

# The Wiles of the Devil

## Introduction

It is clear to any level headed Christian that the biggest threat to their spiritual well being is the devil, but other than being depicted as some sort of bogey man, very little of practical use has been taught to the church. Well, that is about to change. By the end of this lesson you will have a much better understanding of this enemy of the faithful. We will carefully consider what the word has to say about this entity, who is known by many names, but who prefers to stay and work in the dark. We, however, will drag him out into the light where we can get a good look at him.

**I: Foundation Scripture:** *Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (Eph. 6:10)*

This Scripture tells us certain things. For one, it tells us that we will be assaulted by the devil, and that he will use trickery and deceit as his main weapons to defeat us. We also see that God has provided for us, both defensive and offensive weapons for the battle. In this way we should not fail, but we have the opportunity to be victorious and thus, bring honor to His name. In this teaching we will be considering all of these factors, so that the well-informed Christian will be able to stand indeed. Let us proceed now to unmask this hidden foe so that we may consider him.

According to Webster's dictionary, the word **wile** is defined as follows:

1. A sly trick; a deceitful artifice, a stratagem
2. A beguiling, deceitful or coquettish trick

## **II: Who is the Devil?**

Before we can understand who the devil is, let us examine to see who he is not.

1. He is not the evil twin of God. Conventional thinking has likened the devil to an eternally coexistent, but opposite in attribute "being" to the Godhead. This is, of course, not true. He is not eternally existent (meaning from everlasting to everlasting), but he was created at some point in time in the distant past and before the earth was, therefore, he is a creature, and not a being. See (Ezek. 28:12-19, Job: 38:7).
2. He is not coequal with God in power. He is not omnipotent.
3. He is not omnipresent. The devil can only occupy one place in space at a time, although he doesn't appear to be bound to the natural space-time continuum, i.e. (Luke 4:5)

The creature that we call the devil has not always been known as such. I can tell you now that his given name is not “devil”. He is named Lucifer, (Heb; 1966, heylel; which means the morning or daystar). Let us go back to the beginning and study the origin of the entity known as the devil. We find that the prophet Ezekiel refers to the devil as a cherub. (Ezek. 28:14)

**The Cherubim:** These creatures are mentioned quite extensively in the Bible, and are best defined as winged celestial entities. In all of the described visitations to the throne room of heaven, they seem to figure prominently. They appear to have a role in guarding, as well as, ministering to the Lord. They were not described as exactly humanoid in appearance, but were described as having four faces and up to six wings. There seemed to be two cherubim of particular prominence. These were the two who were depicted by Moses in his earthly copy of the throne of God. (the tabernacle) The Ark of the Covenant was covered by two cherubim positioned on either side of the mercy seat, their wings outstretched and touching each other in the middle of the seat. We are told in the Psalms that the Lord “dwells” between the cherubim. (Ps.80: 1, 99:1) It is noted that in the construction of the tabernacle, which was known to be a terrestrial model of the Heavenly abode of God; Moses constructed the Ark of the Covenant to be overshadowed by two golden cherubim with outstretched wings which touched in the middle. It is also noted that it is from this precise location that the Spirit of God spoke to the people. Since this served as a model of the actual heavenly realm of God, it is logical to conclude that there are also two actual cherubim that minister to the Lord from either side of the throne. Moreover, if the role of the copy was to “cover” the mercy seat, how much more was it the role of the “original” to cover the real mercy seat? Now since there is no other mention of covering cherubs in the Bible, it would be safe to assume that any cherub whose job it was to cover something was indeed to cover the throne of God. This then was the position of the entity that we now call the devil.

(Note that the designation of cherubim is a function of ontogeny, not a description of function or office, in much the same way as describing a man as a human.)

References: Gen. 3:24, Ex. 25:18-22, Num. 7:89, Heb. 9:1-5.

Based on all of the aforementioned information, we may now safely conclude the following: The one we now call the devil is a created entity of great glory and significance in the economy of God, who at some point in the distant past, fell from grace because of iniquity, and became an enemy to the kingdom. He has subsequently become known by many other names, each descriptive of his many destructive attributes. In the Bible we find him described as the adversary, the serpent, a murderer, a liar, the deceiver, the dragon, and other such unsavory monikers.

### **III: What was the Sin of the Devil?**

In Ezekiel 28:12-19, and Isaiah 14:12-13, we see that everything was fine with Lucifer until he began to think of himself more highly than he ought to. (by definition: pride) He became ambitious and sought to gain for himself that which was not lawful for him to

have. That is, he ceased to see himself as a minister of God and sought to rule within the kingdom of God, as God. He, however, lacked the powers of God so that he was not able to create his own kingdom. Instead he aimed to displace God from rulership in His kingdom. This was unacceptable to the rightful ruler of the universe who refused to cede power thus kindling the conflict that has now raged on for eons.

At this point one might ask, “Since this seems to be a celestial conflict, why are we terrestrial dwellers caught up in the middle of it?” Well, we have had the “misfortune” of being created in the image and bearing the glory of God. And, as such, He has decided to utilize us to teach the lesson of His eternal power and excellent glory to a wayward celestial creation, that through the lesson of the obedience of the lesser, all may know the futility of the rebellion of the greater. This propensity of God to use this technique is well established in the Scriptures, for example (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1: 18-31). The unveiling of God’s plan to use us to confound the devil was revealed in the Garden of Eden just before we were kicked to the curb. He spoke to all of the rebellious parties concerning His response to their sin. To the serpent, He indicated that there would be recompense for iniquity coming through the “seed” of these recently created lowly creatures, who were barely more than the dust of the earth from which they were formed. This prophecy of the Lord immediately got us placed on the devil’s list of enemies. Therefore we became a target of his wrath against God, and he sought opportunity to destroy us, lest we be found useful to God as examples of good creature-creator relationships.

It is important to realize that although powerful, the celestial hosts are not necessarily privy to all of the plans and purposes of God. Now God, in His wisdom, has decided to give them front row seats to the drama unfolding on the earth, so that they may observe the eternal wisdom of His grand plan by which He will bring order to His creation. The mystery of the gospel is revealed in Christ Jesus, not only to us, but also to them. In this they know the love of God that was manifested toward us in the giving of His own, that we might be restored to Him. This is the mystery that the Bible tells us that angels desire to look into. (1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:12) It is this very act that has confounded the enemy, but has caused a time of rejoicing in the faithful hosts of Heaven. For through us they begin to understand so great a mystery, in that they have seen God manifested in the flesh, sojourn in the way of the wicked, but yet be justified in the Spirit, and then received up in glory. (1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 3:16) Moreover, they have seen those of the dust take on the nature of the excellent glory. Having received so great a gift as this, they observed the spectacle as those of the flesh endured that they might obtain a portion of the inheritance that is reserved for those who do not falter or lose hope. They have also seen a place reserved for such as these amongst the fiery stones, that through obedience, those who were once lower have risen up to a place of preeminence, so that the lesser has now become the greater. (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 4:9, 6:3, Col. 2:11-15)

#### **IV: The Kingdom of Darkness**

Who are the cast of characters in the devil’s kingdom, and what is the makeup of his organization?

- We find that the devil’s kingdom has a structure and a hierarchal organization, much in the same way as the kingdom of God.

- The devil himself is at the head of his organization. John 14:30, 16:7-11
- He commands fully one third of the angelic host. Rev. 12:4,7-9
- The lowest members of the devils posse are the demons, or more accurately unclean spirits. These are the disembodied souls of the Nephelim of the days of the giants. These were the product of hybrid celestial terrestrial unions between angels and humans. The resultant creatures were so evil that they corrupted all of mankind causing God to destroy the world with the flood in the days of Noah.

*Now the giants who have been born of spirit and of flesh, shall be called upon earth evil spirits, and on earth shall be their habitation. Evil spirits shall proceed from their flesh, because they were created from above; from the holy Watchers was their beginning and their primary foundation. Evil spirits shall they be upon earth, and the spirits of the wicked shall they be called. The habitation of the spirits of heaven shall be in heaven; but upon earth shall be the habitation of terrestrial spirits, who were born on Earth. The spirits of the giants shall be like clouds, which shall oppress, corrupt, fall, content, and bruise upon the earth. They shall cause lamentation. No food shall they eat; and they shall be thirsty; they shall be concealed, and shall rise up against the sons of men and against women; for they come forth during the days of slaughter and destruction. And as to the death of the giants, wheresoever their spirits depart from their bodies, let their flesh be destroyed before the judgment. Thus they shall perish, until the day of the great consummation of the great world. A destruction shall take place of the Watchers and the impious. (Enoch 15:8-16:1)*

## **A: Demons**

The Greek word *daimon* (Strong's # 1140) is used infrequently in the Bible. For example, it occurs in the book of Mark 16:17, where Jesus says that those who believe in Him would cast them out. We find this word also used in Mark 7: 24-30, when Jesus encounters a young girl who is possessed by what is called a demon. Most everywhere else these same entities are called either devils or unclean spirits.

Strong's # 169: *akathartos*: impure, foul ceremonially unclean

Strong's # 4151: *pneumo*: air or spirit

These demons, or unclean spirits, are loathsome creatures left over from the fall of mankind in the days of Noah. They are contrary to the ways of God, and they hate mankind. It is because of these facts that they make excellent allies of the devil, both in His quest to overthrow the kingdom of God, as well as his efforts to destroy the world of men. Since they are of "mixed" heritage, the devil doesn't think that much of them either, but because they serve his purpose in opposing mankind, he finds them quite useful.

## Characteristics of Unclean Spirits

1. They have no bodies; therefore, they are unable to directly interact with the physical world. (Luke 24:36-39) In order to manifest in the physical plane they must inhabit or operate through a physical body. That body may or may not be human. They can also manifest through animals. (Mark 5:1-13)
2. They are territorial and prefer to inhabit a specific individual or a specific geographic area. (Mark 5:10, Matt 12:43-45)
3. Those possessed by them exhibit inordinate physical strength, and also tend to be self-destructive (Mark 5:1-5, Acts 19:13-16).
4. A single body may be possessed by more than one unclean spirit. (Mark 1:24, Mark 5:9, Luke 8:1-3)
5. They are responsible for various physical maladies exhibited in those possessed by them.
  - Epilepsy: Mark. 9: 14-29
  - Deaf and dumb: Matt 9:32-34
  - Insanity: Mark 5:15, Luke 6:17-19

## B: Angels

The next several members of the cast of characters are all members of a particular group of celestial entities known as angels. So it would seem fitting to discuss them at this time. Bear in mind that just because we are discussing angels in the section on the kingdom of darkness, doesn't mean that all angels are evil. In fact, only one third of them have rebelled against God and allied themselves with the devil. The following discourse is applicable to angels in general. Firstly, it is important to note that the word "angel" does not describe who these creatures are, but what they do. As to who they are, they can be most accurately described as non-cherubim celestial entities. They too are ancient creatures, created by God long ago, and sanctified for His purposes. It is very common for people to confuse the two different types of creatures, and to consider cherubs as angels. This is incorrect, for they are two different types of creatures, and serve two different roles in the economy of God. (Heb. 13:2 says, "Who makes His **angels** spirits, and His **ministers** [cherubim] a flame of fire)." For one thing, their appearance is quite different one from the other. Cherubs are described as four, or six winged creatures with four faces, while angels are apparently, (and contrary to popular depiction) wingless. (There is no reference in the Bible to any angel with wings). They are quite human in their appearance, to the extent that many times they were mistaken for men. Moreover, we are admonished in Hebrews 13:2 to be kind to strangers, for, in so doing, many have entertained angels unawares. Unless one was blind, they would have no difficulty telling that a six-winged, four-faced creature was not human.

As previously stated angels differ from cherubim in the area of job description. Although they both can be described as ministers, the scope of their ministries, although sometimes overlapping, is different. The ministry of the cherubim is in the heavenly kingdom, and the recipient of their ministry is God Himself. They are completely disassociated with the affairs of men. There is no record in the Bible of any interaction between cherubs and men except the unlawful interference that occurs through the devil.

They seem to spend their existence in close proximity to the throne of God where they minister unto Him in song and praise and worship. Angels, on the other hand, are frequently seen interacting with mankind, where they seem to be messengers from the kingdom of God to bring us news and information from the Godhead. As a matter of fact, this is precisely what the meaning of the word angel implies. It means, “messenger” or “ambassador.” It is clear from the Scriptures that they too have a role in praising the Lord in the throne room, but they are also often used by God to communicate His wishes to mankind, or to carry out specific tasks relative to the affairs of men. Angels have the responsibility to be largely unseen overseers who watch over the various goings on within the terrestrial kingdom. At the behest of the Lord they do, from time to time, make their presence known to men, either by bringing messages, deliverances, or exacting judgment on those who oppose the Godhead.

In the Bible the angels are, on occasion, referred to as “sons of God.” (Gen. 6:1-4, Job 1:6,2:1, 38:7, Luke 20:34-36) This indicates that their relationship with Him goes far beyond their role as servants of the Kingdom. He created them even before He created the heavens and the earth. They are part of the family of God. Now God has derived this family by three mechanisms: begetting, creation, and adoption.

One more point of note regarding angels is that they have a hierarchal structure. There is mention in the Bible of an angel named Michael. He is called the “archangel,” (Jude v. 9) as well as a “chief prince.” (Dan. 10:13) These appellatives certainly carry with them the implication of great rank or status.

To sum up then, one may conclude that angels and cherubim are both celestial creatures created by God in the distant past. They differ from one another in appearance as well as primary function; so therefore, it is not useful to interchange them in discussions of biblical things. Below are scriptural references that highlight these two members of the household of God, along with their differences of ministry.

#### Cherubim:

- Seen in proximity to, and/or giving praise to God

Isa. 6:1-4

Ezek. 1:1-28

Rev. 4:1-11

#### Angels:

-Seen ministering between Heaven and earth

Gen. 19:1

Gen. 28:12

Psa. 91:11

Lk. 16:22

Acts 7:53

Gal.3: 19

Heb.2: 1-2

Now that we understand who angels are, and what they do, let us resume our discussion of the cast of the forces of evil.

## **C: Principalities**

Definition according to Strong's: (746) *arche: a commencement or chief in various applications of order, time rank; beginning, 1<sup>st</sup> estate*

*Webster's: The rank, dignity or jurisdiction of a prince, the territory ruled by a prince, A country in which a prince's title is recognized*

Principalities are the first class of truly celestial beings in the devil's kingdom. Now notice something interesting. They are designated according to a concept of geography. In our system of human government we use the word principality to indicate a specific geographic area such as a city or county. It seems strange to think that this class of celestial entity would be designated according to geography until you realize that their role is to rule over these areas in the spirit realm. This process is analogous to the concept of a kingdom, in which the operative word is "king." So then a kingdom is a specific physical region of land that is ruled over by a single leader known as a king, whose dominion is limited to that particular geographic area. In like manner, a principality is a specific region of land that is ruled over by a single celestial leader known as a prince. Now it is vital to be aware that the notion of a kingdom is invalid, without the presence of its king. Similarly, a principality does not exist without its prince. In other words, the ruler is one with the land over which he has dominion. Therefore, the land cannot be separately considered without its prince.

The implications of this are staggering. Every physical nation that exists on Earth, save one, has an angel who is in service to the devil, as its spiritual head. The borders of this prince's dominion correspond exactly to the physical borders of the terrestrial nation. As a matter of fact, the natural national borders are actually secondary to, and reflective of, the celestial borders. In other words, the limitations of the boundaries of the principality are established first in the spirit, and then subsequently reflected in the natural by the nation that represents it. By the way, the nation that is excepted is of course, the nation of Israel. Because they have been sanctified by the Lord as His focal point of interaction with the sons of men on earth, He has given the role of prince to the Prince of Peace; namely Christ Jesus. Now, while Jesus is otherwise occupied, God has appointed the archangel Michael, as a steward to watch over His house.

Before you dismiss this as heresy, consider carefully what is noted in the Scripture of truth concerning these matters. In the book of Daniel we find a curious encounter between Daniel and the angel Gabriel. (Dan 10:12-21, 12:1) It seems that Daniel made an inquiry of the Lord concerning the fate of his people. Now God dispatched Gabriel to bring him the answer, but he was delayed in arriving in the natural plane for a total of three weeks. According to his account, the prince of the kingdom of Persia held him up. It wasn't until three weeks later, when Michael relieved him that he was freed up to deliver the message to Daniel. Now you don't really think that any mere human on earth can withstand an angel of God for three seconds much less three weeks do you? So then, it is logical to conclude that the kings and princes under discussion in this chapter are the principalities upon which I have been previously expounding. The information given by Gabriel, regarding his encounters with the various princes of the region happens to correspond exactly to the sequence of kingdoms that have arisen in that region.

From this discourse, one can clearly see that there is conflict in the spirit realm between the angels of God and the angels of the devil, and when a particular prince is defeated, another one displaces him. This just happens to correspond to the ebb and flow of geopolitical fluidity within the natural world. Remember, the nation begins first in the spirit, and then subsequently manifests in the natural, and as such, that nation takes on the characteristics of the principality that is heading it. This phenomenon explains why the character of nations on earth differ so, one from the other. So then, when there are wars between nations and one conquers another and takes it over, this is only because there has been an antecedent change of dominion accomplished in the spirit. Ultimately, God has preordained the entire tenure of mankind on the earth, and we are moving inexorably toward the completion of His divine plan

*“ And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their habitations, so that they should seek the Lord in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.” (Acts 17:26-27)*

Now you know by what mechanism He has accomplished these things. Understand that the boundaries of our current habitations were established first in the spirit, and then, only by way of warfare: there, in the spirit first, then also here, in the natural.

Scriptural examples:

Rom 8:38

Eph 1:21

Col 1:16

Col 2:11-15

Eph 3:1-10

## **D: Powers**

Definition: (1411) *dumanis, force, miraculous power, ability*

(1849) *exousia, force, capacity, competency, magistrate, superhuman*

These are also celestial beings and are usually mentioned in the Bible in conjunction with principalities. The main difference is that their habitation is not confined to the terrestrial realm, as in the case of the principalities. (Eph.2: 2) Their abode is within the first and second heaven that is the earth's atmosphere and outer space. An interesting parallel to explain their differences is to analogize them to the military. The principalities would be the army, and the powers would be the air force. With this type of structuring, the devil maintains tight control over his whole empire.

**Scriptural examples:**

Luke 21:25-28

Rom 8:38-39

Eph 3:1-12

Col 2:11-14

1<sup>st</sup> Pet 3:18-22

## **E: Rulers of the Darkness of this Age**

Beyond their mention in Ephesians 6:11 as one of the forces against whom we wrestle, nothing specific about them is revealed in the Scriptures. We may safely surmise however, that they are celestial creatures (probably angels loyal to Satan), and that they are our enemies. Remember, we don't wrestle with those considered friends. Perhaps they are more highly ranked than the principalities or the powers. Returning to our military analogy, they may be majors or colonels.

## **F: Spiritual Hosts of Wickedness in the Heavenly Places**

This very designation carries with it the most ominous of implications. How could there be wickedness in the heavenly realm? This shows you the magnitude of the rebellion that has occurred within the kingdom of God, as well as how high up the chain of command that it extends. These entities are the most high-ranking angels in the camp of the devil, and their abode is within the third heaven where, I am sure, they are quite an annoyance to the Godhead. This also happens to be the main hangout of the devil himself. This makes perfect sense, since he has set his heart on the very throne of God so, of course, he would want to stay in a close relationship to it. Moreover, he would want to be in proximity to the Father, so that he can engage in his favorite activity, which is to accuse the brethren before the Lord. Now, the devil himself is at the top of this wicked empire. He is the *capo de tutti capo*, as it were.

### **Scriptural examples:**

John 14:30

John 16:11

Rev 12: 7-9

Job 1:6

## **G: Special Guest Stars**

One group of allies of the devil that we have not yet considered, are those humans who either willingly, or unwittingly, do his bidding and serve the cause of evil; (i.e. Judas Iscariot, and the Antichrist.)

## **V: The Wiles of the Devil**

Now that we have a full understanding of who the devil is and who his allies are, let us go on to discuss the mechanisms at his disposal, by which he seeks to destroy mankind. The first, and most important, thing to remember is that the devil has no authority outside of that which God has given him. His dominion is very narrowly defined, and basically, if you stay out of his yard, he has no opportunity to bite you. So, in order for the devil to harm you, he must first lure you into his web, which brings us to his number one weapon.

1. **Deceit:** Defined as “presenting that which is known to be a lie as though it were the truth,” deceit is the main way that the devil brings people under his dominion where he now has the right to harm them in whatever way that suits his fancy. In order for deceit to be engaged in, there must first be access to, or knowledge of, the actual truth. This knowledge must then be displaced by the acceptance of the lie as though it were the truth. When these conditions have been met, the individual has successfully been victimized by deception. To merely accept a lie without exposure to antecedent truth, is suffering from the consequences of ignorance. The way that he works this trick is almost elegant in its simplicity. He simply finds out whatever God has said about a situation, and then he stakes out a position diametrically opposed to it. So, for example, if the Lord says, “Up,” then the devil says “Down.” If the Lord says “In,” then the devil says “Out” and so on. After that, it becomes the responsibility of the person on the receiving end of both pronouncements, to determine who is the more trustworthy witness, and to listen to that one. The devil figured out this technique very early on in man’s history. In the Garden of Eden, we see an exchange between Eve and the serpent. He shows her the tree of which God had forbidden them to eat, and then asks concerning it. She replies correctly that God had forbidden them to touch it lest they die. This was certainly a truth. The devil’s response was to tell a lie, which was that they would not die if they ate of the tree.

Here are two diametrically opposed views. Obviously, one of them was wrong. Since it is part of God’s job description that He is never allowed to be wrong, it is clear that the one lying was the devil. Now, by presenting his argument as though it were the truth, but clearly knowing that it was a lie, he laid his trap of deception. Eve had the opportunity to test the trustworthiness of both parties. Somehow she concluded that the one who was lying was the One who had made her out of nothing, and breathed the breath of life into her. So she followed the path of the devil, and we all know the outcome of that action. Deception, then, is a way to separate one from the safety of obedience to God’s word. Once it has done that, you automatically fall victim to the consequences of disobedience. By making us unwitting authors of our own destruction, the devil has done great damage to mankind with very little effort on his part. This makes deception a powerful weapon indeed.

Now, there is a type of deception that is very subtle and, as such, is particularly dangerous. That is: the act of presenting an actual truth, but to do so with the intent to foment a lie. The power of this technique is demonstrated in the following example, when you consider who the devil tried to victimize with it. In Luke 4:1-14, there is an account of a discussion between the devil and the Lord Jesus. After fasting for forty days the Lord was hungry and the devil showed up to tempt Him. In one of his enticements, he made mention of a Scripture in Psalm 91, where the Lord God promised that He would give His angels charge over those who were loyal to Him, and they would be protected from harm. In attempting to get Jesus to throw Himself down from the top of the temple, the devil quoted this very Scripture. This was certainly a statement of truth on its

own. However, when used to accomplish his intended goal, which was to entice Jesus to test God by jumping of His own free will, this truth would have instead, been used to foment a lie. Now if Jesus had fallen for this “lie,” He would have surely died and the world would have been without a Savior.

### **Examples of Deception**

Luke 21:7-9

1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 6:9

Gal. 6:6-10

1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 2:14

Jas. 1:22

Rev. 12:9

2<sup>nd</sup> John v.7

2. **The Devil is the Mediator of the Curse:** It is vital to understand that the Lord Himself does not afflict with harm or engage in evil doing. Because of sin, deleterious effects have been allowed to hold sway in our world. God is not the perpetrator of these things, but they are the result of doing things contrary to His explicit instructions. When one has disobeyed the word of God, there are consequences that are entailed, and these are overseen by the devil. He is more than happy to make you pay for stepping outside of God’s protective shield of obedience. The way this process works is as follows. In the beginning mankind was not cognizant of the concept of good and evil, therefore, none of our actions were assailable. We had no discernment of whether an act was good or evil, therefore, no act could result in a consciousness of sin. The price that we paid for Eve’s deception was the introduction of the ability to make a distinction between good and evil. Once this happened, the ability to choose between the two was given. At this time, God laid out for us the choices that would be consistent with His will for mankind. Moreover, He revealed the outcomes of making either choice, so that we could judge the validity of the choice by measuring it against the outcome. Put simply, good things happen if you obey what God has said, and bad things happen if you are disobedient.

The first application of this principle was in the Garden of Eden. After Adam and Eve disobeyed God, He informed them that the very ground was cursed for their sakes. (Gen. 3:17-19) What exactly did that mean? It meant that the earth would no longer be a place of ease and fruitfulness, the way that God had planned it in the beginning. Now it would only reluctantly yield its sustenance, and at every opportunity, it would function in a way as to hinder mankind. The Earth is an inanimate object, so how do you suppose that this would be carried out? Enter the devil of course. He is the one who, by virtue of having been given license through sin, is free to afflict mankind in all of his affairs. History tells us that the devil’s intentions toward mankind are to destroy us thoroughly if possible. By giving him place through disobedience, we have allowed him to cause much pain, suffering and loss on the earth. On the other hand, if we are obedient then he has no license to cause harm. Here is a nice way to analogize this principle. Our

disobedience to God has started a rainstorm. He has provided an umbrella (His word). If we stay under it, we can travel around the Earth without getting wet. If, however, we don't use the umbrella then we will surely get wet. So, whether or not we get wet, is not a function of active intervention by God, but do we put up the umbrella? So, you see then, how much we are afflicted by the various curses that inhabit mans world is a matter of choice on our part. And the choice is, do we choose good, or do we choose evil?

3. **Ignorance:** In this battle for the earth, a lack of knowledge is a very dangerous thing. In Hosea 4:6, we are told that the people of God are destroyed for a lack of knowledge. If you are in a war and you lack information on what weapons are at your disposal, or what the strengths, weaknesses, and tactics of your enemy are, then you are at a very grave disadvantage. Therefore, the devil has sought to keep us ignorant of the tools that we have to enable us to battle successfully.
4. **Religion:** This is a very powerful weapon in the devil's arsenal, and with it he is able to keep most of the church ignorant of its power in the Lord. Now in the most simple terms possible, I would define religion as follows: it is man's futile attempt to interface with the kingdom of God, according to the manner of the flesh, and not according to the spirit. In other words, we bring God down to the level of the natural in our attempts to worship Him. This leads to several grievous errors. For one thing, those who are religious tend to deal with God only from the point of view of the senses. They have to see and touch Him. This, of course, leads to idolatry, where we represent God with the devising of man's hands. Or, if we are not bowing down to an icon, we are trying to be "worthy" of God by neglect and abuse of the body. Neither of these things are useful to Him. Remember, Jesus said that the Father is looking for those who would worship Him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24) In addition, we do not penetrate the heavens, by not tasting, touching, and handling. These are acts of the flesh that in no way indicate the loyalty of the heart towards God. The devil, on the other hand, is quite content for us to waste our time in futile pursuits that do not result in godliness. Religion represents no threat to him at all. Faith in the word of God however, is quite a potent weapon that can be applied by any Christian to keep him at bay and turn aside his attacks.
5. **Bribery:** According to Webster's, bribery is defined as: *the act of paying or receiving a reward for the performance of that which is known to be unjust.* When given the opportunity, the devil is not at all above offering to make it worth your while to violate the statutes of God. He promises great reward for taking the lesser path. Now to the unwary this may seem attractive, since it affords one the opportunity to obtain the things that make for comfort and ease, without all of that messy diligence and righteousness. But, he neglects to tell you that taking that path eventually results in destruction and eternal damnation. This technique is so successful because it awakens in us certain lusts that lay in the heart of all of the unregenerate. Why work for something valuable when you can kill someone and take his or, at the very least, rob him of it? And why treat someone fair in

business dealings, when you can misrepresent the product and receive more in return for what you gave than you were due? In case you were unaware, these three entities are known as murder, robbery, and fraud respectively. These three, and many others are given opportunity to flourish when we listen to the devil who promises advancement and riches at the expense of adherence to what is universally known as right.

A very potent scriptural example of this principle is again found in Luke's account of the temptation of the Lord Jesus by the devil. At one point the devil takes Jesus to a very high mountain and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. He then promises to give Him all that He saw if He would bow down and worship him. Herein lies the act of bribery. Satan offered Jesus a reward or payment in exchange for committing an act, which they both certainly knew, was unlawful. The temptation part lay in the fact that had Jesus taken the offer, He could have received the rulership of the kingdom without enduring the suffering of the cross. Thankfully, He found the reproach of the Father more honorable than the reward of rebellion.

- 6. Self Righteousness:** This is a very clever trick of the devil, and was used to great effectiveness against both David and Job. Basically, the idea of self-righteousness is to consider oneself to be "good" without any independent corroboration from any member of the Godhead. That is to say that such a one looks in the mirror and considers himself to have some sort of intrinsic goodness. This is the type of individual, who, when their actions or motives are scrutinized, respond with, "I'm a good person." Well, this person is not only self-righteous, but they are also deceived, since it was God, who said, "There is none who are righteousness, no, not one." (Rom. 3:10) Again He said; "In my flesh nothing good dwells." (Rom. 7:18) In Job's case, the devil provoked this character flaw in him by heaping affliction on him and his circumstances. In response, he promptly "blamed" God for the mishap, as was evidenced by his assumption, that God, was afflicting him without just cause, since he saw no guiltiness that could be attributed to him. If this were indeed true then God would have been guilty of perverting justice. No, on the contrary Job was guilty of the sin of self-righteousness, said sin having been exposed by the attack of the devil on his circumstances. Left unchecked, this mindset can lead to some extreme positions such as atheism. Why believe in God when you are self-reliant? When you are sufficient in your own sight, then there is no need to look skyward for help. Also, you may succumb to pride, which in this case, is thinking of yourself more highly than you ought to. Falling victim to either of these errors is guaranteed to cause you to end up on the wrong side of the sword come judgment day.

Even the mighty King David was not immune to the subtlety of this particular wile of the devil. During his reign as king in Israel, God had given him great success in defeating his enemies. However, at some point in time David allowed Satan to convince him that he might be deficient in troop strength, thus, he could not continue to be effective in battle. This was a fallacious argument, since it had not previously been a matter of troop strength in determining their ability to defeat their enemies. It was the hand of God upon them that had delivered their

enemies into their hands. However, David's trust in God waned, and he allowed the devil to trick him into numbering the men of Israel. Now, this was not for some sort of general census, but it was to see how potent a force of war could be mustered. This lack of faith angered the Lord so, of course, there was a price to be paid. The end result was the loss of 70,000 of the men of Israel. It would have been prudent for David to continue to look to the Lord for strength and provision. Instead, he relied on his own abilities, which in this case, were presumed to be possibly deficient; otherwise he never would have ordered the census in the first place.

7. **Disguise:** In the natural, the most common use of this technique is to conceal one's true identity, as well as to appear as someone who is either a friend, an ally, or at least innocuous. The devil has adopted this method of deception in an attempt to distract the sons of men from seeking the true kingdom of God. In 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 11:14, we are told that Satan transforms himself into an angel of light. Once he has been accepted as a friend, he is free to lie to the unsuspecting and lead them down a path that leads to destruction. (Gal. 1:8)
8. **Applying the Authority of the Office:** This next item under discussion is very subtle, and yet very important. The devil uses this particular wile to great effectiveness, seeing as how few Christians are aware of it. In our previous discussions of the devil, we stated that he is a cherub, which is to say, a creature of high standing in the economy of God. In Ezekiel 28:14, we find that the Lord's testimony concerning him is that He had established him as the anointed cherub who covers. Although he has rebelled against that commission, and very likely no longer functions in that official capacity, it is clear that he still enjoys the respect that goes along with that office. It would be a mistake to ignore this fact and to approach the devil from a position of arrogance. You will be quickly reminded that you are lower and subject to punishment for your hierarchal shortsightedness. Now, lest you be incredulous here, let me prove this by the Scriptures.

In both of the books of Jude and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, we are given a description of certain men who are corrupt and rebellious. It is said, of such men, that they reject authority and speak evil of *dignitaries*. In Jude v. 9 we are told that not even the archangel Michael, in contending with the devil over the body of Moses, *dared* bring against him a reviling accusation, but appealed to the Lord to rebuke him. Why was Michael so hindered in dealing with the devil? It was because, although the devil was now counted as an enemy of God, he still maintained the glory of his office. It was the office that Michael was giving honor to, so he went up the chain of command in dealing with him. Now, if the archangel in the army of God is diligent to tread so carefully concerning dealing with the devil, how much more should the children of dust be mindful of heavenly things when dealing with the celestial enemies? You see, if we deal with the devil from a point of view outside of what is scripturally lawful, then he is not only under no obligation to acquiesce, but he is very likely to make you pay for your arrogance.

This is why it is absolutely essential to only do battle with him under the banner of the name of the Lord Jesus. For it is He alone, who has triumphed over the devil, and made a spectacle of him openly. Moreover, He has given us the authority to use His name in the war, so that when we speak in that name, it is one and the same as if He, Himself, were speaking. This principle is also beautifully demonstrated in the book of Acts where the seven sons of Sceva tried to cast out a demon in the name of Jesus. They, however, were not authorized to use that name since they were not true believers. Not only were they not obeyed, but they were also severely beaten for their trouble. By the way, who do you think those dignitaries are who were mentioned in the aforementioned books? They are clearly the rebellious sons of God: the celestial creatures that we on the Earth call angels. So remember, never to lose sight of the fact that our power over the forces of darkness comes from faith in the name of Jesus, and not of ourselves. If you attempt to fight against them, and are not mindful of this, they will quickly remind you of your error.

## **9. Spiritualism vs. Spiritism:**

What does it mean to be spiritual? We use this term all of the time, but our understanding of it tends toward the deficient. For example, one may inquire of another, “Are you born again?” Frequently, their response is something on the order of, “I have my spiritual side.” What they usually mean is that they don’t necessarily know what it means to be born again, but they have some kind of belief in an existence outside of the normal human realm. In other words, a world that is outside of the sphere that we live in, one which cannot be measured by the senses.

I would think that a good working definition of “spiritual,” is that which pertains to the non-carnal, but not necessarily to the non-corporeal. How do we apply this practically? We can see that those who make up the realm that we call the spirit world are divided into two opposing camps, which we call light and dark. The two camps are easy to distinguish since they have opposing agendas. As you well know, it is the devil’s aim to stand diametrically opposed to everything that God puts forth, and that constitutes His will for our lives. The enemy will frequently attempt to confuse people by providing them with a substitute code of behavior or even a deceptive foray into the spirit world, which is designed to distract them from a true communion with the Godhead. People are all too readily sucked into this deception because they are very eager to seek after signs as a means of validating the promises of God, rather than simply taking Him at His word. The latter, of course, involves the application of that elusive entity we call faith.

Jesus illustrated this principle when He dealt with the nobleman with the sick son. (John 4:46-54) After the man came and begged Him to come and heal his son, the Lord Jesus responded with the observation that these people would not believe unless they saw signs and wonders. He, nevertheless, healed the man’s son. The misplaced reliance on signs and wonders is again illustrated in John 6:30. As Jesus went about proclaiming His ministry, He was having trouble getting people to believe Him. They said to Him, “What sign will you perform

then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?" And again, in Jerusalem, we see a similar situation (John 2: 23-25) in which, many believed in His name when they saw the signs, which He did. But, we also see that He did not commit Himself to such men because He knew what was in their hearts. The overriding message here is that true faith, does not come from observing signs and wonders, but by a conscious act of ones will to believe the testimony concerning Him. When asked by His disciples, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered them thusly. "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." (John 6:29)

At this point one would ask, "What purpose, then, do signs and wonders serve?" The answer is that they serve the role as advertisement, or as a vehicle to arrest people's attention so that they might give heed to what follows. One must never forget that with God it is all about faith, and that comes from the hearing of the word, and not by the performance of, or the observance of signs and wonders. Now, if we do not understand this fact, and have a similar mind to the Pharisees, we will be susceptible to the deception of the devil. For, he is the author of all manner of lying signs and wonders, and doctrines of demons. (2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 2:9, 1<sup>st</sup> Tim 4:1) If one were to fall victim to this trap, they would be immersed into what I have called "spiritism."

**Spiritism:** Also pertaining to the non-carnal and not necessarily non-corporeal, spiritism is the process by which one is carried away from the truth by pursuing what turns out to be lying signs and wonders. As it turns out, this is the method by which the devil succeeds in deceiving the whole world during the time of the Antichrist. People will be carried away into error because they will believe the lie, because it is evidenced by signs and not by the truth of the word. Apparently it is much easier for people to believe the sign than it is to exercise true faith. Spiritism is characterized by inordinate attention being paid to seeking the supernatural. When this happens, the devil is more than happy to accommodate you. However, since there is no truth in him, the only thing that his manifestation can bring is a lie. Moreover, since he has succeeded in making most people doubt that he exists, they naturally assume that any supernatural manifestation is of God. When this deception has reached its full flower, it results in such things as divination, demonic manifestations, false prophets and the like.

One might also ask, "What then constitutes true spirituality?" The Bible tells us in Romans 8:1 that, "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the spirit." Now what does this mean, to walk according to the spirit? When we have become born again we are renewed in the inner man, the hidden man of the heart. We no longer serve the lusts of the flesh. So then, being "spiritual" is simply the act of being obedient to the word of God. Now, you can see why it so easy for people to be carried away into spiritism. It is easier to put one's faith in lying signs and wonders, than it is to crucify the flesh. The rest of Romans Chapter 8 is quite informative on just what the mind of the Lord is on this matter. The theme highlights the contrast between living according to the spirit vs. living in the flesh. It is noteworthy, that those who live in the flesh are considered to be apart from the will of God and remain subject to death. But those who put to death the deeds of the flesh are

acceptable to Him. Moreover, we are not left to endure this struggle without divine help, for He sends us His Holy Spirit to help us in our weaknesses. So then, the role of the Holy Spirit is to assist us in denying the flesh the pleasures of sin, so that we may walk in obedience to the commands of God, and thusly, receive the right to be called the children of the Most High.

## **VI: Battle Strategies for Fighting the Devil**

As in any war, there are both defensive and offensive blueprints to be considered. Once you know as much about your enemy as possible, the wise soldier then figures out how to first, defend his position so as to escape harm. Then he develops an attack strategy designed to inflict maximum damage on the enemy. These tried and true techniques are also valid in this spiritual war that we, as Christians, are fighting. First, I will discuss the defense mechanisms at our disposal, and then we will cover the most effective way to deal out offensive blows to the devil's head and body.

**A. Defense:** The most important defensive action is to put on the whole armor of God. The Bible tells us, in Ephesians 6:11, that in so doing, we will be able to stand against all of the wiles of the devil. Let us now consider each piece of this armor on an individual basis.

- **Truth:** is the act of indicating, by word and deed, an accurate reflection of the way things are. This attribute is not part of the devil's character. So then, allowing lies to prosper within your sphere will put you in his camp, allowing him to have access to you with evil intent. If your life embraces the truth, you are unassailable, since the truth stands on its own and cannot be successfully contended against. Remember, that the Lord Jesus told us that the devil is a liar and the father of lies, and there is no truth in him. Therefore, it is not possible to ward him off by engaging in behavior that gives him license to be up close and personal with you.
- **Righteousness:** The state of righteousness is the condition of having been declared by God to be in right standing with Him. This state is subsequent to the born again experience. If we are not truly born again, then we are not in favor with the Father, and therefore have no legal right to the use of the name of Jesus. Based on what I said in the previous section about the authority of the devil, it would not be good for one to be found defenseless when facing off against the devil. In other words, if God has not taken up your cause, and He won't unless you belong to Him through Christ Jesus, you would be at a severe disadvantage in a wrestling match with Satan. It is sort of like bringing a knife to gunfight.
- **The Preparation of the Gospel of Peace:** This is stating that one should have at their disposal, all of the attributes and benefits that come from the fruit of salvation. There is much more to our relationship with the Lord Jesus than merely being saved from fiery indignation. In Him, we have the opportunity for peace and joy in our lives that no man, or angel for that matter, can rob from us. We should live healthy and worry-free lives.

These things are very hard for the devil to exploit, since his mandate is to operate within the arena of lack, sorrow, sickness and despair. If we don't go there, he can't afflict us.

- **Faith:** Without it, it is impossible to please God. It's a pretty safe bet then, that you will not be successful in an encounter with the devil. As a matter of fact, this area concerning faith is heavily targeted by the devil in his attempts to undermine us. Since it is true that at no time have we seen God, we must believe that He is, in order to trust Him to be there for us. We must also be thoroughly convinced that Jesus has indeed defeated Satan, and that he has been stripped of his ability to harm us in a capricious manner. All of this requires faith on our part, which is an abiding inward conviction of the truth of the promises made to us in the Bible. Moreover, we evidence our belief in these truths by speaking and acting like they are so, even though they are not necessarily immediately manifested to the sense realm.
- **Salvation:** In a similar manner to the gospel of peace, having oneself covered in the blood of Jesus, is a very good start in fending off attacks from the wicked one. The concept is as follows: If you are not born again, you belong to the devil's kingdom by default. He then has a right to afflict you at any time, since you are his disciple. It would do little good to protest, since he is a very cruel taskmaster. Grace and mercy are not in his vocabulary. So then, in order to prevail, you must be on the team of the One who has defeated him, and made an open show of him. Only then are you entitled to receive help from the Lord in time of need.
- **The Word of God:** Called the "sword of the Spirit," the word does double duty as both a defensive and offensive weapon. On the defensive side, there is no attack from the devil for which the Scriptures have not provided a defense. For example, suppose you are attacked in your body with sickness. The word declares that, "*Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we having died to sins, might live for righteousness, by whose stripes you were healed.*" (1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 2:24) If we are willing to believe such promises as this, and to speak and act like they are true, (in other words, have faith) then we can fully expect to see the word come to pass in our lives to the glory of God. Now you understand the command of the Lord to fight the good fight of faith. The devil knows that knowledge of, and faith in the word of God, is a powerful weapon that can be used to great effectiveness against him. He therefore first seeks to keep the children of God ignorant of the word if he can, and absent that, he will settle for encouraging you to doubt it.

Now, concerning the offensive nature of the word of God, we can use it in a preemptive way to prevent the devil from launching any attacks in the first place. By meditating on, and practicing the word of God, we fill our lives with His glory, and therefore, leave no place in us for exploitation. In other words, don't wait for an attack to start to apply the Scriptures, but confess them and live like they are so, day-by-day. In this way our minds are renewed in the word, and no place is left for doubt, which could serve

as a doorway for possible attacks. Remember always that His word is spirit and life, and they are useful for every situation in which you might find yourself.

**B. Give No Place:** In Ephesians 4:27, we are admonished to, among other things, give no place to the devil. This Scripture tells us something very powerful. The devil does not automatically have a place in us, but can only work against us when we provide the opportunity. If we refuse to do so, his only option is to attack from afar, and then only by means of a lie. This is far less effective than being able to convict us with our own shortcomings. This then begs the question, “How does one give place to the devil?” Every time we act contrary to the word of God, the devil has access to bring to pass all of the things that the word has said would occur as consequences for disobedience. This concept is elegant in its simplicity. The Lord has spelled out for us the code of behavior that He expects us to follow. He has also warned of the consequences of disobedience. The devil waits in the wings for the opportunity to be the agent of those consequences. This process works whether or not we know what the will of God is. That is why we are warned against living in ignorance, and why He has provided adequate instruction for those who would seek it with all of their hearts. So then, when we lie, cheat and steal, the adversary has the right to attack us in the manner prescribed in the Scriptures, which is reserved for those who commit evil. Now, you can understand why the Lord said, that “obedience is better than sacrifice.”

**C. Test the Spirits:** Now that we have a more thorough understanding of the spirit world, we know that not everyone who speaks from there is a friend. Remember I stated that the devil is a liar and a deceiver. Moreover, he is not above posing as a representative of the kingdom of light. So you can never just accept something from any source, without first testing it to see if it is indeed from the Lord. The Bible calls this procedure, “testing the spirits.” (1<sup>st</sup> John 4:1) So what is this concept of testing the spirits? Basically, it is the process by which we determine the intent behind any communication. Is it a statement of truth designed to bring us to the truth of a matter? Or, is it a lie intended to distract us, and to ultimately separate us from the fellowship of the Father through Christ Jesus? In order for us to test the spirit, we must first have the answer key. This key is, knowledge of the word of truth, namely the Scriptures. No matter who is doing the speaking, whether terrestrial or celestial, if what they are saying is to be accepted as helpful, then it must conform to what has already been given by God, and validated by the Holy Spirit.

The admonition in 1<sup>st</sup> John contains a powerful example as to how this process works. We are told not to believe every spirit, but to test them. Why? It is because there are those who speak falsely, both terrestrial and celestial. If we blindly accept what is said, especially if it is from a celestial source, we run the risk of being led astray from the kingdom. If what they are saying is in agreement with the truth, as given in the Scriptures, then we may conclude

that the intent of the one speaking, is to edify in the ways of righteousness, and that they are of God. If, however, what they say is contrary to the word, then we may safely assume that they are out to deceive us and to cause us harm. In the context of this example, agreeing that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is certainly consistent with the testimony of the Godhead. Those who confess this can be relied upon to have benevolent intentions toward the listener. If on the other hand, the one who speaks denies the deity of the Lord Jesus, then they have belied the witness of the Godhead, and have shown themselves to be a liar and of the spirit of the Antichrist. Remember; do not be fooled, especially by supernatural acts. The devil is of the celestial realm, and is capable of performing lying signs and wonders. The way to judge is to know that no one performing any kind of sign or wonder by the power of the Holy Spirit will soon thereafter call Jesus accursed. Every legitimate witness from the celestial realm is in agreement that Jesus is Lord.

**D: The Body of Christ:** The last weapon in your arsenal to consider, is the most important of all. We must realize that we serve a unique role in the kingdom of God by virtue of a process known as identification. The Lord Jesus was sent to earth primarily to defeat the devil. This He did in the most ignominious way, by becoming the very thing that He had been sent to conquer, namely sin. Now, since He had no intrinsic sin of His own, He “borrowed” ours. Once filled up with our iniquity, He became subject to judgment. In this, of course, the devil was happy to oblige. When Jesus received the wages of sin, which was death, justice was satisfied, or was it? It did not take justice long (three days and three nights) to figure out that it had the wrong man. For in reviewing the records, as it were, it was determined that there had been no wrongdoing committed by this man, but He had been wrongly punished for the crimes of another. At this point, death lost its claim on Him, so it could not hold Him. But now there was an even bigger problem. Not only had justice been denied the guilty, it now had to contend with the cries of the innocent blood that had been spilled in the wrongful death of Jesus. In order to balance the scales, the innocent blood of the Lamb was matched up with the sins of mankind, thus simultaneously providing the requital for the blood, as well as a propitiation for our sins. So, the blood having been “spent” to pay for our sin was now quiet, and our debt to justice was now squared.

However, all was still not quite balanced, for there was still the matter of the “murder” of Christ Jesus, an act for which the devil was left holding the bag. You see one of the things that he “inherited” in mankind’s fall from grace was the power of death. (Heb. 2:14) In essence, we supplied the sin, which was the sting, and the devil obliged with the bee, which was the death. Up until Christ Jesus, everyone who felt the sting of death had it coming, as it were, because all had sinned. The devil’s carnage among mankind was unassailable. However, in the case of the Lord Jesus, the devil had no right to “sting” Him, since He had no relationship with sin. Thus, the death of Jesus was an unlawful act by the ruler of this age, which caused him to be subject to

irrevocable judgment. In addition, it set in motion the aforementioned sequence of events that resulted in the restoration of mankind to right standing with God. Herein lies the revelation of the great mystery of the gospel. The Bible tells us that, if the rulers of this age had known the mind of God, and the hidden wisdom of the ages, they would never have killed Jesus. (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 2:6-8) But the adversary was blinded by his pride and did not discern the plan of God, so he fell victim to the Father's plan, to both punish the celestial hosts who had gone astray, and to gather from the dust of the Earth, many sons to Himself, to which He could be their Father.

There is one more twist to this story that I think will demonstrate the magnificent elegance of the Father's plan. We know that this plan of punishment and salvation was hatched in the mind of God from before the foundation of the earth. Moreover, the unlawful acts of the devil could not have been carried out without the cooperation, of God. In any court in the universe, this would be considered to be a conspiracy to commit murder. So, it would seem that the devil might have a legitimate argument to have the Father added to the indictment as a co-conspirator. This would have indeed been the case, except for one thing. In order to have a murder you must "*habeas-the-corpus*," which is to say, to have the body. It is rather difficult to sustain a murder charge when there is no body.

Now you understand the genius of the resurrection. Not only did it provide for us a mechanism to escape judgment, but it also precluded any possible indictment against the Father as a co-conspirator in murder. For it was necessary for Jesus to remain in hell long enough for the blood to be heard, but not so long as to cause corruption of His body, or to allow jeopardy to attach to the Father. "Why wasn't the devil able to use the same "loop-hole," you ask? Ah, good question, the answer to which explains the reason for the three days and three nights that the Lord spent in the prison of Hades. The primary act that set in motion the events just elucidated was the unlawful shedding of the blood of the Lord Jesus. Now since the life is in the blood, when the blood stops flowing the life is gone. If the spiller of the blood had no right to spill it, then such a one is guilty of murder. The main witness is the cry of the blood itself. It has been previously established that the spilling of the blood of Jesus was by the hand of the devil, and that he compounded his crime by imprisoning the soul of the Righteous One. These two facts were enough for justice to establish the guilt of the devil. However, it was the power of the eternal Father who restored the Lord Jesus to His body, and then elevated Him to a position of prominence within His kingdom, a place that no one but He had ever previously enjoyed. By so doing, the Father separated Himself from the conspiracy, leaving the guilt to be shared amongst the devil and his disciples, both celestial and terrestrial. It is evident that this truth remains; by the restoration of His soul to His body, the Lord God raised Jesus from the dead, thus exempting Himself from guilt. But, it was by the hand of the devil that the blood was shed, and the restoration of the soul to the body, does not silence the witness of the blood.

At this time you might be wondering, “What does all this have to do with our ability to fend off the attacks of the devil?” It has to do with a process that I will call **identification**. In order to reap the benefit of the blood of Jesus, we must receive it by faith. The faith that saves is demonstrated in accepting the truth of the story that I have just laid out; namely, that Christ Jesus died a death, not for Himself, but for us. On the third day God raised Him from the dead. In this, God sees us as He sees Jesus. We become inseparable from Him. In other words, whatever benefit has accrued to Him from His obedience, has also been credited to us who are identified with Him. So then, when God saw Him die, He saw us die. And when God raised Him up, He raised us up. When He sat down at the right hand of power, we sat down at the same right hand. When powers and authorities became subject to Him, they also became subject to us in Him. (Col. 2:11-15, 3:1-4, Mark 6:7, Luke 10:19) That is why He could say of the believers, that in His name we would cast out demons. In this context, the process of identification can be summed up thusly. Because Jesus has overcome the enemy, and been given a place of preeminence within the kingdom of God, we believers in His name, are also overcomers, having been made more than conquerors. The name of Jesus is a powerful weapon indeed in the fight against the devil.

## **Conclusion**

We have now explored the kingdom of the devil. We have gained much insight into how his organization is run, and the tactics that he employs in his efforts to thwart the plans of God. In addition the careful reader should now have a thorough understanding of how to combat him, and to keep him from winning victory in the battle for your faith. After diligent study, the children of God should take heart in the fact that they don't have to be unwitting victims of the devil. He has no right to arbitrarily attack you, but he can only do so when given license to by our disobedience or ignorance. The preceding teaching has taken care of the ignorance part. Now, the obedience part is up to you. The Lord weighs in on this matter with this strong admonition: “Obedience is better than sacrifice.” It would serve the church well to remember that they are in a war, but it is a war in which the outcome has been predetermined, and we are on the winning side. This should make us bold in our faith, and determined in our resolve to be found useful by God in His plan, to show Himself mighty and to magnify the glory of His name throughout all of creation. Happy is the Christian who has his part in the mystery of the gospel.

May all glory abound to the name of Jesus, as His kingdom shall surely endure forever, and that He, as well as we, should abide in the love of the Almighty, who is the Father of us all. Amen.