorded in Luke 11 and Mark 3. The recorded conversation was initiated by Jesus healing a man who was “*demon*” possessed. Most modern Bible versions employ the term “*Satan*,” with a capital “*S*,” which reflects a pre-disposition toward the existence of a mythical fallen angel. While Young’s Literal Translation correctly translates the term as “*adversary*,” he chooses the middle ground, as he capitalizes the term.

*26 and if the **Adversary** doth cast out the **Adversary**, against himself he was divided, how then doth his kingdom stand? YLT*

Beelzebul is generally accepted as being Baal-zebub, the god of the flies, who is the most prevalent pagan deity in the Hebrew Scriptures.

GODS, PAGAN

“Baal-Zebub, which means "lord of the fly," was "the god of Ekron" ([2 Kings 1:2-3,6,16](#)) - the name under which Baal was worshiped at the Philistine city of Ekron. This god was worshiped as the producer of flies, and consequently as the god that was able to defend against this pest. In the New Testament, reference is made to Beelzebub, a heathen god considered the chief evil spirit by the Jewish people..” Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary.

While some hold the name Beelzebul as a name for “*Satan*,” the Israelites understood the term as referring to the pagan god of the Philistines, whose chief city was Ekron.

2 Kings 1:2, 3, 6, 16

*2 And Ahaziah fell through the lattice in his upper chamber which was in Samaria, and became ill. So he sent messengers and said to them, "Go, inquire of **Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron**, whether I shall recover from this sickness."*

*3 But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and say to them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of **Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?**'"*

*6 And they said to him, "A man came up to meet us and said to us, 'Go, return to the king who sent you and say to him," Thus says the Lord,' Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of **Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?** Therefore you shall not come down from the bed where you have gone up, but shall surely die.' ""*

*16 Then he said to him, "Thus says the Lord, 'Because you have sent messengers to inquire of **Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron** — is it because there is no God in Israel to inquire of His word? — therefore you shall not come down from the bed where you have gone up, but shall surely die.'"*

The ancients viewed Beelzebul as being the chief of the pagan gods; hence, the name came to symbolize all pagan gods and their associated systems of worship. It goes without saying that all pagan gods and religious systems were in opposition (an “adversary”) to the purpose of God.

In the present text, the Pharisees make no mention of a fallen angel, but specifically name Beelzebul as the source of Jesus’ power. Jesus responds to their position by using the generic term “adversary” - if an adversary casts out the adversary....

In the text of Matthew 12, the phrase “*this man casts out demons only by Beelzebul*” invokes the concept of agency. In ancient cultures, including that of the Israelites, one who was acting in the capacity of an agent was seen as being the person he/she represented; therefore, Jesus, being viewed as possessing the power of Baal-zebub, would have been viewed as if he were Beelzebul himself. The concept of agency is also applicable to demons as they are the “*satanas*” (vs. 26), which made them one with Beelzebul.

With the phrase “*if I, by Beelzebul cast out,*” Jesus places himself in the position of an agent of Beelzebul. With the phrase “*if ‘adversary’ casts out ‘adversary,’*” Jesus is indirectly applying the term “*satanas*” to himself, as well as the demons. Therefore, in the present text, the term “*satanas*” has multiple applications with none of them being the “*fallen Angel*” known as “*Satan*.”

The terms “*he,*” “*himself*” and “*his*” (vs. 26) do not appear in some manuscripts, which would produce the reading: “*If adversary casts out adversary how will such a divided kingdom stand?*” On the other hand, the term rendered as “*himself*” does not necessarily indicate a person, as it is often rendered as “*itself*.” The term rendered as “*his*” (kingdom) is often rendered as “*that*” (kingdom). The term rendered as “*kingdom*” refers to “*rule, power, reign or domain*.” The religious rulers correctly identified Beelzebul, a pagan god, as being an “adversary” to the purpose and will of God. On the other hand, if the text is viewed correctly, the phrase - “*if adversary casts out adversary*” – has Jesus applying the term “adversary” to himself and the abnormal condition of the individual he had just healed. Jesus’ application of the term is proper as it exhibited the understanding of those of the first century, who had no understanding of mental diseases or physical handicaps, such as being sight or hearing impaired. The designation of “adversary” is also proper, as it reflects the curses that God promised would come upon the

children of Israel if they were disobedient. While the religious leaders correctly associated such impairments with sin, they erred in focusing upon the individual, rather than what those conditions indicated – the deplorable spiritual condition of God's people. This issue will be discussed in greater detail in the section entitled “*Demons*.”

Jesus defended himself by applying the age-old principle of “*united we stand, divided we fall*,” to their concept of an evil kingdom under the dominion of Beelzebub. In such a case, the power and domain of Beelzebub would diminish, which would be contrary to his purpose.

The religious leaders of Israel had convinced the people that physical impairments were a sign of sin having brought God's disfavor while station and wealth were signs of God's favor. While the scribes correctly associated physical impairments with sin, they failed to comprehend that these conditions were an indictment against their sinful condition.

Deuteronomy 28:58-62

58 "If you are not careful to observe all the words of this law which are written in this book, to fear this honored and awesome name, the Lord your God,

59 then the Lord will bring extraordinary plagues on you and your descendants, even severe and lasting plagues, and miserable and chronic sicknesses. will cling to you.

61 "Also every sickness and every plague which, not written in the book of this law, the Lord will bring on you until you are destroyed.

62 "Then you shall be left few in number, whereas you were as numerous as the stars of heaven, because you did not obey the Lord your God.

Their failure to recognize the cause of physical impairments caused them to fail to understand the real meaning behind the power of Jesus to heal such impairments. As the physical impairments Jesus encountered were a result of national sinfulness, in healing them Jesus was demonstrating his power to heal the sin of the nation. These miraculous cures were but a herald of the perfect form of forgiveness that was to come through his offering. To enable them to understand his purpose, Jesus stated that the man's sins were forgiven, which drew a negative response from the scribes. Jesus then healed the man's condition, which, if its cause was properly recognized, served as undeniable evidence of his power over sin. Jesus, in healing the illnesses that God had promised would come upon them for disobedience, was demonstrating his power to remove the consequences of sin for all Israel. In the various miracles of healing, Jesus was making individual demonstrations of what he would later accomplish on a wholesale basis.

Walter Balfour states that Jesus was answering a charge made against him by the Pharisees, who believed that demons were the spirits of bad men who had died and were commissioned by Beelzebub to torment the children of men. Hence, they were the “*adversaries*” of men, as was Beelzebub. Balfour states that Jesus, as he did so often, fashioned his response around their beliefs, without commenting on whether that belief was right or wrong. If both the demons and Jesus were acting on authority of Beelzebub, their purposes were counter-productive and would result in instability within his kingdom.

Matthew 16:23, Mark 8:33

23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan (adversary)! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

While no one considers Peter to be “Satan,” it is the common perception that Peter was acting under the influence of “Satan,” and Jesus is calling him to account. The previous verses must be considered if we are to understand what was taking place.

Matthew 16:21-22

21 From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

22 Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You."

Jesus had just informed his disciples that his purpose was to die in Jerusalem. Peter becomes an adversary to his mission as he states that he will not allow that to happen. Having taken a position that will impede God’s purpose for Jesus, Peter is told to take a position where he will not impede his purpose. Despite suffering a rebuke Peter continued to act as an adversary. When the soldiers and temple guards came to arrest Jesus, Peter drew his sword and came to the defense of Jesus, cutting the ear off one man before Jesus could stop him.

Matthew 26:50-52

50 And Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you have come for." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him.

51 And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

52 Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword."

Mark 4:15

"And these are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan (adversary) comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them."

We must bear in mind that Jesus came unto his own (Jn. 1:11), which were the children of Israel. It is also recorded that he came only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mt. 15:24). Peter states that Jesus came to grant repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel (Acts 5:29), while Paul states that he came to redeem those under the Law (Gal. 4:5). Paul also stated that Jesus was a servant to the circumcision (Rom. 15:8). Therefore, the earthly ministry of Jesus only concerned his brethren of the circumcision. The above verse is found in the “*Parable of the Sower of Seed*.” Jesus gave this parable to illustrate the various responses that his brethren would have upon hearing

the "good news" that, in him, God was fulfilling all the promises that He had made to the fathers of Israel and through the prophets. "Satanas" refers to the religious leaders of Israel, who would oppose Jesus and the apostolic message and succeed in convincing many of the people to continue placing their trust in the Law. Hence, they were adversaries to the purpose of God.

Matthew 16:6, 12

6 And Jesus said to them, "Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

12 Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

John 11:47, 48

47 Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs.

48 "If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

John 12:18, 19

18 For this cause also the multitude went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign.

19 The Pharisees therefore said to one another, "You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him."

Jesus was pointing out that the actions and teaching of the religious leaders would prevent the people from accepting the message of righteousness, and that their teaching and practices would place those who had become proselytes to Judaism in a worse condition than they were before their conversion.

Matthew 23:13, 15

13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

During the administration of the apostles, these same people persecuted them and forbid them to teach the way of Jesus, as they regarded Jesus and his followers as blasphemers of God.

Acts 4:18, 19

18 And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge;

These same people encouraged dedicated men like Saul of Tarsus to imprison and kill their brethren who had placed their trust in the offering of Jesus.

Acts 8:3

But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house; and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.

Acts 9:1, 2

*1 Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, **went to the high priest,***

*2 **and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus,** so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.*

Acts 26:10

*"And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, **having received authority from the chief priests,** but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them.*

Stephen, prior to being martyred, spoke before the “adversarial” high priest and his council.

Acts 6:12

And they stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and dragged him away, and brought him before the Council.

Acts 7:1, 54, 57, 58

7 And the high priest said, "Are these things so?"

54 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him.

57 But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears, and they rushed upon him with one impulse.

58 And when they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him, and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

These same people rejoiced at the murder of James.

Acts 12:2, 3

2 And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword.

3 And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. Now it was during the days of Unleavened Bread.

The apostolic writings reveal that the “opposition” to the way of Jesus came from their brethren of the “false circumcision.” These were “Jews” who were people acting under the influence of their “adversarial” religious leaders, who refused to accept Jesus as the anointed of God. They directly or indirectly responsible for every recorded act of persecution levied against those of the way of Jesus.

Titus 1:10, 11

10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,

11 who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach, for the sake of sordid gain.

Philippians 3:2

Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;

Romans 1:18

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

The wrath, to which Paul refers, and which is mentioned repeatedly in the apostolic writings, is that which came upon the rebellious of Israel in the Roman-Judean war of 67-70 AD.

Luke 10:18

And He said to them, "I was watching Satan (adversary) fall from heaven like lightning.

What is "*Satan*," the essence of evil, doing in heaven where no sin dwells? If "*Satan*" had fallen from heaven before the creation, did he somehow worm his way back into the heavenly abode of God? The myth holds that this evil angel was cast out of heaven prior to tempting Eve. Now we find Jesus seeing him falling from heaven. We find the writer of the Revelation recording that he also sees him falls from heaven. How many times was "*Satan*" ejected from heaven? Apparently, he has a way of getting back into heaven no matter how many times he is cast out, which makes God powerless to keep him out. This also attests to his god-like qualities as he is in heaven while walking about the earth seeking whom he may devour.

Watching: Grk. Theoreo - to see, to perceive, **to consider, to contemplate**, to mark or note.

Jesus was not contemplating the fall of "*Satan*," but the fall of the "*adversary*" which he identifies in the following verse.

Luke 10:19

"Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall injure you.

The "*adversary*" encompasses serpents, scorpions, and all the enemies of God that are capable of causing physical harm to the apostles to whom he is speaking.

Matthew 23:33

"You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?"

The Matthew narrative records that the fall of these things is due to the power that Jesus had given them.

Matthew 10:1

And having summoned His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

The term rendered as “*spirit*” refers to the vital principle of life, or the breath of life. The term rendered as “*unclean*” means polluted or lacking purity. The children of Israel viewed all physical and mental handicaps, as being due to sin, which is a lack of purity.

As is always the case when seeking understanding, we must view any given text in accord with the time and people being addressed. We will not find understanding by applying 20th century principles and understanding. In the section dealing with the fall of Adam and Eve, it was demonstrated that the terms “*serpent*” and “*scorpion*” were used of men, who were opposed to the way of God. The scriptures commonly use the term “*heaven*” of a nation, its people, and/or its governmental and religious structures (Is. 13:1, 10; Is. 14:12, 13; Ez. 32:1, 7; Joel 2:1, 10; Is. 34:4, 5; Jer. 4:27, 28; Amos 8:7-9). Jesus uses the term in that context when foretelling God’s wrath coming upon his rebellious brethren.

Matthew 24:29-35

*29 "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky (**heaven**), and the powers of the heavens will be shaken,*

30 and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.

31 "And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky (heaven) to the other.

32 "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near;

33 even so you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door.

34 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

*35 "**Heaven** and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away.*

Mark 13:25

*and the stars will be falling from **heaven**, and the powers that are in the **heavens** will be shaken.*

Just three verses before the text under consideration, Jesus used the term “*heaven*” in a figurative sense when speaking of the fall of Capernaum.

Luke 10:15

*15 "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to **heaven**, will you? You will be brought down to Hades!*

The event that triggered Jesus' reflection of the fall of the "*adversary*" was the enthusiastic return of his disciples from their preaching mission where they had successfully performed wondrous works in the healing of diseases. Jesus was not foreseeing a single event but was visualizing the time after his death and resurrection when his disciples would begin their mission in earnest. He was contemplating the fall of the "*adversary*," which included the corrupt religious leaders of the children of Israel, the adversarial nature of the Law which was against God's people, and the physical and mental disorders that God had decreed would come upon His people because of sin. Jesus was acknowledging that his disciples had begun the process that would bring an end to all the things that were separating men from God.

Luke 13:16

"And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan (adversary) has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

We must consider verse 11, before we can understand verse 16.

Luke 13:11

And behold, there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double and could not straighten up at all.

The NASB translates the language as "*caused by a spirit*," which is an injustice to the original language. The original language states that she had "*a spirit of sickness*." The first century "*Jews*" used the term "*spirit*" to depict any quality attributed to a person, whether good or bad. The scriptures are filled with expressions, such as "*spirit of meekness*," "*spirit of jealousy*," "*spirit of fear*," "*spirit of joy*," etc.

The context concerns the compassion exhibited by the religious leaders toward animals on the Sabbath, while having no regard for the suffering endured by the less fortunate.

The woman in question was of the lineage of Abraham. While she possesses a "*spirit of sickness*," her bondage was not her illness. Her bondage can be viewed as two-fold. The first is due to the religious leaders (the adversaries of God), who associated all illness and infirmity with sin. As a sinner, she would have been shunned by the society of Israel and regarded as being unworthy of even the smallest considerations. In healing her condition, Jesus would not only be freeing her from the bondage of being unclean, but also from the bondage imposed upon her by the society of Israel. Even the disciples of Jesus held this view of the infirm and impaired.

John 9:2, 3

2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?"

3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him."

Some hold the woman to be the woman the Mark narrative records as having an issue of blood.

Mark 5:25-29

*25 A woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years,
26 and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had
and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse —
27 after hearing about Jesus, she came up in the crowd behind Him and touched His cloak.
28 For she thought, "If I just touch His garments, I will get well."
29 Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was
healed of her affliction.*

In this case, the “adversary” could well have been the Law of Moses, which required the women to be regarded as unclean.

Leviticus 15:19-27

*19 'When a woman has a discharge, if her discharge in her body is blood, she shall continue
in her menstrual impurity for seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until
evening.
20 'Everything also on which she lies during her menstrual impurity shall be unclean, and
everything on which she sits shall be unclean.
21 'And anyone who touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be
unclean until evening.
22 'And whoever touches any thing on which she sits shall wash his clothes and bathe in
water and be unclean until evening.
23 'Whether it be on the bed or on the thing on which she is sitting, when he touches it, he
shall be unclean until evening.
24 'And if a man actually lies with her, so that her menstrual impurity is on him, he shall
be unclean seven days, and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.
25 'Now if a woman has a discharge of her blood many days, not at the period of her
menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond that period, all the days of her impure
discharge she shall continue as though in her menstrual impurity; she is unclean.
26 'Any bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her like her bed at
menstruation; and every thing on which she sits shall be unclean, like her uncleanness at
that time.
27 'Likewise, whoever touches them shall be unclean and shall wash his clothes and bathe
in water and be unclean until evening.*

Viewing the Law as an “adversary” may be problematic for some; however, Paul had no such problem as he stated that the Law was “against” the people it governed, and that it was a ministry of sin and death. Were it otherwise, it would not have been necessary for Jesus to offer himself to correct the Law’s propensity toward condemnation.

Colossians 2:14

*having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was
hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*

2 Corinthians 3:6, 7

*6 who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for **the letter kills**, but the Spirit gives life.*

*7 But if **the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones**, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was,*

The words of the synagogue official are significant as he makes no reference to the woman being free of “Satan” or demons, but merely states that she had been “healed.”

Luke 13:14

*And the synagogue official, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, began saying to the multitude in response, "There are six days in which work should be done; therefore come during them and **get healed**, and not on the Sabbath day."*

Of even greater significance is verse 17, which states that all the “opponents” of Jesus were humiliated. While we may struggle with the identity of the “adversary,” the writer of the narrative attributed to Luke had no such problem.

Luke 13:17

*And as He said this, all His **opponents** were being humiliated; and the entire multitude was rejoicing over all the glorious things being done by Him.*

Luke 22:3, John 13:27

And Satan (adversary) entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve.

The following verses demonstrate how the Greek term translated as “entered” is to be understood.

Matthew 25:21

*"His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, **enter into the joy of your master.**'"*

Matthew 26:41

*Keep watching and praying, that you may **not enter into temptation**; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

The Greek term rendered as “entered” conveys a disposition taken on by the individual, rather than the entrance of something into the individual. Therefore, it was not a case of “Satan” entering into Judas, but of his surrendering to the demands of his carnal nature. Judas was no stranger to being governed by his “adversarial” nature, as he had been stealing from Jesus and his fellow disciples for quite some time. Therefore it is no surprise that he would be persuaded by thirty pieces of silver.

John 12:4-6

*4 But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said,
 5 "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii, and given to poor people?"
 6 Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, **but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.***

While Judas was responsible for his actions, the “*adversarial*” religious leaders, with whom Judas had struck a monetary bargain of betrayal, were also to blame. Judas became an “*adversary*” to Jesus when his desire for personal gain outweighed his loyalty. On the other hand, the “*adversarial*” religious leaders were motivated by greed and the thirst for power, as they viewed Jesus as a threat to their position. When these two “*adversaries*” became united, they unknowingly set the stage for the fulfillment of God’s purpose in Jesus.

Mark 14:10, 11

*10 And Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went off to the chief priests, in order to betray Him to them.
 11 And they were glad when they heard this and promised to give him money. And he began seeking how to betray Him at an opportune time.*

It is to be noted that when Peter speaks of the sin of Judas, he makes no reference to a “*fallen angel*” or “*Satan*,” but holds Judas solely accountable for his actions.

Acts 1:16-18

*16 "Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.
 17 "For he was counted among us and received his portion in this ministry."
 18 (Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out.*

Luke 22:31

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan (adversary) has demanded permission to sift you like wheat;

This verse is poorly translated. Not only was Jesus speaking of an “*adversary*,” but the phrase “*has demanded permission*” is rendered from a single Greek term that simply expresses a desire. Hence, we should read: “*Simon, Simon, behold, the adversary desires to sift you like wheat.*”

Sift: Grk. *siniázō* - sieve, to sift, to shake as grain in a sieve. Figuratively, to agitate, or prove by trials and afflictions.

The above text is generally used as evidence that “*Satan*” has power to persuade one as faithful as an apostle. As in Job, this verse is rendered in a manner that suggests “*Satan*” needs permission to

try one of God's elect. However, Jesus is speaking of an "adversary" that is presently (then) in a position to test Peter's commitment to Jesus, which is clarified in the following verses.

32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers. "

33 And he said to Him, "Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!"

34 And He said, "I say to you, Peter, the cock will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me."

The "sifting" (proving or testing) of Peter concerns his statement that he would follow Jesus to prison or death. While Peter's "inner nature" was determined to follow Jesus, his "carnal" nature was inclined toward self-preservation. When faced with reality, Peter's carnal nature overcame the desire of his mind and he abandoned Jesus.

On the other hand, those who arrested and tried Jesus were also adversaries to Jesus and his God-given purpose. They held the power of life and death which caused Peter to wilt; hence, they had put Peter to the test.

Hence, while Peter was solely accountable for his actions, the religious leaders of Israel were a contributing factor. The sifted Peter three times by asking him about his association with Jesus, and three times his "carnal" nature determined his actions. Peter's denials were due to self preservation, as he feared what the "adversaries" (religious leaders of Israel) might do to him; therefore, they were the "adversaries" who sifted Peter.

SATANAS IN ACTS

ACTS 5:3,4

3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan (adversary) filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land?

4 "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God."

Peter's use of the term "why" indicates that he had a difficult time understanding the reason Ananias and Saphira had chosen to be dishonest. While theologians commonly teach that "Satan" had influence them, the language indicates that this deception was a personal choice. Had Peter recognized the involvement of a fallen angel, he would have understood the reason for the deception and asked: "why have you allowed Satan to fill your heart"? The form of Peter's question is only reasonable if Ananias and Saphira had themselves conceived this deception, which is exactly what is stated in verse 4. Their decision was the product of allowing their "carnal" nature to overrule the desire of the heart.

ACTS 26:18

Acts 26:17-18

17 delivering you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you,

18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan (adversary) to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.

The above verse is taken from Paul's defense before Agrippa where he related what Jesus had told him when he appeared to him on the road to Damascus. Paul stated that Jesus had told him that he was being sent to the "gentiles." While "gentiles" are commonly held as being those who are not of the lineage of Abraham, they were, in fact, of the lineage of Abraham. The apostolic writings most often use the term in reference to the ten northern tribes of Israel that God had given a bill of divorcement and scattered among the nations in the "diaspora" of 721 BC. The mission given to Paul and Barnabas was to fulfill God's restoration promise. Those who would respond to God's invitation would be "turned from" the domain of darkness to light. This refers to these people as having been separated from the fold of God and being returned. The dominion of the "adversary" refers to the reason they had been separated from God – having surrendered to the desires of their carnal nature and worshipped false gods. The "adversary" was someone or something to which they were presently dedicated or enslaved. Having been given a bill of divorcement, they were no longer God's people. Having been scattered among the nations, they were subject to the influences of paganism. Therefore, the "adversary" is something other than a mystical spiritual being dedicated to the destruction of mankind.

As the people of record were those who God had given a bill of divorcement and sent away, they had become as the Samaritans.

John 4:19-24

19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.

20 "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

22 "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

23 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

24 "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Therefore, unlike the "Jews" who continued to find forgiveness through the offerings of the Law, the scattered people of the house of Israel ("gentiles") had no means of acquiring God's forgiveness. Hence, through acceptance of the way of Jesus, they were delivered from condemnation that emanated from the weakness of the flesh - the nature that warred against the desire to serve God. Regardless of how one chooses to view the adversary, Paul is not referring to a "fallen angel" named "Satan."

ROMANS 16:20

**20 And the God of peace will soon crush Satan (adversary) under your feet.
The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.**

Paul did not say that “*Satan*” would be crushed, but the “*adversary*.” Paul states that the adversary will soon be crushed. Hence, it existed at that time but was soon to be eradicated. Hence, it cannot be “*Satan*” as he is held as continuing to exist.

Throughout Paul’s letters, his concern with the activity of the “*adversary*” involves anyone or anything that is in opposition to God’s purpose in Jesus. One adversary is identified in his presentation of the “*adversarial*” nature of man that is aroused by the Law of Moses. As the disposition to sin (the “*adversarial*” nature of man) is given dominance and power through the Law, the Law was against those it governed; hence, it was in opposition to the righteousness of man. Therefore, the deliverance of those of the way of Jesus was from the condemnation resulting from the weakness of the human nature.

Romans 7:5, 6

5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

Colossians 2:14

having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

The Law was a certificate of death due to the weakness of man’s nature. The Law had no provision that allowed it to separate acts of rebellion from sins of weakness. The offerings of the Law that had been given for the forgiveness of sins (Lev. 4, 5) were only applicable to sins of weakness. God’s acceptance of the offering of Jesus allowed Him to set aside sins of weakness and base righteousness on the disposition of the heart/mind. This allowed the commandments to fulfill their unended purpose of creating a people of righteousness.

Romans 8:1-4

1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Satanas

Another “*adversary*” that concerned Paul were his “*Jewish*” brethren who were not content with rejecting but persecuted their brethren committed to the way of Jesus and sought every opportunity to interfere with the apostolic message. Of such were the Judaizing teachers, who were in opposition to Paul’s ministry and beset him at every turn. Therefore, the crushing of the “*adversary*” involved the destruction of those who were opposed to God’s purpose. This took place through the execution of God’s wrath in the Roman-Judean war of 67-70 AD.

Titus 1:10, 11

*10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially **those of the circumcision**,*

*11 who **must be silenced** because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach, for the sake of sordid gain.*

1 Thessalonians 2:15, 16

15 who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men,

*16 **hindering us** from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved; with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. **But wrath has come upon them to the utmost.***

Philippians 3:2, 3

*2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, **beware of the false circumcision**;*

3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

Acts 15:1, 2

*1 And **some men came down from Judea** and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."*

2 And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.

Galatians 2:4

*But it was because of the **false brethren** who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order **to bring us into bondage.***

The most significant adversary to man is the sentence given to Adam. While the common translations state that Adam would die the day he ate of the tree of knowledge, older more reliable manuscripts record that he was told “*in dying you will surely die.*” Hence, everlasting death.

Gen 2:17

and of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou dost not eat of it, for in the day of thine eating of it — dying thou dost die.' YLT

Yet from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you are not to be eating from it, for in the day you eat from it, to die shall you be dying. CLNT

Paul declares the wages of sin to be “*the death*” (Rom. 6:23), which is the denial and opposite of everlasting life. The writer of the Hebrews letter states that Jesus freed man from the slavery (dominion) of the fear of the death was before man all his life.

Hebrews 2:15

and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

1 CORINTHIANS 5:5

I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan (adversary) for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Paul twice referred to “*delivering one to Satan*.” The other occasion is 1 Timothy 1:20, which is the next verse in our study. Therefore, whatever view one accepts of the present verse, must be applied to that text.

If “*Satan*” deceives men for the purpose of separating them from God, how could delivering a person over to him result in his being restored? How would delivering a person to “*Satan’s*” influence result in destroying his flesh, while allowing his “*spirit*” to live? The application of the term “*Satan*” is obviously problematic. Suffice it to say that when commentaries are consulted, the term “*Satan*” dominates their explanations of the text, and their opinions are varied, confusing, and illogical. The following comment is typical of those found in various commentaries.

“it was a species of punishment administered in extraordinary cases, in which the body and the mind of an incorrigible transgressor were delivered by the authority of God into the power of Satan, to be tortured with diseases and terrors as a warning to all; but while the body and mind were thus tormented, the immortal spirit was under the influence of the divine mercy;” Adam Clarke's Commentary, 1 Corinthians 5:5.

How can one be delivered to “*Satan*” and have his immortal spirit remain with God?

Albert Barnes goes so far as to assign the sufferings of the individual to the apostles.

“But it is very evident from the Scriptures that the apostles were imbued with the power of inflicting diseases or bodily calamities for crimes.” Barnes' Notes, 1 Corinthians 5:5.

The phrase “*I have decided*” is not a part of the original language; hence, Paul is issuing an instruction, as to the proper course of action to be taken by the saints of Corinth. The Greek term rendered as “*destruction*” implies punishment. The phrase “*to deliver*” is most often used in the context of delivering someone over to the authority of another, such as civil authorities. That this man’s sin is not found among the “*gentiles*” indicates that he is a “*Jew*.”

1 Corinthians 5:1-5

1 It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife.

2 You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst.

3 For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present.

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus,

5 I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

As he is a "Jew" delivering him to the "adversary" is to deliver him to the "Jewish" authority, where his sin would be subject to their judgement. As he is of the way of Jesus, delivering him to the authority of another would sever him from the commonwealth of God's people and the grace of God. Hence, he had become numbered with those who had shrunk back to God's wrath and the inheritance of everlasting death

Leviticus 18:8

'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness.

Leviticus 20:11

'If there is a man who lies with his father's wife, he has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death, their bloodguiltiness is upon them.

The phrase "may be saved" is rendered from a single Greek term that carries the meaning of protection, as does the word "saved." Paul use of the term "flesh" is seen in his letter to his "Jewish" brethren in Rome.

Romans 7:25

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Hence, Paul is speaking of the destruction of this man's "outer (fleshly) nature" that houses his desire to rebel against the will of God. The term "mind" is an accurate translation of the Greek term "noi." Paul also uses the Greek term "pnuema," which refers to "that which is of the mind, mind-set, or mental disposition." Hence, Paul is speaking of the two natures of this man. He is to be delivered over to pursue the unrighteous path he has chosen in the hope that his deterioration will bring him to repentance.

The "day of Jesus" refers to the time when God's judgment would come upon the disobedient of Israel as he foretold in Matthew 24, Luke, 21 and Mark 13. The "Jews" who refused to accept Jesus, as the Anointed of God, were delivered to physical destruction, with eternal consequences.

1 TIMOTHY 1:20

19 keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

20 Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan (adversary), so that they may be taught not to blaspheme.

Question: How would delivering a person to “*Satan*” help him learn not to blaspheme, when “*Satan*” is held to be the greatest of blasphemers? Wouldn’t delivering a blasphemer to the king of blasphemers have the opposite effect?

We cannot properly understand verse 20 without considering the context in which it is found. The problem associated with these men was that they were maligning the way of Jesus. Paul had addressed such men in the earlier verses of the chapter.

1 Timothy 1:6, 7

6 For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion,

7 wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.

Therefore, the delivery of these men to the “*adversary*” denotes their not being hindered from following the Judaizing teachers who were teaching that righteousness demanded circumcision, which obligated them obey to the Law. In allowing them to pursue the way of the Law, they would certainly learn the finer points of abstaining from blasphemy, which, under the Law, was punishable by stoning.

Galatians 5:2-5

2 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. 3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.

4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

5 For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.

1 CORINTHIANS 7:5

Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer and come together again lest Satan (adversary) tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

Paul is addressing the sexual relationship between a man and his wife. He encourages them not to deprive one another of marital privilege, as this would lead to the temptation of finding satisfaction elsewhere. Paul is not concerned with “*Satan*,” but the influence of one’s carnal nature that stands in opposition to the desire to do what is right. This places Paul in agreement with James, who places failure squarely on the individual.

James 1:14-16

14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

2 CORINTHIANS 2:11

in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan (adversary); for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

Paul's second letter to the saints of Corinth is a continuation of his first letter, where he addressed the confused and disorganized state of the "*ekklesia*" of Corinth. In the immediate context, Paul is addressing their forgiveness and acceptance of the individual that he had previously recommended to be delivered to the "*adversary*."

1 Corinthians 5:1, 2, 6, 7,9-11

1 It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife.

2 And you have become arrogant, and have not mourned instead, in order that the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst.

6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?

7 Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

9 I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people;

10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world.

11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler — not even to eat with such a one.

Verse 6 indicates that "*this punishment*" was applied.

2 Corinthians 2:6

6 Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority,

While Paul's concern is with the sin of a single individual, he takes the opportunity to advise the saints of Corinth that this is the appropriate course of action to be taken against all who practice the sins listed in verse 11. Evidently, the expulsion of this individual from the "*ekklesia*" had achieved the desired effect of bringing about repentance, as Paul is now advocating that they forgive this individual and accept him back into the fold.

Forgiveness is necessary to insure that "*no advantage be taken of us by 'satanas' (adversary).*" Refusing forgiveness is not an exercise of "*spiritual*" service, but an action borne of one's carnal

nature, which Paul refers to as the outer man who stands in opposition to doing what one knows to be right and proper.

While this view has merit, immediately following this admonition Paul addresses the activity and impact of the Judaizing teachers. Therefore, Paul's concern is with dissent and hardness of heart giving an opportunity to those that are "*adversaries*" of the way of Jesus. Refusing forgiveness and acceptance of this individual would have made him easy prey for those who stood against the way of Jesus, not to mention those that might be weakened by the division such an issue can create. While the NASB states "*for we are not ignorant of his schemes*," the original language allows for a translation of "*their schemes*," which indicates multiple adversaries.

2 CORINTHIANS 11:14

And no wonder, for even Satan (adversary) disguises himself as an angel of light.

The context of this verse deals with those who were teaching a false gospel.

2 Corinthians 11:4, 13, 15

4 For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.

13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ

15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds.

The term rendered as "*servants*" (vs. 15) is the same term that is rendered as "*deacons*" who are those appointed to serve the "*ekklesia*." Verses 13 & 15 clearly indicate that Paul is concerned with the messengers of an adversary. These were men who had come from Jerusalem and were challenged the correctness of the apostolic message by advocating the necessity of circumcision.

2 John 7

*For many deceivers have gone out into the **world**, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.*

In the above text, the term rendered as "*world*" is "*kosmos*." While this term is commonly understood as referring to the earth, it simply refers to an *existing or orderly arrangement*. Our understanding must be in keeping with the first century people being addressed, who had no understanding of the earth or world as we know it. In the apostolic writings, "*kosmos*" commonly refers to the "*existing arrangement*" established between God and the children of Israel at Mount Sinai. Therefore, John, speaking to his "*Jewish*" brethren of the way of Jesus was warning them against accepting those who were seeking to destroy the liberty they had gained through Jesus.

Galatians 2:4, 5

*4 But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.
5 But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.*

Peter also warned his brethren of faith to be aware of these deceivers.

2 Peter 2:1-3

*2 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.
2 And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;
3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.*

The deceivers that had come from Jerusalem had caused the saints of Galatia to encourage Paul to go to Jerusalem to settle the issue of circumcision for the saints from among the gentiles.

Acts 15:1, 2

*1 And some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."
2 And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.*

Paul's letter to the saints of Galatia was written immediately after Paul's meeting with the "officials" in Jerusalem. This letter strongly cautions the saints against accepting the deception being offered by their false brethren who had come from Judea.

Galatians 1:8, 9

*8 But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed.
9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.*

The "adversary" who had sent these messengers was in Jerusalem. As with Saul of Tarsus, they were acting with permission from the high priest.

Acts 9:1, 2

*1 Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest,
2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.*

While the most accountable “*adversary*” was the chief priest, the term is applicable to all those who were engaged in furthering his denial of Jesus.

2 Corinthians 12:7

And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan (adversary) to buffet me — to keep me from exalting myself!

It is generally held that Paul is referring to an unnamed physical ailment, which he, like Job, had received from “*Satan*.” However, the context in which this verse is found is Paul defending his message against the teaching of his false brethren who were presenting themselves as messengers of light. Paul introduced the subject of boasting in 11:16, where he addresses the boasting of the Judaizing teachers (vs. 18). He then spoke of his lofty credentials as a Hebrew of Hebrews and a Pharisee and detailed his sufferings for the sake of his mission.

2 Corinthians 11:22-28

22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I.

23 Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.

24 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes.

25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep.

26 I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren;

27 I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

28 Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches.

The credentials offered by those who were presenting themselves as messengers of light were causing problems for Paul and his ministry. They could boast on their association with the officials of Jerusalem, which the saints of Galatia held in high regard as evidenced by their insistence that Paul go there to clarify the issue of circumcision.

Acts 15:1, 2

1 And some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

2 And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.

Question: What manner of physical ailment would prevent Paul from boasting in what he had accomplished among the "*gentiles*"? Common sense dictates that even if he were a double amputee, it would not diminish what he had accomplished and was continuing to accomplish. There were two humbling experiences that would have prevented Paul from glorying in his success. The first was the success that the Judaizing teachers were having among those he had persuaded to accept the way of Jesus. Not only were these men "*adversaries*" of Paul, they boasted in their association with those in Jerusalem, the home of the great "*adversary*" - the corrupt high priest, who was determined to destroying the way of Jesus. These false teachers were the thorn in the side of Paul, as they were disrupting his ministry, by making it necessary for him to re-plow old ground, rather than moving to other fertile fields.

Galatians 4:19-21

19 My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you —

20 but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

21 Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?

The second humbling experience was Paul's own persecution of the saints, while he was a messenger of the "*adversary*." While Paul understood that he had received forgiveness for his past action, he was never able to put it completely behind him.

1 Corinthians 15:9, 10

9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:18

For we wanted to come to you — I, Paul, more than once — and yet Satan (adversary) thwarted us.

This verse involves the same "*adversary*" as the previous verses of Second Corinthians. It was not "*Satan*" that prevented Paul from coming to Thessalonica, but the influence of the false messengers of light, who were set on destroying Paul's work by maligning the accuracy of his message. Their negative influence required Paul to alter his plans and return to plow old ground.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:9

that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan (adversary), with all power and signs and false wonders,

While the apostolic writings are translated as announcing the “coming” of Jesus, the term “*parousia*” refers to a “*presence*.” The sacred writings of the Israelites refer to God’s “*presence*” as a “*visitation*,” which is often in the context of God’s wrath being poured out on a nation or people. Therefore, the terms “*parousia*” and “*visitation*” are common to prophecies concerning the implementation of God’s wrath. Throughout the apostolic writings, the “*presence*” of Jesus is synonymous with the fulfillment of his prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple complex, and God’s righteous judgment of unfaithful Israel.

The present context concerns a time of apostasy which would take place before the “*presence*” of Jesus, which would reveal the man of lawlessness.

2 Thessalonians 2:2-9

1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him,

2 that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

*3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for **it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,***

4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?

6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed.

*7 For **the mystery of lawlessness is already at work**; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.*

*8 And then that **lawless one will be revealed** whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;*

*9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of **Satan**, with all power and signs and false wonders,*

Of foremost importance is that Paul is speaking of a man (vs. 3). That man is not someone who is to come at some time in our future but a man who was already at work when this letter was written to the saints of Thessalonica (vs. 7 & 8). While this “*son of destruction*” was poised to do his evil work when this letter was written, he was being restrained. However, the restraining force would soon be removed, which would allow him to pursue his evil desire. Paul states that this individual would be slain during the “*presence*” of the Lord. God’s “*visitation*” upon unfaithful Israel was foretold by Jesus in Matthew 24, Luke, 21 and Mark 13. His prophecy was fulfilled in the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the temple complex during the Roman-Judean war of 67-70 CE. We must also note that the wonders performed by or through this individual were false; therefore, he possessed no real power. The activity of this individual agreed with the “*adversary*” - the chief priest of Israel and those who followed his refusal to accept Jesus as the Messiah of Israel.

This individual would exalt himself above every other god or object of worship, which indicates that he was to be the object of worship. Paul stated that the true nature of this individual was to be revealed **before** the “*presence*” of Jesus (vs. 3). As the “*presence*” of Jesus culminated with

the fulfillment of his prophecy to destroy Jerusalem and the temple in September of 70 CE, this individual was revealed before that event took place.

Paul's second letter to the saints of Thessalonica is generally accepted as being written circa 52 CE. Nero ascended to the throne of Rome in 54 CE; hence, in 52 CE, he was without power. Historical documents record that the first years of his reign were peaceful and prosperous.

"Ancient historians describe Nero's early reign as being strongly influenced by his mother Agrippina, his tutor Lucius Annaeus Seneca, and the Praetorian Prefect Sextus Afranius Burrus, especially in the first year. The first few years of Nero's rule were known as examples of fine administration. The matters of the Empire were handled effectively and the Senate enjoyed a period of renewed influence in state affairs."
Wikipedia; Nero.

After a period of peace and affluence, Nero steadily began to increase in ruthlessness and wickedness to the point where early historians record that his reign was more wicked than that of Caligula. In 64 CE, Rome burned and the "Jews" convinced Nero to place the blame on those of the way of Jesus. The persecution that followed caused many to desert the way of Jesus (the apostasy) and placed Nero in accord with the purpose of the corrupt religious leaders of Israel (the "adversary").

"NERO

But why were the Christians selected as scapegoats? Why not the Jews, who were both numerous and had already offended the Roman government and had been banished in great numbers? Or why not the many followers of the oriental religions, which had proved more than once obnoxious? (1) Poppaea was favorable to Judaism and had certainly enough influence over Nero to protect the Jews; she was regarded by them as a proselyte and is termed by Josephus (Ant., XX, viii, 11) theosebes, "god-fearing." When the populace and Nero were seeking victims for revenge, the Jews may have been glad of the opportunity of putting forward the Christians and may have been encouraged in this by Poppaea. Farrar (Early Days of Christianity, I, chapter iv) sees "in the proselytism of Poppaea, guided by Jewish malice, the only adequate explanation of the first Christian persecution." (2) Closely connected with this was doubtless the observation by the Roman government that Christianity was an independent faith from Judaism. This may first have been brought home to the authorities by the trial of Paul before Nero, as suggested by Ramsay (Expositor, July, 1893). Judaism was a recognized and tolerated religion, a religio licita, and Christianity when divorced from Judaism became a religio illicita and punishable by the state, for Christianity first rose "under the shadow of licensed Judaism" (sub umbraculo licitae Judaeorum religionis: Tertullian, Apol., xxi)." International Standard Bible Encyclopaed

While Nero committed suicide on June 9, 68 CE, uprisings among the "Jews" in Palestine led him to dispatch Vespasian and legions of Rome to suppress the revolt in 66 CE. This was the beginning of the Roman-Judean War that would culminate with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple complex in September of 70 CE. This event was the "visitation" of God, foretold by and executed through Jesus. As with many of the monarchs of Rome, Nero considered himself to be a God and the object of worship. He insisted that appropriate statues be erected in all the temples throughout

the empire, that he might be worshipped as such. His attempt to erect a statue of himself in the temple failed.

The revolt in Palestine was led by three factions of zealots who fought among themselves for supremacy and control. Josephus records that they were responsible for the misery and suffering of the people in Jerusalem. Hence, by extension, their lawlessness was revealed.

1 TIMOTHY 5:15

for some have already turned aside to follow Satan (adversary).

Paul is not referring to “*Satan*,” but an “*adversary*.” As seen in verse 14, Paul is speaking of young widows.

1 Timothy 5:14

Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach;

Verses 14 and 15 demonstrate that the “*adversary*” and the “*enemy*” are one and the same. The apostolic letters identify the “*Jews*” who were refusing to accept Jesus, as the enemies of God and the saints. Among them were those who were maligning the correctness of Paul’s message by advocating the necessity of circumcision and faithfulness to the Law. In the ancient world, women had little standing and were reliant on their husbands. Therefore, widows were prone to be victimized by those who practiced deception.

Romans 5:10

For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Romans 11:28

From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;

Philippians 3:2-7, 16-19

2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;

3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

4 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more:

5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;

6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

*16 however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.
17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.
18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that **they are enemies** of the cross of Christ,
19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.*

In the above text, Paul cautions the saints of Philippi to beware of the evil workers who were those of the false circumcision. The true circumcision consisted of “Jews” such as Paul who had accepted the way of Jesus (vs. 3). Those of the false circumcision were the children of Israel who were enemies of God and His people, as they did not accept Jesus as the one of promise (vs. 18). Jesus warned his “Jewish” disciples that their enemies would be those of their own household.

Matthew 10:34-36

*34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.
35 "For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
36 and a man's enemies will be the members of his household.*

Perhaps there was very little opportunity for the widows of the way of Jesus to find a new mates in the faith which moved them to return to the Law and those who stood in opposition to the gospel.

REVELATION 2:9

'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan (adversary).

REVELATION 3:9

'Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan (adversary), who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie — behold, I will make them to come and bow down at your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

The Greek term rendered as “synagogue” means a “collection, body, or assembly;” therefore, the reference is to the entire “body” or “collection” of the “adversary.” These people are clearly identified as those claiming to be “Jews” but are not. Paul establishes that a true “Jew” is not only a circumcised member of the lineage of Abraham, but one who had also undergone “spiritual” circumcision, which is that of the heart.

Romans 2:28, 29

28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

The “*Jews*” who were refusing to accept Jesus as the one of promise were the “*false circumcision*.”

Philippians 3:2, 3

2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;

3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

Therefore, the writer of the Revelation was speaking of his “*Jewish*” brethren that were refusing Jesus and persecuting all aspects of the way of Jesus. While the majority holds the Revelation to be addressing the “*end of time*,” it relates to the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus recorded in Matthew 24, Luke 21, Mark 13. Jesus foretold God’s “*visitation*” and vengeance upon the unfaithful of Israel which took place in the Roman-Judean War of 66-70 CE, and culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in September of 70 CE.

REVELATION 2:13

'I know where you dwell, where Satan's (adversary's) throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith, even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan (adversary) dwells.

If we accept that the reference is to “*Satan*,” the context demands that we accept that his abode is in Pergamum - mystery solved!

The text of Revelation 2:12 through 17 addressed the saints of Pergamum. Pergamum was located off the coast of what is today western Turkey, about 50 miles south of ancient Troy. At the time that the Revelation was written, there was a great amphitheater built into the side of a nearby mountain that housed a magnificent, 40 foot high, Altar of Zeus - the throne of “*adversary*.” Eusebius records that Antipas was put to death by the pagan priests of Aesculapius ((Hist. Eccl. 4, 5).

REVELATION 2:24

24 'But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan (adversary), as they call them — I place no other burden on you.

We cannot possibly identify the “*adversary*” without considering the context.

Revelation 2:18-24

18 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:

19 'I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.

20 'But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

21 'And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality.

22 'Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.

23 'And I will kill her children with pestilence; and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

24 'But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them — I place no other burden on you.

The context concerns the influence of a false prophetess, who is referred to as Jezebel. She has led some of the saints of Thyatira to engage in immorality and to making sacrifices to idols. Therefore, the reference to “*the deeper things of Satan*” concerns knowing the deeper principles of the pagan system being espoused by the person identified as Jezebel. Jezebel denotes the character of the wife of king Ahab of the northern kingdom of Israel, who was influential in promoting idolatry. All false gods and pagan systems of worship are “*adversaries*” of God.

REVELATION 12:9

And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil (slanderer, false accuser) and Satan (adversary), who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

From this verse it is concluded that “*Satan*” and “*the Devil*” are one and the same, and that references to the “*serpent*” and the “*dragon*” refer to this being. In the section entitled “*The Garden of Eden*,” it was demonstrated that the scriptures commonly use these terms in reference to people who were opposed to the will and purpose of God. Our study has shown, and will continue to show, that the terms “*satanas*” and “*diabolos*” were most often used to identify human “*adversaries*,” “*false accusers*” and/or “*slanderers*.” The term “*world*” is rendered from the Greek term “*oikoumeneen*,” which did not, and does not have, global significance. The term simply denotes “*a land within boundaries*.” While the Israelites often used this term in reference to the lands of Palestine, in the apostolic period it commonly referred to the lands under Roman control - the Roman Empire.

Luke 2:1

*Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the **inhabited earth** (oikumeneen).*

Acts 11:28

*And one of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the **world** (oikumeneen). And this took place in the reign of Claudius.*

While the text of Luke is translated as “*inhabited*” it should read “*inhabitable*.” The Romans held that only the lands under their control were “*inhabitable*.” All other lands lacked their refinements which made them “*uninhabitable*.”

Returning to the text of Revelation, the Greek term rendered as “*earth*” is the Greek term “*ge/gais*” which simply means “*land*.” This term was used by the “*Jews*” to refer to the land they had been given by God - Palestine. The term rendered as “*angel*” simply means “*messenger*” and was commonly used to refer to any person who had been sent to accomplish a given task.

We must bear in mind is that the language of the Revelation is figurative; it cannot be taken literally. In the context of 12:3-17, the writer stated that the dragon was a “*sign*” (vs. 3), and that it symbolized those who persecuted the faith.

Sign: Grk. sēmeíou - (neut. noun.) Sign, mark, token, miracle with a spiritual end and purpose. In the plural, miracles which lead to something out of and beyond themselves;

*finger-marks of God, **valuable not so much for what they are as for what they indicate.** Particularly a sign by which something is designated, distinguished. **Specifically a sign by which the character and truth of any person or thing is known,** a token, proof. The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*

To understand the purpose and identity of any symbol, we must view the context in which it appears.

Revelation 12:1-17

*1 And a **great sign** appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars;*

2 and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.

The writer saw a “*sign*” that appeared in heaven. The term “*sign*” indicates that what was seen was a symbol of something. The woman clothed in radiant attire represents the faithful of Israel, with the twelve stars symbolizing the twelve tribes of Israel (Gen. 37:9).

*And **another sign** appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems.*

The above verse identifies the dragon to be a “*sign*,” which means that it is symbolic.

4 And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth (land). And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

5 And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

The symbolism of the above verses is common to the language found in the Hebrew scriptures.

Daniel 8:9, 10

9 And out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land.

10 And it grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down.

The sweeping away of a third of the stars represents the fall of a rebellious people or culture. The three- and one-half-year period of God protecting the woman was representative of the preservation of the faithful remnant during the Roman-Judean war of 66-70 CE. Note that the

1,260 days are the equivalent of the “*time, times and half time*” of verse 14, and the “*42 months*” of 11:2, 3 and 13:5. The fate of the woman is reminiscent of Elijah’s sojourn in the wilderness during the three- and one-half years of drought (1 Kings 17:3-6).

7 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war,

8 and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world (only a portion of the earth); he was thrown down to the earth (land), and his angels (messengers) were thrown down with him.

If the dragon is symbolic, so must be the war in heaven. If the war in heaven is viewed as literal, then one must ask how the “*Devil*” got back into heaven after being cast out? The context deals with the “*ge/gais*” (vs. 4, 9, 12, 13), which has no global significance as it refers to a portion of land which is commonly the land God had given to the Israelites – Palestine. These verses depict the fall and crushing of the unfaithful Israel, who were those who refused to accept the righteousness that God had extended through Jesus.

10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying,

"Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night.

11 "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 life even to death.

After his ascension into the heavenly realm, Jesus was given authority over all things pertaining to the elect, which included the authority to initiate God's wrath on unfaithful Israel. The false accuser began to be thrown down with the beginning of the apostolic message and was fully implemented with the coming of God's wrath. The "*accuser and slanderer*" of those of the way of Jesus was the high priest of Israel, who symbolized those of covenant Israel who had refused to accept Jesus and were persecuting their brethren of the way of Jesus. The dragon symbolizes the Zealots who, one way or another, received the support of those who were not of the way of Jesus. Those who opposed them were replaced by those who supported the rebellion.

While those who remained faithful to the Law were false accusers and slanderers of their brethren of the way of Jesus, the Law to which they remained loyal cannot be set aside as it was against those it governed and was a law of sin and death. Those who placed their trust in the way of Jesus became free of the condemnation of the Law. Hence it has a role in Revelation 12 and 13.

12 "For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth (land) and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth (land), he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child.

14 And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

15 And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood.

16 And the earth (land) helped the woman, and the earth (land) opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Verses 12 through 17 deal with the persecution of the faithful remnant of Israel at the hands of their rebellious brethren who are characterized as the dragon and the serpent. The Revelation is multi-faceted in its presentation of God's wrath (destruction) upon the unrepentant of Israel, the nation, Jerusalem, and the temple complex, which brought an end all the ceremonial aspects of the Law and the Levitical priesthood. It also reveals the establishment of a new system of righteousness in the everlasting kingdom of God and the resurrection of the faithful unto everlasting life.

REVELATION 20:2, 7

2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil (slander, false accuser) and Satan (adversary), and bound him for a thousand years,

7 And when the thousand years are completed, Satan (adversary) will be released from his prison,

In the original manuscripts, the definite article (the) does not appear before the word “*diabolos*,” which is translated as “*devil*.” The absence of the definite article requires us to insert an “*a*,” hence, the “*adversary*” is a “*slanderer/false accuser*.” The dragon and the serpent are symbolic of the children of Israel who were “*adversaries*” (*satanas*) to the way of Jesus and were “*slandorous/false accusers*” (*diabolos*) of their faithful brethren, who had accepted Jesus. John and Paul state that the appearance of Jesus would bring an end to those who were slandering the way of God.

1 John 3:8

the one who practices sin is of the devil (false accusers); for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

2 Thessalonians 1:6, 7

*6 For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you,
7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,*

Jesus declared the unfaithful of Israel were the children of those who slandered the way of God; hence they were “*diabolos*.”

John 8:44

44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.

Jesus had foretold that he would bind the “*adversary*” and carry off his property (people).

Matthew 12:28-29

28 "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

29 "Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

30 "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

It is to be noted that Jesus said that the kingdom of God had come upon “*you*,” which refers to those he was then addressing. He then stated that the binding would take place so that he could carry off the property of the “*slanderers*.” He then personalized his statement (vs. 30) to demonstrate the involvement of his disciples in that endeavor. The destruction of the old covenant system and the rebellious element of Israel defined the binding of the “*adversary*.” This was in keeping with Paul’s promise that God would soon crush those, who stood in “*opposition*” to His people.

Romans 16:20

And the God of peace will soon crush Satan (adversary) under your feet.

“DIABOLOS”

Devil: Greek - diabolos

1. **Prone to slander, slanderous, accusing falsely, slanderous speech.**
2. **Satan, the prince of demons, the author of evil, persecutor of good men.**

As is the case with the term “*satanas*,” the definition of “*diabolos*” has been subject to the process of evolution. Definition number one represents the true meaning of the term, while definition number two represents what the term has come to mean. As is the case with the term “*satanas*,” the first century children of Israel had no understanding of definition #2.

We will begin our study by looking at some of the “*Old Testament*” verses, where some Bible versions have the term “*devil(s)*,” while others use a companion word, such as “*demon*” or “*satyr*.”

Leviticus 17:7

*And they shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the **goat demons** (a goat) with which they play the harlot. This shall be a permanent statute to them throughout their generations.”*

2 Chronicles 11:15

*And he set up priests of his own for the high places, for the **satyrs**, and for the calves which he had made.*

The manuscripts do not contain any word that relates to “*demons*” or “*satyrs*.” The Hebrew term rendered as “*goat demons*” and “*satyrs*” in the above verses simply means “*a goat*,” and refers to the worship of this animal, which is idolatry. The term “*he*” in 2 Chronicles 11:15, refers to Jeroboam, who set up priests in the “*high places*” (the places where idols were worshiped) that ministered to idols of goats and calves.

Deuteronomy 32:17

*“They sacrificed to **demons** (Heb. Sed) who were not God,
To gods whom they have not known,
New gods who came lately,
Whom your fathers did not dread.*

Psalms 106:37

*They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the **demons** (Heb. Sed),*

The Hebrew term “*sed*” is a masculine noun that refers to the recipient of any offering other than the God of Israel. Hence, the reference is to false gods who received forbidden sacrifices. These were gods of wood and stone which Paul declares are not gods at all.

Galatians 4:8

However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods.

The above verses represent the typical manner the sacred writings of the Israelites use various terms that our Bibles render as “*devil*” or one of its companion terms. In each case, the context reveals that pagan worship (idolatry) or corruption are the subjects, not a “*fallen angel*” that we know as “*Satan*” or one of his entourage.

Before beginning our study of “*the Devil*” in the apostolic writings, we will note the three occasions where “*diabolos*” is correctly translated.

1 Timothy 3:11

11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips (diabolos), but temperate, faithful in all things.

2 Timothy 3:3

3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips (diabolos), without self-control, brutal, haters of good,

Titus 2:3

3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips (diabolos), nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good,

In the above verses, “*diabolos*” is translated as “*malicious gossips*.” This is an appropriate translation as gossip is most often “*slandorous*” and based on “*false accusations*.”

The term “*diabolos*” appears in 35 times in the apostolic letters and is rendered as “*devil*” in 32 of those appearances, with the definite article added to indicate that an entity is being addressed. Simply stated, such translations are reprehensible. We will find that if we view the apostolic letters by inserting the correct meaning of the term “*diabolos*,” we will find no reference to “*the Devil*.”

Mark 7:20-23

20 And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man.

21 "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,

22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.

23 "All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

The above text reveals that the real “*diablos*” lies within each man, which Paul addresses as the outer or carnal man in Romans 7. Therefore, as stated by James, each man is solely responsible for his acts of rebellion.

James 1:14, 15

But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. 15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

Jeremiah 17:9

*"The heart is more deceitful than all else
And is desperately sick;
Who can understand it?"*

Matthew 13:38, 39

*38 and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom;
and the tares are the sons of the evil [one];
39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and
the reapers are angels.*

The above verses are taken from the explanation of the parable of the tares.

Matthew 13:37-42

*37 And He answered and said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man,
38 and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom;
and the tares are the sons of the **evil** [one];
39 and the enemy who sowed them is the **devil** (diabolos), and the harvest is the end of the
age; and the reapers are angels.
40 "Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the
end of the age.
41 "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all
stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,
42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and
gnashing of teeth.*

I have enclosed the term "one" (vs. 38) in brackets, as it does not appear in the manuscripts which merely state that they are the sons of evil. The field is the children of Israel to whom belonged God's promises.

Romans 9:4 5

*who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants
and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,
5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over
all, God blessed forever. Amen.*

2 Peter 1:4

*For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them
you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in
the world by lust.*

Romans 15:8

For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers,

Acts 1:8

but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

In Acts 1:8, The term rendered as "earth" is "gais" which denotes a portion of land. The term is commonly used to denote the land the children of Israel had been given by God – Palestine. The text has Jesus telling his apostles that they would be his messengers in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria and the remotest portion of the land. The land where Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria were located is Palestine. Their mission was later confirmed during the meeting that took place in Jerusalem.

Galatians 2:9

and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

Returning to the text of Matthew 13, the term rendered as "world" (vs. 38) is "kosmos" which refers to an "existing/orderly arrangement." Its most common reference is to the arrangement established between God and the children of Israel at Mount Sinai – the covenant of Law. The fruit of the "good seed" represents the faithful remnant of Israel, while the tares represent those that were stubbornly refusing to accept Jesus as the Anointed of God. The judgment is to take place at the end of the "age" (vs. 40), not the end of the world. This came to pass in the Roman-Judean war of 66-70 CE and culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple complex in September of 70 CE, as foretold by Jesus in Matthew 24, Luke 21 and Mark 13. The enemy sowing the tares is the High Priest who represents the religious leaders of God's people. In verse 38, the "slanderer" is said to be the "poneros." "Poneros" means "evil in effect or influence." Jesus addressed the corruption of the religious leaders who were charged with the care and keeping of God's people and accused them of corrupting the people.

Matthew 23:14

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you will receive greater condemnation.

John 11:47-53

47 Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs.

48 "If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all,

50 nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish."

51 Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation,

52 and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

53 So from that day on they planned together to kill Him.

Acts 4:5, 6, 15-18

5 On the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; 6 and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent.

15 But when they had ordered them to leave the Council, they began to confer with one another,

16 saying, "What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.

17 "But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name."

18 And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

While the priestly order was acting out of a sense of self-preservation, we cannot ignore that this was due to the influence of their carnal natures.

Matthew 25:41

"Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil (diabolos) and his angels;

Eternal: Grk. aionios - of an age, pertaining to an age, time of an age.

Fire is a consuming force and commonly refers to destruction. The text does not refer to an "eternal fire," but a fire that pertains to an "age." The apostolic letters record that it is the "age" of the covenants of Law and circumcision that was coming to an end. The fire was to be kindled by Israel's Messiah, who would be empowered to execute God's judgment on unfaithful Israel. The unfaithful were the children of Israel who continued to reject the righteousness that God was extending through Jesus.

Matthew 3:7-12

*7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, **who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?***

8 "Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance;

9 and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

10 *"And **the axe is already laid at the root of the trees**; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and **thrown into the fire**.*

11 *"As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*

12 *"And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but **He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire**."*

The fire of God's wrath was not kindled for the "Devil" and his "angels," but for the "false accuser" and his "agents/messengers." While John brings an indictment against all the rebellious people of Israel, his primary reference was to the religious leaders of Israel who were led by their chief priest. It was their teaching and influence that blinded the people to God's purpose in Jesus. Jesus spoke of this judgment of fire in Matthew 24, Luke 21, and Mark 13. God's wrath upon the unfaithful of Israel was an important part of the apostles teaching.

1 Thessalonians 2:14-16

14 *For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did **from the Jews**,*

15 *who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men,*

16 ***hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles** that they might be saved; with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. **But wrath has come upon them to the utmost**.*

Luke 21:23

*"Woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land, and **wrath to this people**, (rebellious Israel)*

John 3:36

*"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but **the wrath of God abides on him**."*

Ephesians 5:6

*Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these **things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience** (unfaithful of Israel).*

The term "angel" simply means "messenger or agent," and refers to any person engaged in a given task. Of such were those like Saul of Tarsus, whose persecution of the saints was in consort with the desires of the corrupt leadership of Israel.

Acts 9:1, 2

*I Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, **went to the high priest**,*

2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Luke 8:12

"And those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil (diabolos) comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved.

The narrative attributed to Luke has the term “*diabolos*,” while the narrative attributed to Mark has the term “*satanas*” (see notes of Mk. 4:15 in the section entitled “*Satanas*”). Regardless which term is used the meaning remains unchanged. Jesus was speaking of the various ways his brethren would react when hearing the message of God’s righteousness. The slanderer who would convince them to reject the message of righteousness was the chief priest, who represented all the religious leaders of Israel. They were responsible for suppressing the truth being presented by Jesus and later by the apostles. Their rebelliousness turned the hearts of God’s covenant people away from the deliverance that God was extending through Jesus.

Matthew 23:13

"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

John 6:70

Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil (diabolos)?"

The original language does not include the definite article; hence, the reference is not to a fallen angel whose purpose is to destroy God’s people. In keeping with the meaning of the term, Judas was false, as he was not what he appeared to be. He had been charged with keeping the finances of Jesus and his entourage and had been using those funds for personal gain. His vile nature eventually led him to betray of Jesus for money. In his act of betrayal, he aligned himself with those that were “*false accusers*” and “*slanderers*,” of the faithful, which made him guilty of the same.

John 12:4-6

*4 But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said,
5 "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii, and given to poor people?"
6 Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.*

John 8:44

"You are of your father the devil (diabolos), and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.

Question: What murder can be **directly** attributed to the entity commonly known as “Satan” or the “devil”? Where is his character, lusts, and traits definitively revealed in the biblical record? Outside the realm of myths and fairytales, there is no evidence supporting any charge made against “Satan” or his involvement in any act of rebellion against God’s will. While some will point out that the wiles of “Satan” are in keeping with the definitions of “satanas” and “diabolos,” outside the created myth, there is no evidence to support his existence or any charge made against him. No one can point to a single instance that conclusively demonstrates that “Satan” has personally committed murder or influenced somebody to do so.

The verse under consideration can only be understood if it is considered in its context.

John 8:23, 37-42

23 And He was saying to them, *"You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world.*

33 They answered Him, *"We are Abraham's offspring, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You shall become free'?"*

37 *"I know that you are Abraham's offspring; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.*

38 *"I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father."*

39 They answered and said to Him, *"Abraham is our father."* Jesus said to them, ***"If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham.***

40 *"But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; **this Abraham did not do.***

41 ***"You are doing the deeds of your father."*** They said to Him, *"We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God."*

42 Jesus said to them, *"If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.*

43 *"Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word.*

44 *"You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.*

Jesus stated that he was "from" above, while those that doubted him were "from" below. While we view the term "come" (vs. 42) as denoting a place of origin, the Greek term also denotes a "state or condition" emanating from a place of origin. Hence, Jesus is stating that his disposition was not earthly in the sense of those who were opposing him. Jesus qualified his reference by declaring that their disposition was of “this kosmos” (*this existing arrangement*) (vs. 23) which is to say that they were devoted to seeking righteousness through their personal ability to keep the precepts of the Law.

Their appeal to being children of Abraham is an appeal to being in God's favor. Jesus responds by pointing out that their actions demonstrate that they lacked the trust exhibited by Abraham who did not plot murder.

In his argument, Jesus employs the common Hebrew idiom of the father-son relationship. The children of Israel not only used the phrase "*son of*" in the literal sense, such as "*son of David*," but also in the figurative sense, as in "*son of perdition*" or "*son of destruction*," "*sons of thunder*," etc. Figurative applications were used to indicate an association or a philosophy to which one was devoted; hence, Jesus was referring to their "*models*" and "*mentors*." The children of Israel commonly understood "*the beginning*" as referring to their establishment in the calling of Abraham and solidified through the establishment of the covenants. Their actions reflected that they were not of the disposition of Abraham, but had the character of their rebellious ancestors, who were guided by their carnal nature. Rather than being an image of Abraham (a part of the faithful remnant), they were the children of those who were governed by their carnal nature. They were of those who were false and "*slandered*" and killed the prophets, while defrauding the less fortunate for personal gain.

Matthew 23:28-36

28 *"Even so you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.*

29 *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous,*

30 *and say, 'If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets. '*

31 *"Consequently you bear witness against yourselves, **that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.***

32 *"Fill up then the measure of the guilt of your fathers.*

33 *"You serpents, you brood of vipers, how shall you escape the sentence of hell?*

34 *"Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city,*

35 *that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.*

36 *"Truly I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation.*

John 13:2

And during supper, the devil (diabolos) having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him,

The phrase "*having already put*" is rendered from a single Greek term that means "*to cast*" or "*to put*." The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament states that "*the verb in all its applications retains the idea of impulse.*" Therefore, Judas was under the influence of his carnal

nature, which found support in the corrupt religious leaders of Israel. These men, acting in consort with the high priest, further influenced Judas, who had already given way to his carnal nature by stealing from the groups finances and was now fixated on betraying Jesus for money.

Mark 7:21-23

*21 "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,
22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.
23 "All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."*

James 1:14, 15

*14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.
15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.*

Acts 10:38

"You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil (diabolos); for God was with Him.

Jesus was endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit at his baptism.

Matthew 3:16, 17

*16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him,
17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."*

Peter is commonly understood as speaking of the miracles of Jesus in healing the various physical and mental ailments that were inflicted on God's people by a fallen angel bent on destruction. The term rendered as “healing” refers to a “restoration” or “making whole.” While this term can have application to a disease and/or infirmity, it has a much broader application. The phrase “who were oppressed” is rendered from a single Greek term meaning “to rule, to tyrannize or oppress harshly.” Therefore, while Peter is speaking of the healing power of Jesus, he includes what resulted from those healings – they regained their health.

According to the teachings of the religious leaders of Israel, all infirmities and diseases were the result of sin. Consequently, the afflicted were treated as though they were cursed by God. Therefore, in the eyes of the people, Jesus did more than heal diseases and infirmities; he also removed the “slandorous” stigma that had been placed upon the unfortunate by the teaching of the corrupt religious leaders of Israel. In the deeper sense, because their condition was held as indicating a sinful disposition, the healing miracles of Jesus represented his power over sin.

Therefore, these miracles represented an even greater “*restoration*” than physical health, as they represented the healed being “*restored*” to God.

Acts 28:27

*27 For the heart of this people has become dull,
And with their ears they scarcely hear,
And they have closed their eyes;
Lest they should see with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart and return,
And I should heal them. '"*

Hebrews 12:12, 13

*12 Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble,
13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.*

James 5:16

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

1 Peter 2:24

and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

Acts 13:10

and said, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil (diabolos), you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord?

The identity of the “*diabolos*” is clearly seen by viewing the context of this verse.

Acts 13:7-11

*7 who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God.
8 But **Elymas the magician** (for thus his name is translated) **was opposing them**, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.
9 But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze upon him,
10 and said, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord?
11 "And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time." And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand.*

As stated in our study of John 8:44, the phrase “*son of*” is used in the literal sense, as in “*son of David*,” and in the figurative sense indicating that to which one has an association or a philosophy to which one is devoted. The term “*diabolos*” refers to a “*false accuser, false speaker or slanderer*.” “*Diabolos*” an accurate description of the intent and purpose of Elymas, who was making false and slanderous accusations against Paul and his message. Elymas was speaking against God’s message of righteousness through Jesus, just as were the religious leaders of Israel who were represented by the chief priest. As Elymas was acting in harmony with the chief of the “*slanderers*,” he was of their number.

Ephesians 4:25-27

25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.

26 Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,

27 and do not give the devil (diabolos) an opportunity.

The myth surrounding a fallen angel known as the “*devil*” holds him to be the source of all the sins listed by Paul. However, the definite article does not appear in the manuscripts which state: “*Do not give to adversary an opportunity.*” The context allows for two identities of the “*adversary*.”

Prior to addressing a list of sins, Paul’s addressed those who were opposed to the truth and were seeking opportunity to corrupt those of the faithful remnant.

Ephesians 4:14, 15

14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

The sins listed relate to speech. Anger is to be curbed before it gives way to “*slandorous speech*,” which is “*falsehood*.” Any discord among those of the faithful would provide an opportunity to the Judaizing teachers that were slandering the apostolic message by advocating the necessity of circumcision. Acceptance of circumcision would obligate the individual to the Law and result in forfeiture of the righteousness received through Jesus.

Galatians 5:1-4

1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

2 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. 3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.

4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Philippians 3:2

Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;

Galatians 1:6-9

6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;

7 which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

On the other hand, succumbing to sin results from allowing one's carnal nature to overcome the desire to do what is right. In Roman's 7, Paul placed the outer man (carnal nature) in opposition to the inner man (heart/mind). He established that the weakness of his nature often betrayed his desire to do what was right. As he desired to do God's will, the weakness of his carnal nature, enabled by the Law, falsely accused (*diabolos*) him of being sinful and worthy of condemnation. The false accusations of the weakness of man's nature was overcome by the offering of Jesus which allowed God to set aside sins of weakness and base righteousness in the thought and intent of the heart.

Ephesians 6:11

Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil (diabolos).

The term rendered "schemes" means to "lie in wait." That this concept is applicable to man's carnal nature is seen in God's words to Cain.

Genesis 4:7

*"If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, **sin is crouching at the door**; and its desire is for you, but **you must master it**."*

While man can resist the wiles of the mythical "*Satan*," he cannot master him, which is to have dominion over him.

The identity of "*diabolos*" (false accuser/slanderer) is found in the verse 12.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

The Greek term "*estin*" is not translated, nor does it appear in the first sentence of Eph. 6:11 - "*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood.*" The term "*estin*" refers to "existence or state of being"

– “*for our struggle to exist (to be) is not against flesh and blood.*” Therefore, Paul is speaking of the struggle of those of the way of Jesus to exist as God’s people.

“*Flesh and blood*” can refer to being of the lineage of Abraham; hence, their struggle was not with their heritage or their former reliance on the flesh and blood system of the Law.

Matthew 3:9

and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.

Verse 12 is generally translated in a manner that has Paul speaking of supernatural forces that exist in the spiritual realm. A closer examination of the words and phrases will reveal that this is not the case. The term rendered as “*rulers*” refers to earthly rulers, as seen in Paul’s letter to Titus.

Titus 3:1

Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed,

The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament states that the term translated as “*world forces*” refers to “*worldly men.*” Vincent and Robertson share this opinion.

Ephesians 6:12

The English Revised Version (1885), more correctly, “*world-rulers of this darkness.*” Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament.

These “*world-rulers,*” are limited to “*this darkness*” here on earth. Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament.

The phrase “*spiritual forces of wickedness*” demonstrated that the translators were predisposed to a fallen angel bent on destruction. The original language simply denotes “*spiritual wickedness.*”

Spiritual wickedness... Literally, “*the spiritual things of wickedness.*” Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament.

The terms “*heaven(s)*” and “*heavenly places*” often refer to the leaders of governments or an existing religious system, as demonstrated in the following verse.

Ephesians 3:10

in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.

As God alone is the ruler in heaven, Paul’s use of the plural obviously refers to earthly rulers and authorities. It was not heavenly rulers who would benefit from the physical existence of the “*ekklesia*” (church) but earthly rulers. Josephus records that the Israelites regarded two outer portions of the temple as representing the land and the sea, while the most holy place represented “*heaven*” (Ant. 3,7,7). Therefore, Paul, a Pharisee (Acts 26:5), is referring to the corruption

associated with the chief priest, who was the only one allowed entry into the most holy place (heaven). His office also represented the religious leaders of Israel.

The phrase “*this darkness*” refers to the ignorance, superstition and wickedness that was prevalent among the children of Israel who were stubbornly refusing to accept the righteousness God was offering through Jesus. Jesus stated that his brethren who would not receive him, would remain in darkness, while those who placed their trust in him would walk in light. Paul stated that the “*gentiles*” who committed to the way of Jesus were also formerly in darkness.

Luke 22:53

*"While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; **but this hour and the power of darkness are yours.**"*

John 8:12

*Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not **walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.**"*

John 12:46

*"I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me **may not remain in darkness.***

Ephesians 5:8

*for you were **formerly darkness**, but now **you are light in the Lord**; walk as children of light.*

Colossians 1:13

*For **He delivered us from the domain of darkness**, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,*

The Law did not bring darkness to the children of Israel, as Paul stated that the Law and the commandments were holy, righteous, and good. The darkness was due to man's failure to control his carnal nature.

Romans 7:12, 13, 18-23

12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

13 Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

19 For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish.

20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good.

22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin, which is in my members.

Their struggle for existence was against the influence of the rulers, powers, and worldly men of wickedness - the corrupt religious leaders of Israel – who were dedicated to eradicating the way of Jesus..

1 Timothy 3:6, 7

6 and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil (diabolos).

7 And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil (diabolos).

The phrase “incurred by” (vs. 6) is not found in the original language which reads “*lest he fall into condemnation of diabolos.*” While the term can refer to “*condemnation*,” it can also refer to an act of judgment. While the term rendered as “*fall into*” carries the thought of “*falling into a state or condition*,” it also carries the meaning of “*coming into harmony with*.” Paul’s concern is that a novice being appointed to the position of an overseer can become conceited and become a victim of his carnal nature. Verse 7 is a caution against being victimized by outside influences, particularly those of the “*slandorous*” Judaizing teachers. In verse 7, the term rendered as “*snare*” means “*a stratagem*” or “*temptation*.” No doubt, a novice would be more likely to succumb to the desire to boast in his position or succumb to the stratagem of the “*slanderers*” or “*false accusers*” who maligning the apostolic message. A more mature member of the faith would be better grounded and more likely to have established a good reputation in the community, which would lessen the impact of any “*slandorous*” accusations made by these false brethren. On the other hand, being filled with self-importance can lead one to surrender to his baser nature.

2 Timothy 2:26

and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil (diabolos), having been held captive by him to do his will.

This verse must be viewed in context.

2 Timothy 2:15-19, 22-26

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.

16 But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness,

17 and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,

18 men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and thus they upset the faith of some.

19 Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness."

22 Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

23 But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.

24 And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,

25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil (diabolos), having been held captive by him to do his will.

Paul is encouraging Timothy to make certain that he properly understands and teaches the truth of the resurrection and what is revealed in the "word of God" - the Hebrew Scriptures (vs. 15). He is not to waste his time engaging in a debate against empty and useless chatter (vs. 16), such those who were advocating that the resurrection had already taken place (vs. 18).

Those who were teaching this doctrine were not numbered with the Lord's people (vs. 19). The admonition to flee youthful lusts concerns Timothy's desire to respond to such people in an inappropriate manner, which is the subject of verse 23ff. Rather than devoting his time engaging these false teachers in debate, Timothy is encouraged to devote his time to those that are truly dedicated to serving God (vs. 22).

The phrase "*having been held captive*" is inaccurate as it implies a past action, while Paul is addressing a present condition. Some versions have a rendering of "*him*" and "*his*" (vs. 26), which indicates a single individual. "*Them*" and "*their*" is a more appropriate rendering as Paul has identified two men as teaching that the resurrection had already taken place. The term rendered as "*snare*" is the same word that Paul used in the previous verse of our study and means "*a stratagem*" or "*temptation*." Hence, Paul states that these people had become victims of the "*stratagem*" of those who were "*false speakers*" (diabolos).

Despite these men perverting Paul's teaching, we find that he desired their repentance. It is more than likely that those who were being misled were "*Jews*" which would have made them more susceptible to the influence of their former brethren. Paul was deeply concerned over the spiritual condition of his "*Jewish*" brethren, even going so far as to say that he would gladly suffer condemnation if only they could be saved.

Romans 9:3

For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

The apostolic letters clearly demonstrate that Paul's "*Jewish*" brethren who were refusing to place their trust in the offering of Jesus, were actively engaged in "*slandorous*" conduct toward their brethren of the faithful remnant. Paul spoke of such men in his first letter to Timothy.

Timothy 1:4-8

4 nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.

5 But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

6 For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion,

7 wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.

8 But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully,

Hebrews 2:14, 15

14 Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil (diabolos);

15 and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

The phrase “*He might render powerless*” is from a single Greek term that expresses a terminal condition - “*render ineffectual, abolish, annul, destroy.*” Hence, Jesus destroyed or rendered powerless whatever, or whoever, held the power of death over God’s children. Therefore, if Paul was speaking of a “*fallen angel*” known as “*Satan,*” he is now either powerless or nonexistent.

The phrase “*him who*” (had the power of death) is rendered from a single term that means “*this*” or “*that.*” The phrase “*the power of death*” is literally “*the power to produce death.*” Hence, we should read: “*that which held the power to produce death.*” Who or what had the power to produce death for God's covenant people? Hopefully, at this point in our study, no one will say “*Satan.*”

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:55-57

55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;

57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Translators do not include the definite article in the above verses, which is necessary for understanding Paul. In each case the terms “*sin*” and “*death*” are preceded by the definite article. Hence, the Law enabled “*the sin*” which produced “*the death.*”

Romans 5:12-14

12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned —

13 for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

The definite article precedes the terms “sin” and “death” in the above verses; hence, Paul is not speaking generally but is speaking of a specific form of sin and death. “*The sin*” refers to the sin of Adam who violated a recorded prohibition given by God – of the tree of knowledge you shall not eat. “*The death*” was in the world even though there were no record of God establishing any prohibitions between Adam and the establishment of the commandments at Mount Sinai. As the Hebrew scriptures did not record any established prohibitions between Adam and Mount Sinai, they could not be said to exist. Therefore, man could not sin in the likeness of Adam until the establishment of the commandments. Adam’s sin was due to his violation of a known ordinance when he ate of the forbidden fruit. Hence, the Law produced “*the sin*.”

As a result of violating God’s prohibition against eating of the tree of knowledge, Adam was sentenced to “*the death*.” Most translations record the condemnation of Adam as “*the day you eat of it you shall surely die*.” This leads to all manner of speculation as Adam did not die the day he ate of the tree. An accurate translation of the verse is seen in literal translations.

Genesis 2:17

Yet from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you are not to be eating from it, for in the day you eat from it, to die shall you be dying. CLNT

Gen 2:17

and of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou dost not eat of it, for in the day of thine eating of it — dying thou dost die.’ YLT

Hence, Adam was told that the day he ate of the tree in dying he would surely die. Hence, when he died, his death would be permanent. Hence, the violation of a known ordinance of God leads to a death that has no escape. Hence, under the Law, God’s people were in bondage to the hopelessness of “*the death*.”

1 Corinthians 15:55-57

55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;

Paul stated that man consisted of two natures that were at war with one another (Rom. 7). Under the Law, succumbing to the demands of one’s carnal nature resulted in “*the sin*” which brought the sentence of “*the death*.”

Romans 6:23

For the wages of (the) sin is (the) death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Therefore, the “*diabolos*” that held the power of death is man’s carnal nature. With the mercy, grace and forgiveness that God had extended through the offering of Jesus, righteousness was no longer based on perfect obedience to the Law, but on the thought and intent of the heart. Hence,

the ability of the weakness of man's nature to produce “*the sin*,” leading to “*the death*,” was destroyed. Speaking of his “*Jewish*” brethren of way of Jesus who remained obligated to the Law, Paul said:

Romans 8:1-4

1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of (the) sin and of (the) death.

3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

2 Timothy 1:10

*but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who **abolished** (the) death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,*

The term rendered as “*He might render powerless*,” in Hebrews 2:14, is the same term rendered as “*abolishing*” and “*abolished*” in 2 Timothy 1:10. The term rendered as “*slavery*” in Hebrews 2:15, is commonly rendered as “*bondage*.” The apostolic writers used this term of those who remained committed to seeking righteousness under the Law.

Romans 8:13-15

13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

*15 For you have not received a **spirit of slavery leading to fear again**, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”*

Galatians 4:24

*This is allegorically speaking: for these women are two covenants, **one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves**; she is Hagar.*

Galatians 5:1

*It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject **again to a yoke of slavery**.*

James 4:7

7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil (diabolos) and he will flee from you.

The context, in which this verse is found, begins with James addressing the carnal nature of his “*Jewish*” brethren.

James 4:1-4, 8

4 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?

2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.

3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

*4 You adulteresses, do you not know that **friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.***

*8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, **you double-minded.***

The phrase “*flee from you*” is rendered from a single Greek term that means “*to shun*.” James stated that the source of sin among his “*Jewish*” brethren was their own carnal desires. This is the same war that Paul stated was taking place within himself (Rom. 7:18ff). The desires, to which James refers include lust, murder, envy, and a quarrelsome attitude that leads to disagreements among the saints. He then refers to his brethren as practitioners of adultery, which implies that they were seeking to be attached to someone, or something, other than God. The term “*world*” is generally understood as a reference to worldliness, which is straying from righteousness to pursue the desires of the flesh, which is understood as spiritual adultery. However, the term “*world*” is “*kosmos*” which refers to an “*existing/orderly arrangement*.” The arrangement that concerned James and his “*Jewish*” brethren was the arrangement enacted between God and the children of Israel at Mount Sinai. Hence, James is referring to his “*Jewish*” brethren who were not fully committed to the way of Jesus as they were harboring loyalties toward their brethren who were enemies of God’s purpose in Jesus. This made them enemies through association. The phrase “*double-minded*” (vs. 8) addresses their disposition of straddling the fence between Judaism and the way of Jesus. Therefore, James is encouraging his brethren of faith to commit an unwavering trust in the offering of Jesus. In so doing, those that represent an evil association - their unrepentant brethren and false accusers of the saints - would shun them.

1 Peter 5:8

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil (diabolos), prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

The Hebrew Scriptures often refer to men as lions, with some roaring and devouring their prey. While there are many such references, a few will serve.

Numbers 23:24

*24 "Behold, a people rises like a lioness,
And as a lion it lifts itself;
It shall not lie down until it devours the prey,
And drinks the blood of the slain."*

Jeremiah 50:17

"Israel is a scattered flock, the lions have driven them away. The first one who devoured him was the king of Assyria, and this last one who has broken his bones is Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

Jeremiah 2:15

*"The young lions have roared at him,
They have roared loudly.
And they have made his land a waste;
His cities have been destroyed, without inhabitant.*

Isaiah 5:29

*Its roaring is like a lioness, and it roars like young lions;
It growls as it seizes the prey,
And carries it off with no one to deliver it.*

Jeremiah 2:30

*"In vain I have struck your sons;
They accepted no chastening.
Your sword has devoured your prophets Like a destroying lion.*

Ezekiel 19:1-7

*1 "As for you, take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel,
2 and say, 'What was your mother? A lioness among lions! She lay down among young lions, She reared her cubs.
3 'When she brought up one of her cubs, He became a lion, And he learned to tear his prey; He devoured men.
4 'Then nations heard about him; He was captured in their pit, And they brought him with hooks To the land of Egypt.
5 'When she saw, as she waited, That her hope was lost, She took another of her cubs And made him a young lion.
6 'And he walked about among the lions; He became a young lion, He learned to tear his prey; He devoured men.
7 'And he destroyed their fortified towers And laid waste their cities; And the land and its fulness were appalled Because of the sound of his roaring.*

Ezekiel 22:25

"There is a conspiracy of her prophets in her midst, like a roaring lion tearing the prey. They have devoured lives; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in the midst of her.

Paul also used the term when referring to men.

2 Timothy 4:17

But the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth.

Peter is addressing his brethren that were of the faithful remnant. The “slanders” and/or “false accusers” were their brethren who were rejecting Jesus and persecuting those who had accepted him as the one of promise. Men like Saul of Tarsus, whose actions were authorized by the chief priest, went about like roaring lions seeking to devour their brethren of faith. We know that Saul was not the only such person, as Paul later stated that his brethren of faith were being slaughtered as sheep.

Romans 8:36

*Just as it is written,
"For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long;
We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered."*

The admonition is equally applicable to a caution against submitting to one's carnal nature which seeks to devour the righteous.

1 John 3:8

the one who practices sin is of the devil (diabolos); for the devil (diabolos) has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil (diabolos).

This verse expresses the same thought as John 8:44.

John 8:44

"You are of your father the devil (diabolos), and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.

Jesus stated that the “diabolos” was a murderer from the beginning, while John accuses him of being a sinner from the beginning. The two teachings are harmonious, as murder is sin and John states that the person who hates his brother is a murderer.

1 John 3:15

Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

While John declares the destruction of the “slanderers/false accusers,” Jesus did so indirectly through a parable.

Mark 12:9

"What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others.

In the first verse of 1 John 3, The writer states that his readers had become children of God.

1 John 3:1

See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

Due to having placed their trust in the offering of Jesus, the “world” did not “know” them. The Greek term rendered as “know” means to speak of with complete understanding. The term rendered as “world” is “kosmos,” which refers to an “existing/orderly arrangement.” The term commonly refers the arrangement enacted between God and the children of Israel at Mount Sinai. Hence, those of the way of Jesus had become children of God in a manner that escaped the understanding of their brethren who remained committed to seeking righteousness through the Law. Those who rejected Jesus were not children of God.

Acts 4:12

"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Those who had rejected righteousness through the offering of Jesus were slandering and making false accusations against their brethren of the faithful remnant; hence, they were “diabolos.” Those who refused to place their trust in Jesus continued to be in bondage to “the sin” and “the death,” which is the subject of verses 4ff. What kept them in bondage resulted from their carnal nature, which Paul stated as “weakness of the flesh.”

In what manner was the “diabolos” a murderer from the beginning? Cain allowed jealousy (his carnal nature) to move him to murder his brother Abel. Hence, the failures associated with the weakness of man’s nature has been the bane of man since the beginning of creation. God’s acceptance of the offering of Jesus allowed Him to set aside failures of weakness and equate righteousness on the heart/mind.

Hebrews 8:8-13

*8 For finding fault with them, He says,
 "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD,
 WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT
 WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH;
 9 NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS
 ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND
 TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT;
 FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT,
 AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD.
 10 "FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL*

*AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD:
I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS,
AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS.
AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD,
AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.*

*11 "AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN,
AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,'
FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME,
FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.*

*12 "FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES,
AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE."*

13 When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

Romans 7:17, 18

17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me.

18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

Paul stated that sin dwelt in him and that there was nothing good in his flesh, which refers to his carnal nature. The one who practices sin is being governed by his/her carnal nature, which John associates with “*diabolos*.” Man’s carnal nature has been the cause of sin since the beginning, when it led to the sin of Adam and Eve and caused Cain to kill righteous Abel. The offering of Jesus destroyed the failures resulting from man’s weakness. John confirms this in verse 5.

1 John 3:5

*And you know that **He appeared in order to take away sins**; and in Him there is no sin.*

The term rendered as “*take away*” means “*to take away, to remove, to carry off, to suspend*.” The weakness of man’s carnal nature will always be problematic; however, for those who place an unwavering trust in the offering of Jesus, it has been rendered powerless as its failures will not be recognized as sin leading to destruction.

Jude 9

But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil (*diabolos*) and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you."

As is their custom, the translators rendered “*diabolos*” as “*the devil*,” which necessitates the insertion of the phrase “*against him*,” which is not a part of the original language. If Jude is speaking of the evil entity known as “Satan,” what prevented the righteous Michael from pronouncing a railing judgment against him? The bias of the translator is clearly demonstrated by the following verse where the “*diabolos*” are identified as human beings.

Jude 10

*But **these men** revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed.*

Jude is referring to the rebellious nature of the children of Israel who, despite the instructions they had received from God, had determined to take the body of Moses into the land of promise.

Deuteronomy 34:4-6

4 Then the Lord said to him, "This is the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants'; I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there."

5 So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord.

6 And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor; but no man knows his burial place to this day.

Michael is identified as the arch angel that ministered to the Israelites during their time in the wilderness. The term rendered as "*disputed*" means to "*exercise discernment, to judge or separate.*" The Greek term rendered as "*argues*" denotes as two-way conversation. Hence, those who opposed God's instructions regarding the disposition of Moses' body were the "*diabolos.*" Despite their resistance, Michael brought no charges against them. God's use of heavenly messengers is well documented.

Hebrews 2:2

For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty,

Exodus 3:2

The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed.

Exodus 14:19

The angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them.

Revelation 2:10

'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil (diabolos) is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.'

There is no evidence that "*Satan*" was ever personally involved in casting anyone into prison! However, this cannot be said of the "*slandorous,*" "*false speaking*" "*Jews*" of the rebellion, who are clearly identified in the previous verse.

Revelation 2:9

*I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and **the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not but are a synagogue of Satan.***

As Paul points out, the "Jews" who were refusing to recognize Jesus as the one of promise were not true "Jews," but were of the false circumcision.

Philippians 3:2

Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;

Romans 2:28, 29

28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

The apostolic writings are filled with references demonstrating that it was the "Jews" who imprisoned and persecuted their brethren of the way of Jesus.

Acts 8:3

But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house; and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.

Acts 9:1, 2

1 Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest,

2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

While the above verses concern Saul of Tarsus, it would be foolish to think that he was the only persecutor of the faithful remnant, or that those who were with him ceased when he was converted. The "Jewish" persecution of the faithful remnant began with the inception of good news that God, through Jesus, was now fulfilling all the promises that He had made to the fathers of Israel. It continued unabated and became increasingly more aggressive until the "Jews" persuaded Nero to blame the burning of Rome on their brethren of the way of Jesus.

Revelation 12:9, 12, 13

9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil (diabolos) and Satan (satanas), who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

12 "For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil (diabolos) has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child.

First and foremost, certain undeniable facts must be understood. The images of the Revelation are symbolic and reveal something that was shortly to take place, which was God's wrath upon the unfaithful of His covenant people. Jesus, when speaking of this same event, stated that some of those, to whom He was speaking, would live to experience this event. Therefore, none of the images recorded in the Revelation relate to our future but depict events that would be witnessed and experienced by the children of Israel living in the first century.

Matthew 23:30-36

30 and say, 'If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.'

31 "So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

32 "Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers.

33 "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?

34 "Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city,

35 so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

36 "Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

Matthew 24:34

"Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

The myth holds that Satan was cast out of heaven before the fall of Adam and Eve. Therefore, he cannot be the “*diabolos*” and the “*satanas*” that is now pictured as being cast down.

Verse 12 is translated in a manner that has the “*diabolos*” coming down from a high place, which is commonly understood to be the heavenly realm. The phrase “*come down*” is rendered from a term that means “*descend*” or “*drop upon*.” Hence, the blowing of the seventh trumpet would bring the “*diabolos*” upon them.

The term “*earth*” (vs. 9 & 13) is the Greek term “*ge/gais*,” which denotes a portion of land. As the context concerns God’s judgment of Israel, the land is that which God had given to them. The text places those of the “*heavens*” in opposition to those of the “*land*.” Those who would rejoice were those of the way of Jesus, as they were becoming free of their tormentors and seeing the unfolding of God’s promises. Those of the land were those who refused to accept Jesus and were subject to God’s wrath. Therefore, we come to understand that “*satanas*,” “*diabolos*,” and the “*dragon*” relate to people who are opposed to God’s purpose in Jesus and persecuted the elect.

The term “*saw*” (vs. 13) indicates a past action, whereas the Greek term is the present/future tense “*to see*.” The serpent represents the chief priest who is responsible for deceiving the people of the

land. His being cast off denotes God's rejection of the entire system of Judaism and its people. Woe to the children of Israel who are of the land, because God's judgment is soon to come upon those who were persecuting the woman and her child (righteous remnant). Those who are responsible for the welfare of the people will find that their present positions of authority and heritage will be unable to save them from God's wrath.

Matthew 23:13-15, 32-36

13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

14 ["Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you will receive greater condemnation.]

15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

32 "Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers.

33 "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?

34 "Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city,

35 so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

36 "Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

The dragon represents the Zealot bands who rose up against Rome, Rather than engaging the enemy, they warred among themselves and managed to destroy Jerusalem and its people from within.

Revelation 20:2

And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil (diabolos) and Satan (satanas), and bound him for a thousand years,

See the previous notes and the presentation of this verse in the section entitled "Satanas."

Revelation 20:10

10 And the devil (diabolos) who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

While this chapter is commonly viewed as relating to some unspecified time in our future, the Revelation concerns that which was shortly to come to upon God's people living in the first century. The Revelation reveals the wrath of God upon His covenant people who refused to accept the righteousness He was offering through Jesus. This event would bring an end to the "age" of Law and establish the "age" of God's everlasting kingdom. This was fully accomplished with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple complex in September of 70 CE. That event destroyed all the Hebrew records of genealogy, etc. The loss of those records makes it impossible to re-establish the priesthood and the temple services. The term "*diabolos*" refers to the one responsible for the deception that had come upon God's people – the high priest who represents those charges with the welfare of the people. Those who were deceived and the place where this deception was practiced are the "*nations*" of the four-corners of the "*earth*."

Revelation 20:8

and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore.

The term rendered as "*nations*" is "*ethnos*," which refers to a specific tribe, race or people who share a common bond. While it is rarely recognized, the term commonly refers to the 12 tribal nations that became a kingdom of God's people when they took possession of the promised land. The term rendered as "*earth*" is "*ge/gais*," which refers to a portion of land. The land of record is associated with those being subjected to God's wrath; hence, the land God had given to the children of Israel. Therefore, the deceiver was among the children (tribes) of Israel and in the land of Palestine. The deception involved the slander and false accusations that were being made against Jesus and those who had placed an unreserved trust in his offering (those of the way of Jesus). Therefore, it can be determined that the high priest of Israel, who was the most influential man in Israel and represented those responsible for the welfare of the people, is the "*diabolos*." As "*satanas*," "*diabolos*," the "*dragon*" and the "*serpent*" represent those sharing in the persecution of the elect, we can safely conclude that all these entities were cast into the lake of fire along with the beast and the false prophet who were also of Israel. The first mention of the "*false prophet*" is in chapter sixteen, which concerns those who shed the blood of the saints and the prophets.

Revelation 16:6

for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink. They deserve it."

Matthew 23:30-36

30 and say, 'If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.'

31 "So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

32 "Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers.

33 "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?

34 "Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city,

35 so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

36 "Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

The children of Israel are obviously in view as no prophet could be killed outside Jerusalem.

Luke 13:33

*"Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; **for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.***

As the demise of all the people represented by these figures came to pass with the destruction of the rebellious children of Israel, their nation, and their temple in the Roman-Judean war of 66 -70 CE, it can be said with absolute certainty is that **IF** “Satan” ever existed, he is no more!

DEMONS

The mandates and limitations King James placed upon those assigned to create an English version of the Bible heavily influenced the translation known as the *King James Version*. What is not commonly known is that he was obsessed with demonology, had written a book on the subject, and was considered a leading authority on the subject. As every known Bible translation follows the pattern of the King James Version, there is the possibility that the common understanding of demons is a product of King James rather than the apostolic writers. This becomes even more likely when consulting the term “*diamonia*” in various Greek lexicons. One will find that the definition of “*diamonia*” is steeped in “*Satanism*,” an entity that we have already shown to be fictional.

“According to passages in the Christian Scriptures (New Testament), Satan has a personal army of demons to assist him in attacking humans and accomplishing evil tasks. They roam the world looking for people that they may destroy. The Gospels and the book of Acts describe many exorcisms where Jesus and his disciples release people from demonic possession. The Bible implies that demons are the same fallen angels that once joined Satan in a heavenly revolt. By the 1st century CE in Palestine, many mental disorders were believed to be caused by indwelling demons. Other demons were responsible for bad weather, accidents, etc.” [Demons; religioustolerance.org](http://Demons;religioustolerance.org).

The above quote accurately reflects the common understanding of demons. As is the common practice, it is said that evidence of “Satan” and his legions is found in the apostolic writings, with no specific passage cited. The last two sentences give a good reason for this omission - the children of Israel associated demons with physical and mental disorders. Hence, the common understanding of demons is not biblical.

“When the Greek and Roman mind instead of the Hebrew mind came to dominate the church, there occurred a disaster in doctrine and practice from which we have never recovered” Canon Gouge.

Due to pages denoting “*Old Testament*” and “*New Testament*” being inserted into our Bible, we view it as two separate portions of God's revelation. Are we to view various terms and statements according to established “*Christian*” theology based on the portion of the Bible that is deemed more applicable to us, or as they were understood by those to whom the various documents were written? The answer to this question should be obvious.

Where is the evidence that “*Satan*” is a fallen angel, who is joined by a supporting cast of rebellious angels? Where is the evidence that “*Satan*” has a personal army of demons to assist him in his evil work of attacking humans and seeking to destroy all things related to God? The above stated article only makes one correct observation – “....in Palestine, many mental disorders were believed to be caused by indwelling demons.”

The Pharisees were a Hellenized religious sect that was given to demonology. Their roots were in the religion of the Persians, and they derived their name from the region of their birth – Farsi - the Persian term for Pharisee. Along with their roots in the religion of Persia, they were influenced by the Hellenization movement that came with the conquests of Alexander the Great. Hence, their teaching embraced concepts introduced by Greek philosophers. On many occasions, Jesus accused them of perverting the truth of God for the sake of their traditions.

The Greek term “*daimonia*” is a synonym of “*diabolos*.” Synonyms are words that have similar or identical meanings. The Hebrew translators of the Septuagint used “*diamonia*” in place of the Hebrew “*shed*” (*sed*). “*Shed*” refers to any recipient of an religious offering, who is other than the God of Israel. Hence, the Hebrew references are to gods of wood and stone, and the sin associated with their acceptance.

Deuteronomy 32:17

*"They sacrificed to **demons** (shed) who were not God,
To gods whom they have not known,
New gods who came lately,
Whom your fathers did not dread.*

Psalms 106:37

They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons (shed),

Scholars agree that prior to their captivity in Babylon, the children of Israel had no understanding of the entities we know as “*Satan*,” “*the Devil*,” or “*demons*.” These concepts came to them through their exposure to the pagan religions of their captors.

In general, we may say the OT knows no demons with whom one may have dealings in magic even for the purpose of warding them off. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Copyright © 1972-1989 By Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Understanding the use of the term “*diamonia*” can only be accomplished by stepping into the shoes of those to whom the various documents were addressed. When we do this, we find that “*demons*” were introduced into the “*Jewish*” culture during their captivity in Babylon, and later refined by

their exposure to the Greek philosophers through the Hellenization that came with the expansion of the Empire under Alexander the Great.

“A basic animism underlies the Greek dai/mwn concept. This persisted amongst the Greeks. In the historical period especially it was obviously combatted by educated and especially philosophical circles from which we draw almost all our knowledge of all levels of Gk. thought. Again, especially in the tragic dramatists, it denotes d. "anything which overtakes man," such as destiny, or death, or any good or evil fortune,...chance. It can also be used generally for "fate,"

3. The Influence of Popular Religion on the [Philosophical Systems](#).

*In the above presentation dai/mwn is philosophically understood as a general divine power and thus incorporated into the stream of Greek thinking. Yet philosophy could not stop at this. It was unable to carry through with full consistency its understanding of the world as a kosmos of abstract forces. **It also introduced daimones as personal intermediary beings.** This was helpful in the attack on myths and in their explanation. Oriental influences were also at work, as was the need for a theodicy. **But the formulation of the doctrine of daimones as controlling and disposing forces was mainly determined by the popular belief** which we can here see at work and which can be largely reconstructed from the philosophical conceptions.²¹ Thus Plutarch refers to the Alastores as an example of evil demons (Def. Orac., 14, II, 417d).*

*A first instance of **the influence of popular belief** is to be seen in the fact that philosophy, too, sets heroes alongside demons. In popular belief it is hard to separate the two. Perhaps they are one and the same, as some philosophers assume. More specifically, however, the development led to a separate class of herwes. **The idea of intermediary beings was more systematically worked out in the course of time**, and in the Neo-Platonists we thus find several classes of intermediaries. In philosophy the main task of these beings is to be messengers between the gods and men, i.e., to exercise supervision over men.....This leads Porphyrius to the view that everything in nature is controlled by demons.²⁴*

In the more detailed development of the doctrine that demons are intermediary beings, regard is had to popular belief at three specific points. First, it is noteworthy that demons are brought into special connexion with those parts of the cultus and religion which are closest to animism, i.e., with magic and incantations. We can see this even before Plato in Empedocles,²⁵ and Xenocrates in particular traces back the apotropaic cult to evil demons,²⁶ while Stoicism attributes Manticism to demons...In Xenocrates there emerges already a distinction between the higher forms of religion and the lower and more popular forms with which demons or evil demons are connected. In the developed form of this conception demons are forces which seek to divert from true worship, as in Porphyr.....At an earlier stage already Apuleius De Deo Socr., 14 had traced back the cults of individual peoples to demons,²⁸ also ascribing unworthy myths to them (cf. Plutarch). Secondly, it is to be noted that the demons as rulers of human destiny are specifically connected with misfortune and distress. This hurtful sway of demons is made to serve a positive goal in Corp.

Thirdly, many philosophical systems have assimilated the doctrine of demon possessing men. Extraordinary conditions are popularly ascribed to indwelling deities, especially in

the tragic dramatists and e.g. Hippocrates.³⁰ This was called *daimona=n* or *daimoni/zēsai*, a view which is developed in Porphyrius *Abst.*, II, 36 ff.³¹ to the effect that evil demons clothe themselves with flesh and blood in the human body to kindle evil desires. But Plutarch already speaks plainly of demons which undermine virtue in *Dio*, 2, 3 (I, 958e).

Philosophy incorporated these intermediaries into its system and world view by ascribing *pa/qh* to demons³⁵ and by giving at least to evil demons a location close to the earth. The doctrine that demons are *e)mpaqei=\$* is old, going back at least as far as Empedocles.³⁶ According to Plato³⁷ it was worked out by Xenocrates,³⁸ and was shared by Chrysippus as well as Posidonius, and by Plutarch as well as Apuleius and the Neo-Platonists.³⁹ Similarly, we already find the idea of their location in the air in the *Epinomis*.⁴⁰ This is greatly expanded in connexion with the *pa/qh* doctrine,⁴¹ and is then incorporated by the Neo-Platonists into a great system of intermediaries which become the more imperfect and wicked the closer they approximate to earth.⁴² **Thus the demons become spatial, and their place in the great ladder from God to man and spirit to matter is that of beings which are superior to man but still imperfect.** Their imperfection does not affect their relative divinity. Their wickedness is not simply that of an implacably and causelessly evil will; it is due to their link with matter, and may thus be regarded as an impulsion by cravings which are only too familiar to man, whether in the form of envy, or a self-seeking desire for honour, or the thirst for blood and the odour of sacrifice.⁴³ Although this view of the *pa/qh* and location of demons corresponds to the impulse of Greek thinking, it is simply a reflection of the popular view of spirits. In animistic belief spirits are radically incalculable, and their operations are conceived after the analogy of men and their passions; they are easily provoked to wrath and envy.” Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Copyright © 1972-1989 By Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

While the children of Israel came to err in their view of “demons,” they rightly associated the presence of physical and mental handicaps with sin. Their error was in assigning sin to the individual, rather than recognizing that these were the result of the curses that God, through Moses, had stated would come upon them if they (the collective) rebelled against Him and pursued other gods. Hence, the existence of these calamities was a sign of national decadence, rather than individual sin.

Deuteronomy 28:15, 18, 20, 22, 27, 28, 35, 45, 60

15 "But it shall come about, if you will not obey the Lord your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.

18 **Cursed shall be the offspring of your body** and the produce of your ground, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock.

20 "The Lord will send upon you curses, **confusion**, and rebuke, in all you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken Me.

22 The Lord will smite you with **consumption** and with **fever** and with **inflammation** and with fiery heat and with the sword and with blight and with mildew, and they shall pursue you until you perish.

27 "The Lord will smite you with the **boils** of Egypt and with **tumors** and with the **scab** and with the **itch**, from which you **cannot be healed**.

28 The Lord will smite you with **madness** and with **blindness** and with **bewilderment of heart**;

35 The Lord will strike you on the knees and legs with **sore boils**, from which you **cannot be healed**, from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head.

45 So all these curses shall come on you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you would not obey the Lord your God by keeping His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you.

60 And He will bring back on you **all the diseases of Egypt** of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you.

61 **Also every sickness and every plague** which, **not written in the book of this law**, the Lord will bring on you until you are destroyed.

It is to be noted that God did not say that all would suffer these calamities, but that they would be sent among them. As the "Jews" associated these calamities with sin, the afflicted were naturally associated with "Beelzebub," who was the god of Ekron, and considered to be the chief of all false gods. As the chief of all false gods, he represented the entire pagan religious culture.

"BEELZEBUB

It is a well-known phenomenon in the history of religions that the gods of one nation become the devils of its neighbors and enemies. " International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia.

Associating these infirmities with false gods led to these entities having servants to do their will. Through their association with the culture of the Greeks, the "Jews," came to believe that demons came through relationships between heavenly angels and the daughters of men. Rabbinic Judaism came to hold that demons resulted from relationships between Adam and feminine spirits and Eve with masculine spirits. This view is in direct violation of God's command that each species would only reproduce after its own kind (Gen. 1).

Another fact to be considered is that the apostolic writings only mention "*demon*" possession in the context of the children of Israel. The term is only used eight times outside the gospels and each reference involves an Israelite. James, speaking to his brethren, uses the term once. John, in the Revelation, which reveals God's wrath upon His covenant people, uses the term three times. Paul uses the term four times in 1 Corinthians 10, where it is used in the context of the Hebrew "*sed*" – a recipient of an offering other than the God of Israel – therefore, his reference is obviously to paganism (false gods and false doctrines).

1 Corinthians 10:20, 21

20 No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons.

21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

When the curses of Deuteronomy 28 are compared with the miracles of healing that Jesus performed, we find that “*demons*” were merely diseases of body and mind. In the case of the man known as Legion, modern science has discovered many cases that have been diagnosed as multi-personality disorder and schizophrenia.

Mark 5:9

And He was asking him, "What is your name?" And he said to Him, "My name is Legion; for we are many."

How are we to view the stories where Jesus has conversations with demons, such as legion? Jesus is said to have lived a sinless life. Yet, according to the story of legion, he was responsible for the destruction of 2,000 pigs that were another person's property. This was not only a violation of the Law, but obligated Jesus to make restitution which he did not. While Jesus is justified by stating that pigs were unclean animals, they were only unclean for consumption. Horses, donkeys, camels, and such were also unsuitable for consumption, but were raised for other purposes. Roman legions were based in the area, and they had no prohibition against eating pork.

Another consideration is that demons are commonly held to being able to take possession of any person or creature they desire. Therefore, having taken possession of the individual being addressed, why did they need permission from Jesus to take possession of the pigs? If they are free to take possession of anyone they wished, what is gained from casting them out of their present refuge? Would they not just take possession of another host? Perhaps the writer, being one with his audience, was illustrating the event by using language that would appeal to his brethren of the first century who believed in such beings.

The lunatic boy of Matthew 17 most likely suffered from epilepsy.

Matthew 17:15

"Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic, and is very ill; for he often falls into the fire, and often into the water."

Jesus used the term in reference to insanity.

Matthew 11:18

"For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon!'"

The charge that John is “*demon*” possessed refers to him being out of step with established correctness.

John 7:19, 20

19 "Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law? Why do you seek to kill Me?"

20 The multitude answered, "You have a demon! Who seeks to kill You?"

In the above text, the phrase “*you have a demon*” is obviously a reference to Jesus being delusional - “*you’re out of your mind.*”

John 10:20

And many of them were saying, "He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?"

The above verses establish the “*Jewish*” understanding and use of the term “*demons*” as denoting a disease of the mind. As mental disorders were not understood by any culture of the period, they were associated with forces beyond mortal men.

John 8:44-52

44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.

45 "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.

46 "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?

47 "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."

*48 The Jews answered and said to Him, "**Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?**"*

*49 Jesus answered, "**I do not have a demon**; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.*

50 "But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges.

51 "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."

*52 The Jews said to Him, "**Now we know that You have a demon.** Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he shall never taste of death.'*

The above text is obviously in reference to the perceived mental state of Jesus.

James 2:19

You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

In the above text, James is speaking to his brethren of the circumcision. While modern theology regards him as referring to evil imps that are under the direction of “*Satan*,” the context suggests otherwise. Those who were “*false accusers*” and “*slanderers*” of God’s purpose in Jesus and persecutors of their brethren of the way of Jesus were the unrighteous of Israel. With God’s wrath set to come upon them they had every reason to shudder.

The phrase “*God is one*” refers to a common declaration among the “*Jews*” known as the “*Shema Israel.*”

Deuteronomy 6:4

"Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!

While the God of Israel is one, what are all the other so-called gods? Paul declares that they are no gods at all.

Acts 19:26

"You see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all.

Galatians 4:8

However, at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods.

As these gods do not exist, neither do their presumed servants - "*diamonia*" (demons). As "*diamonia*" is a synonym of "*diabolos*," and the "*diamonia*" do not exist, then, by extension, the "*diabolos*" is also non-existent. Therefore, James is referring to those that are the false accusers and slanderers of God's faithful remnant.

Revelation 9:20

And the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk;

Throughout the Biblical writings, only two gods are worshipped – true and false. The true God is the one supreme God of Israel, while the various gods worshipped by the pagan cultures are false. Therefore, "*demon worship*" simply refers to the worship of any god other than the one God of Israel, and all that is associated with them.

In the text of Revelation 9:20, the Greek term rendered as "*and*" denotes a cumulative effect. Hence, it should have been rendered as "*even, including or both.*" This gives us the understanding that the "*demons*" were the idols that cannot see, hear, or walk.

Revelation 16:13

*13 And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs;
14 for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.*

The basis of Revelation 16 is found in chapter 14, where the place where these events were to take place was not the "*world*," but the "*ge*." This term refers to a portion of land and the land is the land associated with God's judgment of the children of Israel as prophesied by Jesus in Matthew 24, Luke 21 and Mark 13. The people of verse 14 were false and associated with Israel; hence, they were acting as if they had a demon. Their influence was not over the "*world*," but the "*oikumene*," which refers to a broader section of land, and was most often used to denote the lands of the Roman Empire.

Revelation 18:2

And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! And she has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.

Babylon refers to Jerusalem, as demonstrated in verse 24.

Revelation 18:24

"And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth."

Jesus stated that the prophets were slain in Jerusalem.

Luke 13:33, 34

33 "Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.

34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!

When Jerusalem was destroyed in September of 70 CE, was the land inhabited by little spiritual imps or by those who rendered false worship? As God and His people were no longer in the land, it was inhabited by those who did not know Him.

The following statement is typical of those found on many websites through an internet search of the word “*demonology*.”

*“The term ‘demons’ was not always understood to have the absolutely negative connotation that it does today. Homer used the terms ‘demons’ and ‘gods’ more or less interchangeably. Another opinion was that demons were intermediaries between men and gods, and that demons had once been men. Plutarch speaks of ‘human souls’ as commencing, first heroes, then degree. Philo of Byblus seems to draw on this same tradition when he states that, “The most ancient of the barbarians, especially the Phoenicians and Egyptians, from whom other people derived this custom, accounted those the **greatest gods** who had found out things most necessary and useful in life -- and had been benefactors to mankind.....**There is little doubt that most of what was described in older times as "demon possession" would today be diagnosed as some sort of mental illness, and treated accordingly.**”*

Man is a creature of choice and will be judged according to his choices. How is this possible if a “*demon*” can possess and exercise complete control of a person? In our study of Job, we found that God determines the fates of men, not some mysterious “*fallen angel*” dedicated to destroying God’s people.

While the children of Israel rightly associated mental and physical handicaps with sin, they erred in not recognizing that the existence of these conditions among them reflected their sinful

condition, rather than that of the individual. Despite having associated these conditions with sin, they failed to recognize that Jesus, in healing those who were afflicted, was also exercising power over the consequences of sin. The miracle recorded in Matthew 9 was for the express purpose of revealing this to the religious leaders of Israel.

Matthew 9:2-7

2 And behold, they were bringing to Him a paralytic, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "Take courage, My son, your sins are forgiven."

3 And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This fellow blasphemes."

4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?"

5 "For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, and walk'?"

6 "But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — then He said to the paralytic — "Rise, take up your bed, and go home."

7 And he rose, and went home.

SATAN: THE PRINCE?

Under this heading we will examine the phrases “*prince (ruler) of this world*” and “*prince of the power of the air*,” which are commonly understood as referring to “*Satan*.”

The Greek term rendered as “*prince*” is variously translated as “*prince*,” “*magistrate*,” “*ruler*,” or a term designating a governing authority, with each referring to a person or body of people who are “*first in rank or authority*.”

PRINCE OF THIS WORLD

The phrase “*prince of this world*” appears in three verses in the gospel attributed to John.

John 12:31

*"Now **judgment is upon this world** (kosmos); now the **ruler of this world** (kosmos) shall be cast out.*

John 14:30, 31

*30 "I will not speak much more with you, for the **ruler of the world** (kosmos) is coming, and he has nothing in Me;*

*31 but that **the world** (kosmos) may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go from here.*

John 16:8-12

*8 "And He, when He comes, will convict **the world** (kosmos) concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment;*

9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;

10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me;

*11 and concerning judgment, because the **ruler of this world** (kosmos) has been judged.*

12 *"I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.*

Each of the above verses appear in the context of the impending arrest and death of Jesus. In each case, the term translated as “world” is “*kosmos*.” While we understand the term as referring to the entire expanse of God’s creation, those living in the apostolic era of the first century CE had no such understanding. “*Kosmos*” refers to an “*existing/orderly arrangement*” or “*present order*.” As “*kosmos*” is preceded by the definite article, the reference is to a specific “*arrangement*.” Almost without exception, the apostolic writings use this term when referring to the “*arrangement*” established between God and the children of Israel at Mount Sinai.

Luke 11:50

*in order that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of **the world**, may be charged against this generation,*

In the above text, Jesus sets the limits of the “*kosmos*,” as God sent no prophets prior to the children of Israel taking possession of the Land. Therefore, Jesus is speaking specifically of the “*arrangement*” in which the Israelites killed the prophets.

Luke 13:33, 34

33 *"Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; **for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.***

34 *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!*

None of the prophets had been killed outside the city of Jerusalem limits the “*kosmos*” to the time in which God’s covenant people possessed the city. Therefore, the phrase “*the foundation of the world*” does not refer to the creation of the Genesis record but of the establishment of the children of Israel through the “*arrangement*” of the covenant enacted at Mount Sinai. This was the arrangement that was still in force when Jesus spoke these words.

John 8:26

*"I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to **the world** (*kosmos*)."*

Jesus stated that he spoke the words of God to the “*kosmos*.” Therefore, the limits of the “*kosmos*” is set by his ministry, which was confined to Palestine and the brethren of Jesus who were governed by the arrangement enacted at Mount Sinai. This is supported by his statement that he came only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Matthew 15:24

But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

The Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus demonstrate that his ministry was confined to his “*Jewish*” brethren living in Palestine.

John 18:19, 20

*19 The high priest therefore questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching.
20 Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to **the world** (kosmos); I always taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret.*

Jesus stated that he had taught openly in the “existing arrangement” (kosmos). The limits of the “kosmos” is established by his having taught in the synagogues and the temple.

John 12:19

*The Pharisees therefore said to one another, "You see that you are not doing any good; look, **the world** (kosmos) has gone after Him."*

The Pharisees were only concerned with the impact that the ministry of Jesus was having on their control of the people of the “existing arrangement” of the covenants.

John 18:36

*Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of **this world** (kosmos). If My kingdom were of **this world** (kosmos), then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."*

Jesus is commonly understood as saying that his kingdom was not of this “earth.” However, his brethren understood him as stating that his kingdom was not of this “existing arrangement,” which is to say that it was not of the covenants of circumcision and Law, i.e., Judaism. If his kingdom was associated with the “existing arrangement” of the Mosaic covenant, his servants would be fighting to prevent his arrest. This speaks volumes as to the extent of the “kosmos,” as the present followers of Jesus were his “Jewish” brethren living in Palestine. The phrase “my Kingdom is not of this realm” is actually “my kingdom is not from this place,” which refers to the “kosmos” (arrangement) of the Mosaic dispensation. The phrase “this world” should be understood as “this world of ours.”

Romans 12:1, 2

*1 I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.
2 And do not be conformed to **this world** (aion, i.e., age), but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

In the above text, the term rendered as “world” is the Greek term “aion,” which scholars agree should never be translated as “earth” or “world,” as it means “age.” The existing “age” that was of concern to all the apostolic writers was that of the Mosaic dispensation of Law. With the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple September of 70 CE, the Mosaic age came to an end and was replaced by the age of the everlasting kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 2:6

Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;

Ephesians 1:21

far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

Galatians 4:3, 4

*3 So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of **the world** (kosmos).*

4 But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,

5 in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

The "kosmos" of verse 3, is directly associated with the Law in verse 5, and the birth and ministry of Jesus in verse 4. The term "we" (vs. 3) refers to Paul and his "Jewish" brethren. As the "arrangement" held Paul in bondage, he was speaking of his life prior to accepting the way of Jesus when he was governed by elemental (basic) precepts of the "existing arrangement" - the covenants enacted between God and the children of Israel at Mount Sinai. The purpose of Jesus was for the redemption of the children of Israel, who were in bondage due to the condemnatory nature of the Law.

Romans 7:7-9

7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet."

8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.

9 And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died;

Under the "existing arrangement" of the Law, the weakness of man's nature led to sin and death. Through the offering of Jesus, the children of Israel had become free of the condemnation that resulted from the weakness of man's nature.

Romans 8:1-4

1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

James 1:14, 15

14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

While there are many other verses that demonstrate that the term “*kosmos*” refers to the “*existing arrangement*” of the covenants, these should be sufficient for our purpose. With this understanding, we return to the three verses that refer to the “*ruler of this world*.”

John 12:31

"Now judgment is upon this world (kosmos); now the ruler of this world (kosmos) shall be cast out.

The term “*this*” means “*concerning, or in regard to.*” The presence of the definite article indicates that the judgment concerned a particular “*arrangement.*” We know that Jesus lived under the “*existing arrangement*” of the Mosaic covenant and that his ministry and purpose concerned his brethren of Israel.

Matthew 15:24

But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Galatians 4:4, 5

4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,

5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Acts 5:31

"He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Romans 15:8

For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers,

Hebrews 8:8-12

8 For finding fault with them, He says,

"BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD,

WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT

WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH;

9 NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS

ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND

TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT;

FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT,

AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD.

10 "FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL

*AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD:
 I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS,
 AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS.
 AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD,
 AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.
 11 "AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN,
 AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,'
 FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME,
 FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.
 12 "FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES,
 AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE."
 NASU*

It has been previously established that all references to judgment refer to God's impending judgment of unrepentant Israel which took place in the Roman-Judean war of 66-70 CE. God's wrath upon Therefore, the "ruler of this world" is the one who has dominion over the "existing arrangement" of the Mosaic covenant.

John 14:30, 31

*30 "I will not speak much more with you, for the **ruler of the world** (kosmos) is coming, and he has nothing in Me;
 31 but that **the world** (kosmos) may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go from here.*

Jesus was speaking of his impending death and those who the chief priest had sent to arrest him despite having no evidence to support the charges that would be made against him.

Matthew 26:47

*And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came up, accompanied by a great multitude with swords and clubs, **from the chief priests** and elders of the people.*

John 18:3

*Judas then, having received the Roman cohort, and **officers from the chief priests** and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.*

The term rendered "in" would be better rendered as "on" - "he has nothing on me." Pilate verified that Jesus spoke true, as he declared that he found no evidence to support the charges being made against Him.

John 18:38

*Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?"
 And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "**I find no guilt in Him.**"*

Therefore, the "prince of this world" is the high priest who was directly responsible for the arrest, trial, and death of Jesus.

John 16:8-12

8 *"And He, when He comes, will convict **the world** (kosmos) concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment;*

9 *concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;*

10 *and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me;*

11 *and concerning judgment, because the **ruler of this world** (kosmos) has been judged.*

12 *"I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.*

It was previously established that the apostolic narratives establish that Jesus came unto his own, who were his brethren of Israel, and that he lived under the “existing arrangement” of the Mosaic covenant. The above verses associate the ruler of this “arrangement” with God’s judgment of Israel; hence his the high priest of Israel.

PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR

Ephesians 2:1-3

1 *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,*

2 *in which you formerly walked according to the course of **this world**, according to **the prince of the power of the air**, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.*

3 *Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*

Greek term rendered as air is “aeros,” which Paul’s uses when referring to an exercise in futility.

1 Corinthians 14:9

So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.

1 Corinthians 9:26

Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;

Paul began this discussion by referring to his readers as once having been under the dominion of death, which relates to the condemnatory nature of the Law. The term “spirit” denotes a determination or disposition of mind, as in a “spirit of holiness” or “spirit of hostility.” Hence, the reference is to a mind set on being disobedient. The term rendered as “power” refers to “influence” or “strength of force;” hence, the prince has the power of air. “According to the course of this kosmos” (existing arrangement) is synonymous with “according to the prince of the power of air.” Hence, the prince who possesses the power of air is the chief priest who holds dominion over those governed by the “existing arrangement” of the Mosaic covenant.

The Greek term rendered as “course” (vs. 2) is “aion,” which means “age.” Hence, the people of reference were acting in accord with the “age” of an “existing arrangement.” The inclusion of the definite article indicates that Paul is referring to a particular “arrangement.” There should be no argument that the “age” of reference was that of Mosaic covenant. The “*prince of the power of the air*” is not only part of this “age” and “arrangement,” but also governed the actions of the “*sons of disobedience*.” The disobedient of the “age” of the “existing arrangement” were the brethren of Paul who refused to accept Jesus as the one of promise.

That Paul is speaking of his brethren is clearly seen in the phrase “*Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh*.” Hence, Paul, a “Jew,” is speaking of his disobedient brethren, with whom he shared an association while he was in the “*lusts of our flesh*,” which is to say – governed by the Law.

Romans 7:5

For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

Regardless of how we might choose to understand this prince and his domain, it must be in harmony with what Paul stated in his letter to the saints of Rome – there is no authority except as has been given by God. If “Satan” and his minions exist, then his power and influence is God ordained. Even more to the point, such authority is not to be resisted.

Romans 13:1-2

*1 Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For **there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.***

2 Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

As the text under discussion is from Paul’s letter to the saints of Ephesus, some hold that the “*prince of the power of the air*” cannot be a “Jew.” However, this view is born of a failure to understand that Paul was engaged in teaching Jesus as the “*hope of Israel*” and that his mission was to fulfill God’s promise to restore his disenfranchised brethren of the house of Israel who He had scattered among the nations in the “*diaspora*” of 721 BCE. The apostles based their presentation of God’s message on their sacred writings, as recorded in Peter’s initial revelation to his “*Jewish*” brethren in Acts 2, and the message of Stephen to those same people in Acts 7. In each case, the speaker recounted the blessings and promises of God to His covenant people. As God had given those of the house of Israel a bill of divorcement and sent them away, those of the house of Judah were the only Israelites in a covenant relationship with God. Peter and Stephen began their message with a short recounting of their history, culminating in the fulfillment of all God’s promises, through Jesus. Paul’s practice was to establish the blessings given to his “*Jewish*” brethren, then extend those blessings to his disenfranchised brethren of the house of Israel who the “*Jews*” referred to as “*gentiles*.” An example of this is found in his letter to the saints of Ephesus.

Ephesians 1:1-12

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verses 1 and 2 are Paul's greeting to his readers, with verse 3 beginning a new paragraph and the beginning of Paul's address.

Ephesians. 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

The greatest obstacle in understanding the apostolic writings is our failure to adhere to context and the people being addressed. We have been conditioned to view the apostolic writings as if they had just been delivered in our personal mailboxes, rather than being historical documents that have been preserved for us. This failure results in viewing all pronouns – we, us, our, etc. – as having personal reference. Our failure is supported by those who say that we are to view these terms through the prism of association – as the pronouns refer to the faithful of the first century, we, being of like disposition, are also being addressed. However, this is rarely the case and certainly not in verse 3, as the pronoun refers to Paul and his associates who were “*Jews*” and the recipients of the promises of God.

Josephus, a “*Jewish*” historian, records that the “*Jews*” commonly used the term rendered as “*heavenly*” in reference to the most holy place in the temple.

“As for the inside, Moses parted its length into three partitions. At the distance of ten cubits from the most secret end, Moses placed four pillars, the workmanship of which was the very same with that of the rest; and they stood upon the like bases with them, each a small matter distant from his fellow. Now the room within those pillars was the most holy place; but the rest of the room was the tabernacle, which was open for the priests. However, this proportion of the measures of the tabernacle proved to be an imitation of the system of the world; for that third part thereof which was within the four pillars, to which the priests were not admitted, is, as it were, a heaven peculiar to God. But the space of the twenty cubits, is, as it were, sea and land, on which men live, and so this part is peculiar to the priests only.....There were also other curtains made of skins above these, which afforded covering and protection to those that were woven both in hot weather and when it rained. And great was the surprise of those who viewed these curtains at a distance, for they seemed not at all to differ from the color of the sky.”
Josephus, Antiquities, 3:6:4

“When Moses distinguished the tabernacle into three parts, and allowed two of them to the priests, as a place accessible and common, he denoted the land and the sea, these being of general access to all; but he set apart the third division for God, because heaven is inaccessible to men.” Josephus, Antiquities, 3:7:7

The most holy place was the isolated chamber in which God dwelt among His people. Hence, entry into the most holy place was to come into the presence of God. Entry was limited to the high priest, who, once a year, came into the presence of God to present the offering of atonement for

the people. Hence, it was "*the heavenly place*" to the people of the circumcision. Paul is speaking of his "*Jewish*" brethren and used the phrase "*heavenly place*" to emphasize the atonement received by the faithful remnant of Israel through the offering of Jesus.

Hebrews 9:24

24 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

Eph. 1:4

just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. [In love]

Who were the people that were chosen before the foundation of the "*existing arrangement*" of the covenants? In the calling and promises made to the fathers of Israel - Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - it was the people of their lineage, who were known as the circumcision!

Romans 9:4

who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,

Romans 15:8

For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers,

Therefore, Paul is confirming that God had blessed the people of the circumcision by having chosen them to be holy and blameless before Him. The Law was to create a people of righteousness; hence, Paul is referring to the covenant relationship between God and the children of Israel.

Eph. 1:5

[In love] He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

Having been chosen before the foundation of the covenants, those who were in a covenant relationship with God – Paul's "*Jewish*" brethren - were predestined to the blessings that were now being made available through God fulfilling the promises He had made through the prophets and to the fathers of Israel through Jesus. The apostolic writings only use the terms "*predestined*" and "*adoption*" when speaking of those in a covenant relationship with God.

Eph. 1:6-8

*6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.
7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,
8 which He lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight*

Through the fulfillment of the promises God had made to the faiths of Israel and through the prophets, Paul and his “Jewish” brethren had received forgiveness through the offering of Jesus.

Matthew 15:24

But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Eph. 1:9, 10

9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him

10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him

The term “us” refers to Paul and his “Jewish” brethren. The term rendered as “earth” is “ge” which refers to a portion of land. As Paul’s “Jewish” brethren are the people of reference, the land is the land of promise – Palestine. God, through Jesus, was revealing His intention to His covenant people - the summing up of all things, both secular and religious, in the “world” of His covenant people.

Luke 24:44

Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

Eph. 1:11

also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

The inheritance was a promise God had made to the fathers of Israel and through the prophets concerning his covenant people. They were predestined because God’s promises are sure and certain.

Eph. 1:12

to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

As the people of the ten tribes of the northern kingdom had been given a bill of divorcement and scattered among the nations in 721 BCE, the people of the two tribes of the southern kingdom who had become known as “Jews” were to only people in a covenant relationship with God. The fulfillment of God’s promise to restore the people of the northern kingdom did not officially commence until Paul and Barnabas were chosen as God’s messengers to the “gentiles.” Hence, Paul and his “Jewish” brethren were the first to receive the blessings that God was extending through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

Eph. 1:13, 14

13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation — having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

While we commonly view Jesus as a “world” messiah, the apostolic writings view him as the means that God was fulfilling the promises He had made to the fathers of Israel and through the prophets concerning the people of their lineage. The extension of those blessings, to people that were no longer in a covenant relationship with God was to fulfill His promise to restore the people of the house of Israel who He had scattered among the nations in the “diaspora” of 721 BCE.

In Ephesians 1:3-12, Paul outlined the blessings bestowed upon his “Jewish” brethren through the fulfillment of God’s promises. With the phrase “you also” (vs. 13) Paul begins to extend those blessings to the people of the house of Israel (gentiles). Hence, we find that that apostolic letters written to first century “gentile” communities were addressing the scattered people of the house of Israel who were called “gentiles” by their “Jewish” brethren.

John 7:35

The Jews then said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He?"

The above text demonstrates that the “Jews,” to whom Jesus was speaking, considered the people of the diaspora to be Greeks (hellenes). The people of the southern kingdom became known as “Jews” during the Babylonian captivity.

THE GOD OF THIS WORLD

2 Corinthians 4:1-5

1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, 2 but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

In the phrase, “the god of this world,” the term rendered as “world” is “aion.” Scholars agree that this term should never be rendered as “earth” or “world,” as it means “age, of an age, pertaining to an age.” The present “age” that was of concern to Paul and his first century brethren, was that

of the covenants of Law and circumcision - the “age” of Moses - which was about to pass away and be replaced by the “age to come.”

Matthew 12:32

*"And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in **this age**, or in the age to come.*

Matthew 13:39, 40, 47-49

*39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the **end of the age**; and the reapers are angels.*

*40 "Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at **the end of the age**.*

47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind;

48 and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away.

*49 "So it will be at **the end of the age**; the angels shall come forth, and take out the wicked from among the righteous,*

Therefore, we find that the “the god of this aion” is a man associated with covenant Israel.

The phrase “we have received this ministry” refers to those commissioned to preach the “good news” that God fulfilling His promises through Jesus. As the apostles were all “Jews,” they were of the same lineage as those who were perishing due to having been persuaded to reject the righteousness that God had made available through Jesus. Those who had been commissioned to preach the good news had renounced the shameful things they had formerly hidden while trusting in the Law. Their message of the righteousness God had made available through Jesus was only veiled to those who were blind by the “god of this age.” This was none other than the high priest of Israel who represented the religious leaders who had devoted themselves to stamping out the way of Jesus.

God: Grk. theos – God, used of **whatever can in any respect be likened to God, or resembles him in any way: Hebraistically, equivalent to God's representative or vicegerent, of magistrates and judges,....the person or thing to which one is wholly devoted, for which he alone lives.** Thayer's Greek Lexicon.

Jesus, when responding to charges made by the Pharisees, quoted Psalm 82:6, which applies the term “theos” to the magistrates of Israel.

Psalms 82:6

*I said, "You are **gods**,
And all of you are sons of the Most High.*

John 10:34

*Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I said, you are **gods**'?*

The religious leaders of Israel were under the authority of the chief priest who was God's representative. They were actively engaged in blinding their "*Jewish*" brethren to the righteousness that God was extending through Jesus. Their purpose was aided by the people's blind devotion to Moses who stood as a representative of God.

John 9:28

They reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.

Acts 6:11

Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God."

Acts 21:21

and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.

Hebrews 10:28

Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

While blind devotion to Moses and the Law was preventing many from accepting the way of Jesus, Moses cannot be said to be the blinding influence of reference as he spoke of Jesus.

Luke 24:44

Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

John 5:45, 46

45 "Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope.

46 "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.

The apostolic writings directly point to the accountability of the high priest of Israel and his associates, as not only being directly responsible for the death of Jesus but also being actively engaged in suppressing the apostolic message.

SATAN: THE FALLEN ANGEL

Isaiah 14:12

*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! **KJV***

This verse is probably the most misused and misunderstood verse in the Bible. “*Lucifer*” is held to be the name of “*Satan*,” an angel who had rebelled against God and had been cast out of heaven. However, the term “*angel*” does not appear in the entire chapter of Isaiah 14. On the other hand, if the term was present, the term simply means “*messenger*” and is used of anyone given a specific mission or acting in the capacity of an agent or representative of another.

The term rendered as “*Lucifer*” means “*a dawning, or rising light*” and indicates God's view of the person in question. Verse 4 reveals that Isaiah was speaking of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, who God had chosen to be the instrument of His wrath against Judah. Verse 16 clearly states that “*Lucifer*” is a man.

Isaiah 14:4, 16

*4 that you will take up this taunt against the **king of Babylon**, and say,
"How the oppressor has ceased,
And how fury has ceased!
16 "Those who see you will gaze at you,
They will ponder over you, saying,
'Is this **the man** who made the earth tremble,
Who shook kingdoms,*

Nebuchadnezzar had been chosen by God to execute His wrath upon those of the southern kingdom of Judah. While Nebuchadnezzar originally gave God credit for his success, he soon began to base his victory on personal brilliance and gave credit to pagan Gods. This resulted in his fall from God's favor.

Other scriptures used to “*prove*” that “*Satan*” is a fallen angel are those found in the Revelation which speak of the “*adversary*,” or the “*slanderer*” being thrown down to the “*earth*.” As we have already examined these verses, we will not revisit them other than to consider the manner in which the phrase “*thrown down*” is used in the context of destruction, or becoming subject to humiliating circumstances, as was the case with King Nebuchadnezzar.

Lamentations 2:2

*The Lord has swallowed up; He has not spared all the habitations of Jacob.
In His wrath He has **thrown down** the strongholds of the daughter of Judah;
He has brought them down to the ground; He has profaned the kingdom and its princes.*

Lamentations 2:17

*The Lord has done what He purposed;
He has accomplished His word
Which He commanded from days of old.
He has **thrown down** without sparing,
And He has caused the enemy to rejoice over you;
He has exalted the might of your adversaries.*

Psalms 141:6

*Their judges are **thrown down by the sides of the rock**,
And they hear my words, for they are pleasant.*

The above verses demonstrate that reference to being “*thrown down*” simply refers to being removed from a lofty position to one of lowly circumstance. Nebuchadnezzar was the shining light of God’s wrath, but his ego led him to credit false gods for which he suffered madness and lived as a beast in the field.

Daniel 4:31-33

*31 "While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you,
32 and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.'
33 "Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.*

While the Bible records “*good*” angels appearing to men, with descriptions of their form and appearance, there are no references to the appearance of “*bad*” angels.

THE ORIGIN OF “SATAN”?

Having completed our examination of the scriptures that are commonly associated with “*Satan*” and/or “*the Devil*,” we are left to determine how he came to be. When did the children of Israel become exposed to the concept of a supernatural being dedicated to the destruction of God’s people? Scholars agree that the writings of Moses make no reference to an evil entity that is opposed to the purpose of God, and that “*Satan*,” the “*devil*” and demons were unknown to the children of Israel, prior to their captivity in Babylon. Secular history and the findings of archaeology indicate that “*Satan*” was not a part of any religious structure of the cultures that inhabited the regions of Palestine and Canaan. The Hebrew scriptures clearly demonstrate that the cause of problems between God and His people was their worship of false gods (idolatry), with no mention being made of their being persuaded to do so by an evil entity devoted to destroying them.

Before they entered the land of promise, God issued prohibitions against the Israelites becoming associated with witchcraft and sorcery.

Leviticus 19:26, 31

*26 'You shall not eat anything with the blood, nor practice divination or soothsaying.
31 'Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.*

Leviticus 20:6, 27

6 'As for the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists, to play the harlot after them, I will also set My face against that person and will cut him off from among his people.
27 'Now a man or a woman who is a medium or a spiritist shall surely be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones, their bloodguiltiness is upon them.'

Deuteronomy 18:9-12

9 "When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations.
10 There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer,
11 or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.
12 For whoever does these things is detestable to the Lord; and because of these detestable things the Lord your God will drive them out before you.

Exodus 22:18

"You shall not allow a sorceress to live.

While these things are commonly viewed as being “*the Devil’s work*,” the ancient people who practiced these things attributed their ability to their gods of wood and stone. Therefore, God’s concern was not with the influence of “*Satan*,” but with the weakness that led His people to engage into worshipping the false gods of the various pagan cultures.

The first exposure of God’s people to the concept of a supernatural being who was responsible for all the world’s evil, came during their captivity in Babylon. During this period a man named Zoroaster rose to prominence in a fading religious system of the region. He is believed to have been a “*Jew*” as he was well versed in Law of Moses and the God of Israel. While the Greeks knew him as Zoroaster, the Persians knew him as Zerdusht or Zaratush. This individual is regarded as the second greatest religious imposter in the history of mankind - the greatest being the Islamic prophet Mohammed. During the reign of Darius Hystaspis, Zoroaster recognized an opportunity and declared himself a prophet of a fading obscure religious sect of the Medeo-Persians known as the “*Magians*.” The Magian sect embraced two deities: the light (the good god), and the darkness (the evil god). They held that these two gods were locked in an eternal struggle for dominion. Zoroaster blended his knowledge of Judaism with the precepts of the Magian religion which brought new life and popularity to the order. Its growing acceptance among the Babylonians resulted in the children of Israel becoming exposed to the concept of two opposing spiritual forces – one good, the other evil. While Isaiah acknowledged the existence of both light and darkness, he attributed both to the one supreme God of Israel.

Isaiah 45:1, 5-7

45 Thus says the Lord **to Cyrus His anointed**,
Whom I have taken by the right hand,
To subdue nations before him,
And to loose the loins of kings;
To open doors before him so that gates will not be shut:

*5 "I am the Lord, and there is no other;
 Besides Me there is no God.
 I will gird you, though you have not known Me;
 6 That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun
 That there is no one besides Me.
 I am the Lord, and there is no other,
 7 The One forming light and creating darkness,
 Causing well-being and creating calamity;
 I am the Lord who does all these.*

as Isaiah is speaking of Cyrus, the king of Persia, the references to light and darkness are couched in the religious concepts of the Persians, which were based on the newly resuscitated Magian religion. Isaiah attributes both light and darkness to the one God of Israel, to deconstruct the two-god concept of the Magian religion, which was growing among his own people.

Zoroaster did not want to make an indictment against God; hence, he taught that God had only created light which represented good, and that evil followed as a natural consequence, just as a shadow is the natural result of a reality. Zoroaster made further modification to the ancient religion by teaching that God commissioned two angels, one to rule over light and the other to rule over darkness and cast them in an eternal struggle for dominion. Zoroaster did not invent a new religion, but, as Dr. Humphrey Prideaux states, *"He grafted all his new scions on this old stock and it grew."* Zoroaster's teaching became immensely popular among the eastern cultures and became the national religion of the Persians until the 7th century CE.

It is unreasonable to conclude that Zoroaster's teaching had no impact on the children of Israel during their stay in Babylon. To the contrary, it is widely accepted that it was through his efforts that God's people were exposed to the concept of a supernatural being that ruled over darkness. Those who were adults were fertile soil, as God had sent them into captivity because they had gone after other gods. As the children of Israel were scattered throughout the empire of Babylon, they did not exist as a society governed by the Law of Moses. Therefore, those who went into captivity as children and those born in captivity had no firm religious structure to deter them from accepting the concepts of their captors, which included the influences of the pagan religions of Babylon. The fact that the children of Israel had intermarried with those outside the covenant of circumcision is evidence that they were influenced by the culture of the Babylonians.

Ezra 10:2, 3

*2 And Shecaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said to Ezra,
 "We have been unfaithful to our God, and have married foreign women from the peoples
 of the land; yet now there is hope for Israel in spite of this.
 3 So now let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives and their children,
 according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our
 God; and let it be done according to the law.*

The Hebrew writings produced after the Babylonian captivity (some of which we call the Apocrypha) indicate that there was an increased awareness and *"knowledge"* concerning the *"spiritual realm"* which did not appear in the writings of Moses and the prophet. It is in these later

writings that we find the references to devils, demons, evil spirits, and other concepts introduced by Zoroaster.

Did Zoroaster create the doctrine of “*Satan*”? What can be said with certainty is that there are several aspects of the “*Satan*” myth that mirror the teachings of Zoroaster. “*Satan*” is held to be an “*angel of darkness*” who opposes every purpose of God. Zoroaster’s “*angel of darkness*” is locked in a struggle for dominion with the forces of light. Another similarity is where the angel of light (the good god) prevails, there is good, and where the angel of darkness (the evil god) prevails, there is evil. Perhaps the images of archangels battling the forces of evil sprang from the teachings of Zoroaster.

While it is emphatically denied, the doctrine of “*Satan*” does indeed suggest the existence of two Gods. “*Christians*” through the centuries have vehemently denied that their “*Satan*” is a god; yet, they unknowingly attribute to him all the attributes of deity!

Zoroaster also taught of a great future day of resurrection and judgment and the “*eternal punishment*” of the wicked, none of which are found in the established writings of the children of Israel. This suggests that Zoroaster could either see into the future or that he possessed a vivid imagination.

Despite having no Biblical foundation, the concept of an evil god was accepted by the early “*church*” fathers and become one of the tenets of “*Christianity*.” If we hold that Jesus and his apostles taught these concepts, then we must acknowledge that they were not the first to do so, as they were indebted to the teachings of Zoroaster. All false and/or traditional religious concepts share one common thread: theology (belief) precedes evidence. The concept is established, then evidence is sought to support the view. As we have found in our study of “*Satan*” and “*the Devil*,” when the language is properly translated and the context is considered, “*proof*” vanishes, leaving the concept of a supernatural evil being with no Biblical support. Therefore, we can only conclude that the concept of “*Satan*” is accepted through tradition, with various texts being manipulated and/or read in a manner that supports the predetermined view.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE POWER OF DEATH

Romans 5:12

*Therefore, just as through one man **sin entered into the world, and death through sin**, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned*

Romans 6:16

*Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of **sin resulting in death**, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?*

Romans 6:23

*For **the wages of sin is death**, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

1 Corinthians 15:56

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;

Paul clearly establishes that the power of death is sin, which received its power from the Law of Moses. Therefore, death cannot be destroyed without destroying the source of its power – sin. This cannot be accomplished without, in some way, curtailing the condemnatory nature of the Law.

Romans 4:15

for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.

Romans 8:3, 4

*3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He **condemned sin in the flesh**,*

4 in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

In the above verses, Paul states that God had “*condemned*” sin in the “*flesh*.” In the context of the Roman letter, Paul uses the term “*flesh*” in reference to the physical nature of man and its involvement in the physical nature of service under the Law. The system of commandments was to exercise control over one's conduct and was bolstered by ceremonies and offerings that required the physical participation of the individual. At the center of these ceremonies and offerings was the physical sacrifice of life in the physically oriented offerings that were made for the forgiveness of sins. What the offering of Jesus accomplished for those who were under the Law is found in the meaning of the term that is rendered as “*condemned*.”

“Condemned. Deposed from its dominion, a thing impossible to the law, which could pronounce judgment and inflict penalty, but not dethrone.” Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, Romans 8:3.

Paul states that God's acceptance of the offering of Jesus allowed Him to set aside accountability for sins emanating from weakness (unintentional sins) which ended the dominion that sin had gained over God's people through the Law. Therefore, we are to understand that during the period of the “*ekklesia*,” Jesus did not end the Law; nor did he end sin; he ended **accountability** for sins borne of weakness!

Romans 4:8

*"Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord **will not take into account**."*

2 Corinthians 5:19

*namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, **not counting their trespasses against them**, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

Romans 10:4

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

In Romans 4:8, the phrase “*take into account*” is rendered from a single Greek term that means “*to put together with one's mind, to count, to occupy oneself with reckonings or calculations.*” This is the same word that is rendered as “*counting*” in 2 Corinthians 5:19. In both verses, Paul is declaring that God does not “*occupy Himself*” with the sins of those who have placed their trust in the offering of Jesus!

Hebrews 10:1-4

1 For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near.

2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.

*4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to **take away** sins.*

While the customary view of the above text concerns forgiveness, the subject is “*making perfect.*” Two facts must be understood. The Law made no allowance for weakness and the repetitive nature of the offerings for the forgiveness of sins demonstrated that they were inadequate for the purpose of attaining perfection. The “*keys*” to understanding the writer’s presentation are found in the phrases “*no longer have consciousness of sins*” and “*once offered.*” The term rendered as “*consciousness*” refers to self-awareness. How can a man no longer have an awareness of his failures? This can only happen if one is secure in the knowledge that his

failures are “*not taken into account.*” That is precisely what is stated in verse 4. The phrase “*take away*” is rendered from a single Greek term that refers to the removal of a burden, article of clothing, or the suffering caused by the loss of something. The only other time this term is used in association with sin is in Romans 11:27, where the meaning is parallel with the present text.

Romans 11:27

*"And this is My covenant with them,
When I **take away** their sins."*

Consider what Paul stated in the preceding texts taken from Romans 4 and 2 Corinthians 5, concerning God not taking sins into account and not counting their trespasses against them. Add to this the Hebrew letter letter’s declaration that God had promised to “*take away*” sins. Therefore, while those of the way of Jesus would continue to experience failure due to the weakness of their physical nature, God would no longer hold them accountable for those failures.

Hebrews 8:12

*"For I will be merciful to their iniquities,
And I **will remember their sins no more.**"*

Hebrews 10:17

"And their sins and their lawless deeds

I will remember no more."

How does one not have a consciousness of something he/she had done? The only way that is possible is if the issue in question is of no consequence. The Hebrews writer stated the conclusion of the matter in 10:14: "*For by one offering He has **perfected for all time** those who are sanctified.*" The writer states that, for those under the Law, the offering of Jesus made all sins of weakness, past, present, and future, unaccountable! The "*gentiles*" (scattered people of the house of Israel, who God had given a bill of divorcement and scattered among the nations) became recipients of this blessing when they became partakers of the "*hope of Israel.*" John and Paul, when speaking to their "*Jewish*" brethren, confirmed the conclusion of the matter.

1 John 3:5

And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

Romans 8:1

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

A practical application is found in Paul's first letter to the saints of Corinth. Paul spends the first fourteen chapters criticizing the saints of Corinth for their many failures. While these failures are not to be minimized, we find that they do not appear to have affected their standing in the sight of God, as Paul praises them and states that if they continue their present course, they will be saved.

1 Corinthians 15:1, 2

1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand,

2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

One will be hard pressed to find any apostolic reference to someone having "*fallen away,*" other than having abandoned the way of Jesus. This is clearly the case with those of Hebrews 10:39: "*But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.*" The writer is speaking of his "*Jewish*" brethren who had abandoned their trust in the offering of Jesus and returned to seeking righteousness through the sacrificial ordinances of the Law.

Earlier in our discussion, I mentioned the age of the "*ekklesia.*" This is the period between the sacrificial death of Jesus and his "*parousia*" in the Roman-Judean war of 66-70 CE. This forty-year period was a time of preparation and is the most relevant period in the apostolic writings. This period mirrors the 40 years that God prepared the "*ekklesia*" of Moses as they wandered in the wilderness. The "*ekklesia*" of Moses came to an end when the children of Israel crossed the Jordan River and became a physical kingdom of God's people made up of twelve tribal nations. In like manner, the "*ekklesia*" of Jesus was prepared for forty years after which it was taken into the everlasting kingdom of God. The purpose of the "*ekklesia*" of Jesus is seen in the ark of Noah. The ark carried the faithful family of Noah from a dying "*kosmos*" (arrangement) to a new living "*kosmos*" (arrangement). The "*ekklesia*" of Jesus delivered the faithful remnant of God's people

from the dying “*kosmos*” (arrangement) of the Mosaic dispensation, to the “*kosmos*” (arrangement) of eternal kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 15:24

then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

In September of 70 CE, Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed which ended the Mosaic dispensation and the promise of entry into the everlasting kingdom of God was fulfilled. Hence, the period of the “*ekklesia*” of Jesus was temporary and those of the “*ekklesia*” inherited the kingdom.

CONCLUSION

Some will argue that “*Satan*” is real because personal pronouns are used in certain verses and/or contexts in which he allegedly appears, such as Gen. 3:1; Mt. 4:5, 9; Lk. 4:5, 9. As we have discovered during our examination of the texts in question, pronouns are warranted as the adversaries and slanders being addressed are most often people. In any case, the context must determine the identity of the adversary or slanderer. As is always the case, if we seek understanding with a preconceived premise, the result will be flawed.

Some will hold that the universal acceptance of the doctrine of “*Satan*” verifies its truth. A short history lesson will refute such an argument. Until Christopher Columbus sailed to the Americas, it was held that the world was flat and if one sailed too far, he would fall off the edge. It was also held that the earth was the center of our solar system. Some were put to death or excommunicated from the “*church*” for disputing these “*fundamental truths*.” Galileo spent his last years under house arrest, at the orders of an authorized “*church inquisition*,” for his denial of a “*fundamental truth*.” Through the determination of those who chose to risk the penalty for “*thinking outside the box*,” we now know that these universally held truths are false.

Some will merely shrug and hold to the opinion that it is of little consequence what one believes. Bear in mind that “*Satan*” and his demons are only one perversion, and that many others exist in the “*doctrines of men*.” Others include the commonly accepted concepts of “*baptism*,” “*church*,” “*soul*,” “*hell*,” as well as the “*trinity*,” none of which find support in the Hebrew Scriptures or the apostolic writings. To hold that such things are of little consequence is to say that there is no evil in wresting the scriptures to conform to concepts and traditions established by men.

Are we to ignore the fact that the concept of “*Satan*” forms the basis for nearly every superstition and spiritual fear? Are we to ignore the fact that such fears have led to many murders and slanderous activities, such as were found in the Salem witch trials and the inquisition sponsored by the “*one true church*,” and that such views remain alive and well in many parts of the world? Are we to continue to allow our preachers and teachers the license to terrify people, especially our children, with tales of “*eternal torment*” being administered through “*Satan*?”

We must also consider the impact of such perversions on the furtherance of the message of righteousness through Jesus. It is commonly held that the greatest stumbling block to convincing a “*Jew*” or one of Islam to accept God’s message is the doctrine of the “*trinity*.” It is also common knowledge that many missionaries do not teach the doctrine of “*Satan*,” as it is unacceptable to those whom they are attempting to convert. Isn’t it interesting that outside the “*magian*” religion, which was modified by one of God’s people for personal gain, not one pagan culture had such an evil creature as “*Satan*”? Why is it that only those who are to honor God continue to hold such a belief?

The scriptures, as well as our very existence, are for the glory of God. How is God glorified by believing and teaching that He has allowed an evil being to run amok through His creation? How is He glorified by the fact that he punishes those He has left to the influence of this evil entity, while allowing him to continue destroying those who are His? If sin dishonors God, what is to be said of “*Satan*” – His creation and chief architect of evil?

As was stated at the outset, our goal is to study the various scriptures in a manner that is free of the bias of translators. This requires us to recognize and employ a proper translation of the various Greek terms used in existing manuscripts. We have accomplished that purpose. As was also stated, to be right, one must be willing to be wrong. I fully realize that this will be a problem for many for a variety of reasons. I am convinced that the main reason for the establishment of the doctrine of “*Satan*” is the same reason that many will continue to accept it – man’s innate aversion to accepting responsibility for his own actions. Despite this, I believe that those who are lovers of God and truth, will come to the realization that the concept of “*Satan*” serves no purpose other than to cast dispersion on the person and character of Almighty God.

Lastly, it is said that “*Satan*’s” greatest weapon is to convince people that he doesn’t exist. Let’s apply a bit of reason to that statement. What is never clarified is the advantage that “*Satan*” gains when people are unaware of his existence? Are his ways not held to be sly and deceitful, even among the elect? This means that his methods are intended to be undetectable. Therefore, even for those who believe he exists, that knowledge, in and of itself, offers no protection. The scriptures clearly place responsibility for sin upon the individual. The acceptance of personal responsibility translates into freedom from fear.

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