

# The Nature of Evil

Bro Jim Dillingham

This subject is frequently a great stumblingblock to understanding God's truth. We human beings can accept incredibly illogical issues if the truth of the matter is emotionally unacceptable. Sometimes we prefer the deceptive comfort of ignorance to suffering the painful truth of reality. It is a feature of our nature. The true nature of evil is a difficult and humbling realization to accept and digest. God's truth requires a shifting of the source of evil from an imagination generated exterior focus to a Bible defined interior focus... from comfortably outside ourselves to uncomfortably within ourselves, no matter who we are.

The historically popular concept of the nature of evil requires us to understand that immortality is not a clean state, that immortal beings have the capacity to sin. The common Christian understanding goes that God either was unaware, incapable or didn't care to prevent a rebellion among his immortal angels. Led by a former favored angel supposedly named Lucifer a number of angels tried to assume control of heaven and overthrow God. God was either unaware of this pending rebellion, or perhaps ambivalent or simply chose to avoid preventing this 'war'. This non-scripturally supported story finds these sinning immortal angels being cast out of heaven into a subterranean domain referred to as hell, where they were allowed to forever torture the beings that God created but didn't live up to his minimum standards.

It seems logical to the human mind that since there is a good God that there should be an evil god. That presumption accommodates our sense of natural balance. It is also quite pleasant to presume that we are not really the problem, that temptation is promoted by an exterior, malevolent source. We are then free to believe that we only fail because God failed in controlling his angels. This thought process shifts the primary blame for our failings from ourselves to our Creator and defines immortal nature as being just as unclean and sin projecting as mortal nature.

The foundation premise for this understanding is utterly impossible. In fact, that which is immortal does not possess the capacity to sin. The divine nature is a 'clean' state, incapable of sin. This was the issue Adam and Eve had to choose between when the serpent offered opposing testimony to God in the Garden of Eden. God declared that their disobedience (sin) would mean their death. The serpent declared that they could sin without dying (*Thou shalt not surely die*) and that if they disagreed with their Creator that they could actually become like Him (*For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods*).

## **Sin (The Contradiction of the Creator's Righteousness) Must Die**

One way of scripturally proving this understanding that any being that sins must die is Paul's declaration in Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*. We are specifically told that the wages of sin is death. Therefore if someone sins, they must die. That is the payment for sin, by God's requirement. However, that which is immortal cannot die, by very definition. Jesus Christ tells us that angels cannot die (Luke 20:36 *Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels*). The apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, tells us that if something sins, it must die. Since immortal angels cannot die, they therefore cannot sin. If they did sin, they would have to die, which angels are not capable of doing (according to the testimony of the Son of God). The equation is inviolable. That which is immortal cannot sin. Therefore immortal angels cannot sin. There-

fore there could not have been an angel that turned rogue and rebelled against God. Whatever imagined and twisted scriptural evidence is offered to support this impossible conclusion must be improperly understood. As we examine the true nature of evil, as it is presented in the Bible, these misunderstandings will become very apparent.

### Where Does Temptation Originate?

We fail our Heavenly Father when we sin. We sin because we are tempted. What is the process of temptation? Is it something that is generated from within us or is it an outside influence that introduces the consideration of ungodly behaviour into our minds? One of the bedrock truths of God's word is that temptation comes from within us and we have no one to blame but ourselves for our failures. It is human nature to blame others for our failures. The concept of an exterior source of temptation is an exercise in blame shifting, just as it has been from the very beginning. When confronted for breaking the one law in the Garden of Eden, Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent. Now popular Christianity tries to blame one of God's angels that our Creator supposedly failed to properly manage. In fact, temptation and wickedness emanate from within us without any exterior invitation

**James 1:14-15** *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: <sup>14</sup>But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. <sup>15</sup>Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

James presents exclusively two possible sources for temptation... God or ourselves. We are specifically told we can blame no one but ourselves. Temptation is generated by our own lust. Lust produces sin which brings death. Once again we see the inviolable rule that sin brings death, therefore an immortal, incapable of death, cannot sin. Temptation issues from within us, not from outside ourselves.

**Mark 7:17-23** *And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.*

What comes **into** a person from the outside cannot defile him. This statement by Jesus eliminates any possibility of an exterior source that we can legitimately blame for our failures. It is man's heart that produces wickedness. Sin and wickedness are generated from within us. It is not introduced into us from an outside source.

**Jeremiah 17:9** *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?* Man's heart is the most deceitful thing in creation. Absolutely nothing is more deceitful than our own hearts, our own instinctive thought process. No supposedly fallen angel can compare with the capacity of the human heart in matters of deception and wickedness. It is unfortunate that Hollywood & politicians and religious leaders repeatedly tells us we can never go wrong if we listen to our heart, since God tells us we stand the greatest chance of being deceived if we listen to our heart. It is the heart that generates wickedness without any priming from an outside source. It is the heart, the instinctive thought process that must be restrained by divine thoughts and principles in order to please our Creator and enjoy His favor. The heart must be circumcised with the two edged sword of the word of God before we can understand divine truths.

**1 John 2:16** *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father; but is of the world.*

The three inclusive categories of temptation are all "of the world." It is interesting to note that they are not attributed to a fallen angel or a realm of wickedness, but our own society. All avenues of sin are included in these three categories and they are all "of the world."

**Galatians 5:17-21** *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

We war against our own fleshly impulses, not a rebellious angel. It is interesting to note that not once in all of scripture are we warned to beware the temptations of a rebellious immortal angel., yet we are repeatedly warned against our own fleshly impulses issuing exclusively from within us.

**Romans 7:8** *But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. Paul defines the sin that is within him to be the instigator of failure before God. It is sin, from within, that is the problem.*

**Verse 11:** *For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Again, Paul presents sin that was actively working within him, deceiving him and thereby causing death, as the wages of sin is death.*

**Verses 14-24** *For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. <sup>15</sup>For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; [What Paul would mentally prefer not to do is what he actually does] but what I hate, that do I. <sup>16</sup>If then I do that which I would not [If I do the things I don't really want to do], I consent unto the law that it is good [We can't condemn the law of Moses simply because we can't perform it perfectly]. <sup>17</sup>Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. [Again, it is sin dwelling within Paul that is the reason Paul did the things he knew weren't right] <sup>18</sup>For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: [Mankind is not inherently good. By nature the flesh is unclean, because it is the manufacturing plant for sin] for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. [Paul had every good intention, but could not find a way to live perfectly] <sup>19</sup>For the good that I would I do not: [The good deeds Paul intended to perform, he did not] but the evil which I would not, that I do [The evil things he had no intention of doing is what he sometimes ended up doing]. <sup>20</sup>Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. [Sin, working within Paul, is what drove him to do the things he didn't want to do and to prevent him from doing the things he wanted to do] <sup>21</sup>I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. <sup>22</sup>For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: <sup>23</sup>But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. [This law of sin, which is in our members, is what prevents us from doing the right things and encourages us to do the wrong things. It is not an outside influence, but interior. It is sin that produces sin. Human nature is the manufacturing plant for sinful behaviour.] <sup>24</sup>O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? <sup>25</sup>I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. We can be redeemed from this wretched state of possessing a sin-producing nature. Jesus Christ broke the power of sin in his flesh when his transgressions body was executed on the cross. It was this sin within the flesh (the producer of sin) that was*

executed on the cross.

**Romans 8:1-3** *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. <sup>2</sup>For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup>For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.*

The apostle Paul concludes that it is sin that makes him sin. Sin is both the cause and the effect. Paul defines this as "another law in his members." The apostle Paul saw his greatest enemy as the sin issuing from within him, from his own deceitful heart. These references show that no outside source needs to introduce sinful thoughts into us. They are automatically generated from within. It is our responsibility to fight against our own impulses and instincts issuing from our deceitful heart.

What must be understood is that we were not created this way. Our Creator defines every aspect of His creation, at the end of the six days of His creative activity, as being *very good*. Man's inherent inclination to sinful behavior could not fit within a divine approval of *very good*. However, earth's caretaker for whom all this had been prepared, still had to prove his loyalty and compliance with his Creator's principles. Adam had to be tested, but did not have the capacity to generate unbidden temptation to evil from within himself. The exterior temptation source of the serpent provided an opposing proposition to divine truth. This exterior temptation source became internalized when Adam and Eve chose the serpent's testimony of the absence of death for sin above the testimony of their Heavenly Father. Therefore, from this time forward the serpent became a scriptural symbol of this internalized temptation motivation within the heart of man. The Creator did not make man with this sin preference. Our ancestors chose that. Now it is our responsibility to recognize that, refuse it and join our Messiah in his crucifixion of that sin power.

### What is Sin?

One of the greatest stumblingblocks in determining Bible truths is the human tendency to oversimplify. We want things in tight little capsules, acronyms, catch phrases and sound bites. However, God does not express Himself in simple terms. He veils Himself and His principles in the things He has created, in rituals, laws, institutions, dreams, visions, buildings, imagery and features of creation. We should recognize and avoid the instinctive tendency to oversimplify. This is the case with the definition of sin.

In attempting to define sin, frequently Bible students refer to 1 John 3:4 ... *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.* We are specifically told that sin is the transgression of the law. We should note, however, that the term "only" does not appear anywhere in this statement. What the text does **not** say is that sin is **only** the transgression of the law. Unfortunately some trip over this verse with an emphasis suggesting that this definition is exclusive. That conclusion is also easily dismissed with the understanding that sometimes the mere contemplation of wickedness (without the actual performance of transgressing the law) may qualify as sin.

**Proverbs 24:9** *The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men.*

**Matt. 5:27-28** *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

This is why we are exhorted to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Even the very absence of activity can qualify as sin.

**James 4:17** *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

This expression is certainly outside the range of the transgression of the law, yet still qualifies as sin. Jesus makes it quite clear that this absence of good activity is one of the terms of our final judgment. Jesus offers three judgment parables in Matthew 25 that all present this understanding of eternal rejection on the basis of the absence of activity, not the presence of specific transgressions of the law. The first parable sees the rejection of five unwise wedding attendants due to the absence of preparation for the coming of the bridegroom. The second parable records the rejection of the lazy servant for doing nothing with the talent of value given him except hiding it in the ground. The third parable presents the rejected goats to the left of the judge on the basis of the absence of their helpful support to the brethren of Christ (the body of believers). All three judgment rejection scenarios are based on the absence of the right behavior, not the presence of the wrong behavior.

These examples demonstrate that we are not free to presume that the definition of sin is exclusively the transgression of the law. In fact, sin cannot be defined within comfortable, tight little borders. There is even the situation where a specific act is sinful for one person yet the same act is not sinful for another. One of the places this is identified was in the issue of eating meat that had been dedicated to a pagan idol, among the first century Christians. The Apostle Paul explains that nothing is inherently unclean (physically) and divinely defiling unless our conscience condemns us for it. In the issue of eating meat that had been dedicated to a pagan idol Paul makes this statement: *I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean (Romans 14:14)*. In some issues sin is determined simply by how we mentally consider the issue. At the end of the matter Paul makes this concluding statement: *And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23)*. Eating meat dedicated to a pagan idol qualified as sin to those whose conscience condemned them but did not qualify as sin to those who understood that nothing is inherently unclean of itself. This is just an introduction to the understanding that the definition of sin is not easily encapsulated. As stated in our introduction, oversimplification of divine principles is the greatest tripping point for the human heart in pursuing the absolute truths of the Bible.

### **Human Nature is a Naturally Unclean State from Birth**

We determined that sin originates from within us. Human nature produces sin. The Apostle Paul expressed this as sin having caused him to sin (Romans 7). Since sin issues from within human nature ever since the curse of sin and death was inflicted upon us in Eden, this would make human nature an unclean state at birth. A child is, in one sense, a new manufacturing facility for sin. This principle is clearly reflected in the rituals of the law that God gave to Moses. God required that every time a child was born a sin offering had to be given. All that was required was an inexpensive bird for the sin offering, as opposed to the more expensive lamb for the burnt offering. However, in all cases a sin offering had to be offered to God for giving birth to a child. Yet having children is certainly not a sin. God commanded Adam & Eve to be fruitful and replenish the earth. God commanded mankind to have children, therefore it certainly cannot be a sin to have children. Yet God demanded this guilt-free sin offering to be presented whenever a child was born. In fact, there was even a sin offering given by Mary for having given birth to God's son

**Luke 2:22-24** *And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.*

This is a reference to the law detailed in **Lev. 12:6-8**

*And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtledove, for a sin offering, unto the*

*door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest: Who shall offer it before the LORD, and make an atonement for her; and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This is the law for her that hath born a male or a female. And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and **the other for a sin offering**: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.*

Even the Son of God had to have a sin offering performed for his birth, as he was born with the same predisposition to sin that was part of his mother's nature. He simply never once performed a sin. Therefore he was the perfect sacrifice to put to death the root cause of sin, human nature... unshielded by any personal sins deserving death. He attacked the cause of sin... sin in the flesh, which was within him at birth by the cursed nature he inherited from his mother. After all, scripture makes it clear that we cannot take a clean thing from an unclean (**Job 14:4**). There is no guilt ever associated with this category of sin. We cannot inherit guilt, just the cursed physical nature that has a predisposition to produce contradictions to the Creator's righteousness. It is the very fact that Jesus possessed our cursed, sin producing nature that initially qualified him to be the ultimate sacrifice for sin. Sin, in its productive capacity, had to be present but never exercised even once, in order to be legitimately destroyed in the body of Jesus on the cross. If the only sin in Jesus at his crucifixion were sins of others superficially added to him then he would have accomplished absolutely nothing. That sacrifice would have been no different than all the substitute sacrifices under the law of Moses where the sinner put his hands on the head of the condemned animal, symbolically transferring their sin(s) to the animal and then personally killing the animal. Those sacrifices were not truly effective, having to be constantly repeated. If Christ's sacrifice were no different, simply substitutionary in nature, the power of sin would never have been directly executed. Hebrews comments on this issue explaining that sin was put away by the sacrifice of Jesus personally and that the next time Jesus comes he arrives without sin.

**Hebrews 9:26-28** *For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall **he appear the second time without sin** unto salvation.*

The only sin Jesus ever had was the guilt-free sin he was born with, the production capacity for divine error that was part of his nature. This is referred to in scripture sometimes as simply "sin" and sometimes as "sin in the flesh." It is crucial to understand this definition of sin if we are ever going to understand the nature of evil as it is presented in scripture. This principle of human nature being defined as sin in its role of production capacity is evident in a number of divine rituals commanded by God to his children. There were several divine rituals for sin where there had been no transgression of the law whatsoever. No personal sinfulness had been practiced and yet God demanded a sin offering. In fact, just as there were six categories of **guilty** sin offerings (Leviticus 4 & 5), there were also six categories of sin offerings for which **no guilt** whatsoever was assigned (touching the dead - Lev. 19:9,17; bodily issue recovery - Lev. 15:15; leprosy recovery - Lev. 14:19; giving birth to a child Lev. 12:6; the dedication of the bronze sacrificial altar - Ex. 29:36-37; and the annual atonement for the Tabernacle and everything associated with it - Lev. 16:20,33). Just as there were six guilt bearing sin offerings and six guiltless sin offerings, so the golden ark of the covenant had to have its exterior six surfaces covered in gold and its interior six surfaces covered in gold... which is a perfect picture of the principle of atonement.

### **The Red Heifer Sin Offering Where There Had Been No Personal Sin**

A red heifer was required for a one time sacrifice for cleansing from the defilement of death. This animal sacrifice is obviously representative of the sacrifice and victory of the Messiah, as the ashes of this animal cleansed a person from the defilement of death. It is the death of the Messiah that cleanses believers

who hope to be free from the constraints of death. Curiously, God demanded a very specific animal to represent his son.

**Num 19:2** *This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke.*

The animal had to be a female, yet the Messiah would be a male. The sacrificial animal had to have no outward blemish, surely reflecting the fact that Christ would have no spiritual sin blemishes at his death. Oddly the animal had to have red skin. Red is undeniably and powerfully associated with sin by God (ie. **Isaiah 1:18** *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool;* the red dragon enemy of God's people in Revelation 12; the scarlet beast of Rev. 17; the fact that blood is red and blood is exclusively associated with our sin-cursed nature, having no part in immortal nature 1 Cor 15:50). The other significant issue (in this consideration) is that this red heifer was a sin sacrifice (Numbers 19:9,17). This is another oddity that must be addressed in our pursuit of an understanding of the nature of evil.

When a person came in physical contact with a dead body they became ritually unclean, according to the laws of the Kingdom of Heaven mandated at Sinai. There were expelled from the community for a minimum of seven days. If they submitted to the cleansing ritual on the third and seventh days with the ashes of the red heifer they could rejoin God's community of believers. The odd issue is that it was not a transgression of the law to come in physical contact with the dead (with certain exceptions for the priesthood and the nazirite). The High Priest and any man or woman with a nazirite vow were never allowed to touch any dead body. The priests were divinely accommodated but only permitted to touch their dead father, mother, brother or unmarried sister. Everyone else could touch the dead without fear of breaking God's commandments. In fact they were commanded to bury by nightfall those who had been hung (Deuteronomy 21:23), thereby being divinely required to touch the dead. However they were not exempt from participating in the sin offering of the ashes of the red heifer. There would have been no personal sin for which anyone was assigned any level of guilt. In fact they had righteously performed God's command to bury one hung before nightfall. Yet cleansing from the defilement of touching the dead is defined by God as participating in an offering for sin. This also tells us there is more to sin than simply transgression of the law. This tells us that death is the evidence of the presence of sin. It was a **sin** offering because they had touched the dead and death is the result of sin.... *the wages of sin is death*. This offering underscored the principle of the sin producing nature of man that is bound to death. It is a nature and a defilement we need to be saved from. The antitypical red heifer (Jesus Christ) will save us from the physical defilement of sin, which is death.



### **The Red-skinned Female**

Therefore we return to the question as to why this red heifer reflection of the Messiah had to be a female and why it had to have sin-red skin. The only sin that Jesus ever possessed was his guiltless sin producing nature, that which promotes transgression of the law and vile thoughts and abstinence of righteous behaviour. Jesus inherited that sinful nature from his mother, which is why the animal had to be female... the source. The skin had to be red to reflect the presence of sin producing human nature, while there could be no blemish indicating the complete absence of any sinful activity. Confirming this understanding is the fact that this animal could never have served under a yoke, as the Messiah could never be the servant of sin in even a single deed. If we try to remove the understanding of sin being both the guiltless producing factor and the guilty product itself then the details of the red heifer being a sin sacrifice remain a mystery. 'Mystery' is the common excuse of those who promote scriptural error that is not symmetrically perfect throughout the Bible.



If we choose to completely separate our Messiah from this defiled nature category of sin (for which there is no guilt ever assigned) then we have to either explain why God did not demand this heifer to be an albino. Separating our Messiah from a personal bearing of sin is a contradiction to the requirement for the heifer to be red-fleshed. That heifer's red flesh projects a perfect understanding of the presence of the principle of sin in the flesh referenced repeatedly in the New Testament. If we wish to maintain that Jesus was an immortal being (God or Angel) disguised as a human being, then that heifer should have been an albino that was painted red... not naturally red. The same would be true if we insist that the only category of sin is transgressional sin for which guilt is imposed. Those who promote this unGodly concept of the nature of evil simply ignore that divine requirement of red flesh, rather than trying to explain the contradiction to their heart generated distortion.

### Furniture Atonement

Another divine ritual that validates the understanding of our sin producing nature (the interior source of temptation as opposed to the exterior source of an impossibly wicked immortal angel) is the dedication of the bronze altar.

**Exodus 29:36-37** *And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin offering for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it. Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy.*

God commanded that the bronze altar, upon which the four categories of blood offerings as well as the wine and grain offerings would be burned, had to have a sin offering made on its behalf in order to make atonement for this bronze artifact before it could be used for the sacrifices of God's covenant people. The oddity is that metal does not have the capacity to sin and yet God requires a sin offering on behalf of this guiltless bronze altar. Why would metal furniture need atonement? The answer is that God communicates in shadows and visions and dark sayings. This pattern offers an avenue for greater understanding for those who circumcise the heart but also potential delusional confirmation for those who prefer the instinctive impressions of the human heart. Shadows of divine principles are being projected within this ritual for those with seeing eyes and hearing ears... so that they will "get more" as Jesus told his disciples (Matthew 13:12-13). Those who "have not" will suffer the loss of what they did have... on the basis of the shadowy patterns of divine teaching.



The symbolic definition of this altar is simple as scripture interprets that shadow for us.

**Hebrews 13:10-11** *We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.*

This verse compares the differences between the baptized faithful of the Ecclesial Age and the priesthood of the Mosaic Age. The Mosaic priests could not eat from that bronze altar when the blood of the sin offering was taken into God's sanctuary (Leviticus 6:30). When the blood of the sin offering did not go into the Tabernacle then portions of the sin offerings were theirs to eat. Yet in the Ecclesial Age the faithful eat of the altar where the blood of the sin offering (Jesus Christ) entered God's sanctuary (heaven). We have a better altar than the priests of the Mosaic age. Our altar is Jesus Christ. True believers eat of that sin offering when we partake of his flesh and blood through the bread and wine memorials.

The bronze altar of the Mosaic Age shadowed the greater altar of the Ecclesial Age, Jesus Christ. This relationship is key to understanding why God demanded that the bronze altar had to have a sin offering



for its atonement before it could ever be used for the believers. It is because Jesus first had to sacrifice for the sin within him (sin producing human nature for which one bears no guilt whatsoever) before he could be effective to cover the sins of the believers for whom he was dying. This is the sin he inherited from his mother but he never submitted to, because that would have generated guilty sin which would have invalidated his sacrificial death. Jesus needed to be saved from the nature of evil, as he shared our defiled nature but thankfully not our defiled behaviour. Jesus had the red flesh of the heifer but was also blemishless. The bronze altar, shadowing the promised Messiah, had to have a sin offering for its atonement before it could ever be used on behalf of the faithful. One of the oversimplifications Bible students often trip over is the limitation of atonement to forgiveness. Jesus did not need forgiveness. He bore no guilt. He did need atonement however, as the shadows and direct statements of scripture powerfully confirm.

This relationship between Jesus and the altar is further emphasized by a unique feature they each shared. Anything that directly touched the altar become instantly holy.

**Exodus 29:37** *Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy.*

This holiness touch was also true of Jesus. Jesus touched the leper, but in that touch Jesus did not become unclean. The leper's unclean condition was turned into cleanness by the touch of Jesus, the antitypical bronze altar (Matthew 8:3). The woman with the defiling condition of a bodily issue touched Jesus and was instantly healed and cleansed (Luke 8:44-48). In touching the dead 12 year old girl Jesus was not made unclean, like every other Israelite would have been. The maiden came back to life at the touch out the antitypical bronze altar, losing her capacity to make anyone unclean by touching her (Luke 8:54). Divine law stated that anyone coming into physical contact with a person suffering with an unclean condition would also become unclean. Yet Jesus reversed that rule, just like the bronze altar. If we try to desperately distance Jesus from the atonement of the bronze altar we are fighting powerful and layered divinely appointed precedents that are presented for the exclusive observations of those with seeing eyes and hearing ears. The separation of our Messiah from our defiled, sin producing nature (the guiltless category of sin) is the first falling domino that eventually leads us to the God-despising delusion that Jesus was an immortal imposter only pretending to be human during his ministry and sacrificial death.

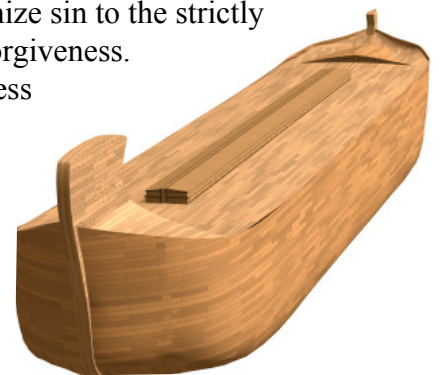
### Understanding the Concept of Atonement

The word atonement means to cover. Those who desperately attempt to minimize sin to the strictly guilty category of transgression try to suggest that atonement is 'only' about forgiveness.

This suggestion is not only impossible, this understanding contradicts countless scriptural shadows and dark sayings that are veiled throughout scripture, hidden exclusively for the understanding of those with seeing eyes and hearing ears. One very powerful shadow of the atonement concept is the covering of Noah's gopher wood ark.

**Genesis 6:14** *Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.*

The verb God uses for the sealing of the ark (*thou shalt pitch it*) is the Hebrew word for making atonement (*kaphar*). The noun God uses for pitch (*within and without with pitch*) is a Hebrew word (*kopher*) indicating camphire, a sticky red unguent made from the dried leaves of the henna plant. God instructs Noah to make an atonement (pitch/kaphar) for this gopher wood ark on the **outside** and the **inside** with this blood red sealant. This ark was the vehicle of salvation for mankind, a very obvious historical parable identifying our Messiah and his role. Gopher wood arks cannot sin, yet God specifically used the word that is predominantly translated atonement in his command for Noah to pitch/paint/ cover that ark with that blood red sealant. Atonement, by God's use of the word, means



to cover. Atonement projects the promise of reconciliation and salvation with both forgiveness and the covering of the spirit nature upon receiving the gift of immortalization.

This same double covering image in an ark of salvation is projected in the golden ark of the covenant that was only used on one day every year... the Day of Atonement.

**Exodus 25:10-11** *And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, **within and without** shalt thou overlay it...*

This ark of the covenant had to have its exterior six surfaces covered with gold and the interior six surfaces covered with gold... by divine command. This also is a shadow of the atonement process that would be available through the vehicle of divine salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as those six surfaces of the ark come together at eight points of convergence (corners) to form a box so the six letters of the Greek name of Jesus (Iesous) add up to an exact total of 888. Just as the man of sin is numerically identified by 666 (Revelation 13:18) so the man of righteousness is numerically identified by the number 888. Greek is the language of the original New Testament manuscripts. Just like the Hebrew alphabet, the Greek letters have a corresponding value as their alphabet also served as their numerical system. The six letters of Jesus' Greek name add up to 888 (iota=10, eta=8, sigma=200, omicron=70, upsilon=400 and sigma=200... totaling 888). This six and eight Messiah theme is projected in other applications as well, such as the heaven and earth covenant of Genesis 15 with the six severed animal parts and the two whole birds used to validate the covenant of promise between God and Abram. The triple eight identification of the name of our Messiah defines the three immortalization (atonement) events in the divine plan: 1. Jesus Christ 2. The family of Christ at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom 3. the rest of the world (following judgment) at the end of the Millennial Kingdom.

Under the laws of the Kingdom of God that were generated at Mt Sinai through Moses we find that it was not just the sin offering that was needed for atonement, indicating that atonement cannot possibly be limited to just forgiveness. This presumption would be a dramatic minimalization of divine principles. The burnt offering, which had nothing whatsoever to do with forgiveness, was instrumental in atonement as well (Leviticus 1:4; 12:6-8; 14:20, 31; 15:15). The lesson of the burnt offering was dedicating oneself to the knowledge of God (Hosea 6:6).

Atonement is all about the covering of salvation, not just forgiveness. This 'covering' application of salvation will be addressed more extensively in the chapter dealing with the nature of man.

### **The Operation of Evil**

The operating nature of evil is that it emanates from within the cursed human condition. The heart is our greatest deceiver. Instinctive thinking is the enemy of divine thinking. The divine thought process has to be introduced into our minds from the outside. Our natural thoughts and instincts will fight it with every step. We have to recognize the evil within and despise it, desiring the divine thought pattern and the blessings and advantages associated with reshaping our minds and therefore behaviour patterns into the likeness of our Creator. This is why we are instructed to circumcise our hearts (Deut. 10:16; Romans 2:29), to slice away the pompous crown of the natural self worshipping frame of reference issuing from the heart, with the sharp, two edged sword of divine truth (Hebrews 4:12).

Unfortunately, it is easier to listen to the self-worshipping, self-indulgent, self-satisfying philosophies of the deceptive human heart. Paganism was the initial enemy of God's truth. Men created gods that were distorted reflections of himself, with all their same petty weaknesses. They defined worship in self-indulgent, sinful terms. With the corruption of Christianity very early in its existence, the natural instincts of the heart redefined God's truth into those same self-worshipping, self-indulgent pagan terms but with

new names to accommodate the Christian theme. One of these instinct distorting issues was the nature of evil. Instead of accepting responsibility for personal and societal evil, men placed the evil outside themselves and pasted the blame for evil on one of God's immortal angels.... thereby elevating themselves in their own sight. They call this fallen angel Satan, the Devil and Lucifer.

### What About Satan, the Devil and Lucifer?

The problem with addressing false doctrine directly is that the incorrect definition of certain terms is already taken for granted as a common basis of understanding. **For example**, not only popular Christianity but even nonbelievers take for granted that Biblical angels have wings. Golly, everyone knows that! Yet there is not a single shred of evidence for such a odd conclusion in the entire Bible. In fact, every single human interaction with angels in scripture present a picture of angels looking just like people... no wings. Frequently the angels are mistaken for human beings, which could never happen if they had wings. The apostle Paul exhorts us to be sure to be hospitable to strangers as some people have entertained angels without knowing it (Heb. 13:1-2 *Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares*). Exactly how could we entertain angels without knowing it if they all had these distinctive wings? Even though this misconception about angels has absolutely no Biblical basis it is commonly understood in popular Christianity. There are many scriptural misconceptions that are presumed to be true. The important procedure is to have the Bible define the terms we want to understand. This is the only way we will be able to understand who God is, what He offers and what He wants.



We should remember the earlier presented fact that immortal angels do not possess the capacity to sin. This capacity of immortals to sin would mean that the nature of God is inherently unclean and that would be a very God-degrading misunderstanding. It would mean that immortality is no protection against sin. The inviolable law of God states that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). If something sins, it must die (cease to exist). However, Jesus tells us that angels cannot die (Luke 20:36). Since angels cannot die they therefore cannot sin. This validates the nature of God as perfectly clean. Immortality is a sinless state. This re-elevates the nature of God to its rightful, glorified state. This understanding also provides a wonderful hope for those who want to be free from the law of sin and death and be gracefully given the nature of God, free from defiling sin. Only righteousness is forever. Sin is not eternal.

Let's first establish that the presumed definition of these terms is certainly in question. Popular Christianity places the source of temptation and lust outside ourselves and in the hands of a supposedly rebellious immortal angel that formerly resided in heaven with Yahweh. We are told to believe that after losing his war with God, this rebellious immortal angel took up residence in a fiery subterranean cavern where he tortures the "immortal souls" of dead people. This sinful angel is called Satan, the Devil and Lucifer. However the Apostle Paul, who wrote much of the New Testament clearly did not share this understanding at all.

### Bible Contradictions to Christianity's 'Satan'

**1 Corinthians 5:4-5** *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

Paul directs the Corinthian believers to deliver an immoral brother to "satan" in order to be **saved**. Shouldn't this set off alarm bells in our minds if we understand satan to be a wicked immortal angel who is the enemy of God and Jesus Christ?! Why in the world would the Apostle Paul suggest the brotherhood cart an erring brother off to a wicked angel ... with the specific purpose of **saving** him? That would

be disastrous! One might also ask how these Corinthians were supposed to send this erring brother to this supposedly wicked and powerful angel that ruled the subterranean world of torture for the damned. Did that mean they were supposed to execute the young man so that his consciousness would be dispatched to the wicked angel's residence? If not execution, then how were they supposed to hand him over to the wicked angel and how would the wicked angel work to save the man? Paul clearly understood something very different about the term "satan" than current popular Christianity. In verse 13 of this chapter Paul explains his understanding of the term satan when he tells the Corinthian brotherhood where to send the erring brother... *But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.* The word satan is a noun that simply means adversary. Paul was instructing the Corinthian brotherhood to disassociate themselves from this brother, to send him into the godless society from which the body of believers were socially separate. Sending him to the opposition (godless society) was intended to be embarrassing in order to encourage reconsideration of the erring brother's divinely unacceptable actions. Perhaps reflective self-examination would be encouraged by the embarrassment and loneliness of disassociation. This understanding is confirmed in Paul's followup letter to the Corinthians.

**2 Cor 2:6-9** *Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.*

This instruction of reclaiming the errant believer would be ludicrous if the satan to whom Paul commanded them to send the young man was the evil fallen angel of Christian legend. It makes perfect sense if Paul understood the term satan to simply mean the adversarial, godless society

### **Satan Education Against Blasphemy**

This is not the only occasion when Paul was in favor of dispatching Christ's servants to satan.

**1 Timothy 1:19-20** *Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, **that they may learn not to blaspheme.***

Why would Paul think that this "satan" to which he sent the two blaspheming brethren would surely teach them not to blaspheme? If we understand Paul as practicing the same fellowship withdrawal practice as he spoke of in 1 Corinthians chapter five then the expression makes perfect sense. However, if Paul understood "satan" to be a rebellious immortal angel intent on seducing God's servants to wickedness... then Paul must be deluded. Clearly, the Apostle Paul did not share the same understanding of the term 'satan' with current popular Christianity.

Another example of how Paul's concept of the terms satan and devil are diametrically opposed to popular Christianity is an exhortation to his beloved Timothy.

**1 Timothy 3:2-6** *This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, **lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.***

Paul recommends inexperienced novices should not be appointed as spiritual leaders, since they may be puffed up with pride. The confusing issue is why Paul would think that the "devil" would condemn

pride.... if the devil is actually a rebellious immortal angel who constantly tries to tempt the faithful to be full of pride and arrogance and practice foolishness? Either Paul is secretly a disciple of the fallen angel, fooling even God and Jesus Christ, or the term devil has a different understanding than what is offered by current popular understanding.

In fact, the word devil is translated from the Greek word *diablos* which simply means false accuser or malicious slanderer. This will be documented and examined in subsequent commentary. For now it establishes consistency in Paul's recommendation. By saying that a novice, tripped by his pride, could fall into the condemnation of the devil, Paul is simply referring to the condemnation of the malicious slanderers. These are the people within almost any community that are always looking for a hint of failure to illuminate and puff it up into something larger than it really is. Paul's message makes perfect sense when we remove the wicked angel delusion from the term "devil."

### **The Messenger of Satan For Paul's Benefit**

Yet another inequity is how Paul expresses the source of a great physical impediment to his preaching efforts. Following his defensive evidence validating his credibility as an apostle and the glories of his visions Paul introduces the humbling issue of his physical impediment and its purpose.

**2 Corinthians 12:7-9** *And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

Here Paul tells us a messenger of "satan" inhibited him with a physical impediment that presented him with an uncomfortable and inconvenient challenge. Paul expresses this as a tool to prevent him from wallowing in self-glory. Once again, Paul does not share the same image of satan as popular Christianity. Christian leaders today tell us that "satan" would never want to limit Paul's self-glorying and expanding self-image. Yet this is exactly the way Paul presents the thought. In fact, Paul tells us that the Lord's answer to his requests for relief confirmed that Paul's burden from 'satan' worked to glorify the Lord. This was certainly not the work of a rebellious angel. Yet again, Paul clearly does not share the same understanding of "satan" as modern Christianity.

Paul is simply speaking of his physical impediment as the natural outworking of sin within us. The curse of sin is the root cause of all disease and suffering and death and misfortune. Our satan, our adversary, is our own human nature. This nature is cursed with sin and therefore suffers the effects of sin... disease, aging, frustration, depression and all forms of suffering. The "messenger of satan" Paul speaks of may have been poor eyesight (Galatians 4:15) or the recurring effects of Malaria that history suggests he may have contracted on the Isle of Crete during his journeys. The actual physical impediment is not significant to our consideration. Paul has demonstrated again that his understanding of the term 'satan' does not align with that of popular Christianity.

### **What is the Job Classification of This Supposedly Fallen Angel?**

Supposedly there are four primary job categories this supposedly sinful immortal angel performs.

- A) He rules the world
- B) He is the source of the world's woes
- C) He promotes sin in the world, tempting mankind to wickedness.
- D) He forever tortures immortal souls (essences of the Creator) of all those who never served God acceptably, whether they were simply unaware of Him, refused to embrace His truths and principles or behaved improperly.

Let's address each of these issues separately.

## 1. Who Truly Rules the World?

The Bible disagrees emphatically with these job descriptions. The one who undisputably rules the world is the Creator of that world. God appoints all political authorities, whether for the good of mankind or for their discipline, as He sees fit. This lesson was forcibly taught to the most powerful man of his generation in ancient Babylon as recorded by the prophet Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar was the emperor, a king of many kings. Yet he was temporarily humbled with insanity to learn this particular lesson about who rules the earth and the political nations.

**Daniel 4:25, 32** *That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that **the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.** <sup>32</sup>And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that **the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.***

The Most High rules in the kingdom of men and certainly not any defeated and expelled wicked angel. This lesson had to be reminded to Nebuchadnezzar's son as well.

**Daniel 5:20-22** *But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the **most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.** And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this.*

God sets in political power whoever He chooses. The Israelites were supposed to know this.

**Jeremiah 27:5-8** *I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and **have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me.** And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him. And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the LORD, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.*

God takes exclusive responsibility for political appointments.

**Proverbs 8:14-17** *Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. **By me** kings reign, and princes decree justice. **By me** princes rule, and nobles, even **all** the judges of the earth.*

This distinction is maintained throughout the New Testament and the Ecclesial Age. This understanding of divine rule requires a behavioural response from the faithful.

**Romans 13:1-2** *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*



If these political appointments were controlled by God's enemy then Paul would certainly not be recommending we submit ourselves to their powers.

**Titus 3:1** *Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.* We are required to obey the authorities because they are appointed by God, not by God's supposed enemy.

**1 Peter 2:13-14** *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; <sup>14</sup>Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent **by him** for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.*

It should be understood that God is not appointing the political leaders according to man's agenda, but His own. He does not appoint for any short term benefit of men and women, but for the outworking of His plan. We are expected to faithfully understand that all things work together for good and not foolishly question His wisdom concerning any particular political appointment somewhere in the world. This first job classification for this sinful angel is completely illegitimate. The Creator is the one ultimately in control of the world and the political appointments. It is only mankind's arrogance that fuels the delusion of his own political self-direction.

## 2. The Source of the World's Troubles

There are three potential job classifications remaining for this supposedly sinful angel. Let's examine the second. Is a rebellious angel the only source of the world's troubles? Before examining the evidence we should understand scriptures' use of the the word "evil." We may understand the word to only mean wicked, but that is often inapplicable. Most often the word evil represents the consequences of sin... the bad things that happen to us. There is a direct application for evil being the consequence of personal sin as well as an indirect application simply for the presence of the corrupting influence of sin being in the world.

**Jeremiah 24:3,8-10** *Then said the LORD unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, Figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the LORD, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt: And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them. And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers.*

The 'evil' figs here obviously represent outdated food that has been corrupted and is now just inedible garbage. Figs do not have the capacity to behave wickedly. Notice how God parallels the 'evil' figs to the sinful Jews who will now bear the cost of their bad behaviour. Evil is used here as a consequence of sin. Rotting food is just another feature of the curse of sin inflicted upon mankind for our failure in Eden. Food would not have rotted prior to the introduction of sin since we see that God declared everything "very good." Rotting food, rusting metal, death, rotting wood, disease and suffering were all justifiably introduced into creation through the sin of man which corrupted all of creation. The hardships of life in general are a result of the principal of evil being the consequence of sin.

Remember, it is the contention of popular Christianity that the evils of the world (the consequences for sin) issue from this sinful angel. Yet it is God who claims that title.

**Isaiah 45:7** *I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and **create evil**: I the LORD do all these things.*

Yahweh certainly doesn't create wickedness, but he does create evil. God initiates the evil consequences of mankind's wicked behaviour. He chastises with unpleasant discipline. God removed King Zedekiah and the Jews from their homes and made them a reproach and a taunt and a curse in all the places He drove them. God sent the evil sword, the evil of famine and evil of plague against those in covenant relationship with Him, as a consequence of their wickedness. 'Evil' is frequently used as a consequence for ungodly behavior.

God makes this issue abundantly clear through the prophet Amos.

**Amos 3:6** *Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?*

Trumpets suggest military alarm. Just as the sound of the alarm automatically brings fear in the hearts of the people so when there is evil in an Israelite city within the borders of God's Kingdom then that evil recompense for their wickedness is automatically from Yahweh.

It is the Heavenly Father that sends evil as a consequence for wicked behaviour. Sometimes this evil consequence for sin is exercised as a feature of divine love. The Heavenly Father will discipline those he loves with harsh experiences to teach the relationship between improper behaviour to pain and disappointment. However, it should never be presumed that anyone suffering must therefore be in divine disfavor for sinful behaviour. This is the incorrect understanding known as exact retribution. This misunderstanding was the mistake of Job's three friends, thinking that because he was suffering so severely that he therefore must have been horribly wicked. This was the misunderstanding of the Jewish elders during the ministry of Jesus. They presumed that the rich were righteous and the poor were wicked. Despite the fact that we must accept that divine discipline is a teaching tool to encourage better behaviour we cannot presume that all misfortune is a result of divine disfavor. Time and chance happen to all men.

**Hebrews 12:5-11** *And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

It was God who caused the suffering of Job. The "satan" adversary was one of the sons of God, which means he was one of the body of believers. A jealous adversary (satan) resented Job's status and favor, considering it solely based on his wealth and health. We have a picture of a righteous man (Job) suffering for the teaching benefit of someone unworthy of his righteousness. This is exactly the picture presented by the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus Christ for an unworthy mankind.

**Job 42:11** *Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.*

### 'Evil' That was God Inflicted

- The ten Egyptian plagues inflicted horrible financial and physical suffering and death but was en-

tirely initiated and controlled by God. Even the Israelites suffered through the first three plagues along with the Egyptians.

- It was God who initiated and controlled the vicious Mediterranean storm that endangered the frightened sailors in the prophet Jonah's ship (Jonah 1). When the fleeing Jonah was tossed into the sea, the storm ended.
- It was God who inflicted Miriam, the sister of Moses, with the dread disease of leprosy for her degrading gossip and undermining of her younger brother's authority (Numbers 12).
- God also inflicted Gehazi, the servant of the prophet Elisha, with leprosy
- It was God who inflicted the curses upon creation and mankind after Adam & Eve introduced sin into the structure of creation (Gen. 3:16-18. This divine cursing resulted in death, suffering, frustration, sorrow, misfortune, disease, etc. There was nothing negative in creation prior to this failure as we are told that the creator declared everything "very good" at the conclusion of his creative works on the sixth day. Genesis 1:31 *And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*
- God dispatches "evil" spirits (not wicked as if it were a morally incorrect 'spirit'... but evil, indicating suffering). God gave King Saul an evil spirit.

**1 Samuel 16:14-16** *But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.*

- God uses false prophets to test those who choose to serve him. It is not a fallen, wicked angel that does this but the Heavenly Father.

**Deuteronomy 13:1-5** *If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.*

This divine warning declares that God may choose to cause the prophecies of lying prophets to come true just to see if his people will respond to the lies from this false prophet. Doctrine was more important than impressive demonstrations of power. The seeming credibility of a prophet suggesting a diverse understanding could be a test from the Heavenly Father to see if the people, awed by the prophets miraculous ability to foretell the future, would depart from the true understanding and exclusive worship of Yahweh, their God.

- God applied this warning in the account recorded in 1 Kings 22 when King Ahab has the choice of believing the many false prophets telling him what he wants to hear or the one prophet of God who warned of his death.

**2 Kings 22:19-23** *Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and*

*said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.*

It makes no difference whether we view this as a parable or a reality, the principle is the same. God commissioned the test before King Ahab to present him with a choice of listening to the false prophets that would result in his death or listening to the one true prophet of God and continuing to live.

**Ezek. 14:9** *And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the LORD have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.*

God uses the wicked to test the enlightened. We don't need a fallen angel for this.

- The New Testament confirms this divine practice. God responds to a refusal to love truth by reinforcing a false chosen perspective. In the context of a detailed prophecy of the antichrist office the Apostle Paul warns believers that God will commission a powerful delusion against those who refuse to love His truth.

**2 Thess. 2:9-11** *Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

There can be no sinful angel responsible for all of the world's woes. Scripture has eliminated job description number two for this impossibly sinful angel. There are still two jobs categories left.

### **Job Description No. 3: The Sin Instigator**

Is it a fallen angel that promotes sin in the world or is it human nature? We have already seen that sin issues from within human nature. It needs no introduction from outside ourselves. Wickedness and sin issue from within the human heart and aggregately from society, scripturally defined as the world.

**1 John 2:16** *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

We are only offered two possible originations for temptation: God or the world. There is no sinful angel offered as an alternative source anywhere in the Bible. The source for all that is in the world is actually generated by the world itself. God can't be blamed and we can't self-righteously hide behind some imaginary wicked immortal angel, blaming him or God's mismanagement. This issue has been extensively presented at the beginning of this chapter. We have no justification for presuming some sinful angel has the job of promoting sin in the world by tempting mankind. We have to look inside ourselves, not outside.

### **Job Description No. 4: The Lord of A Subterranean Fiery Kingdom of Torture**

There is only one possible job classification left for this sinful angel. Does an immortal angel preside over a subterranean realm where immortal souls that are components of the Heavenly Creator are tortured horribly for infinity? Is this wicked angel allowed to claim even those who never had an opportunity to know the Heavenly Father so that he can exact his sadistic pleasure forever on a person who never had the opportunity to make a choice for or against God? The answer is a resounding no!! Our Creator is neither that unrighteous nor that weak.

We have already considered the nature of man in an earlier chapter. We know scripture is very clear that no part of man's consciousness continues after death. We are dependent upon the resurrection in order

to live again and apart from the resurrection we all cease to exist forever. When the body has ceased to live there can be no conscious torture experienced. Eternal death is the sentence of the wicked and the unenlightened, not eternal torture. Within the consideration of the nature of man we examined the terms hell and gehenna. There is no fiery subterranean domain to be ruled over by an impossibly imagined sinful angel.

The four job descriptions of this fallen angel are incompatible with scripture.

## Defining Terms

### What Does "Satan" Indicate?

Satan is a Hebrew noun. Often in scripture it is left untranslated, as if it were a proper name. This Hebrew word 'satan' simply indicates an adversary, or one who opposes. In the verb form it is translated *hate, resist, and oppose*. With a concordance we easily see that satan is a Hebrew noun, not a proper name. We can refer to the Hebrew Lexicon to determine that "satan" is also translated *adversary*. In the Strong's Concordance the identifying number for the noun satan is 7854 and 7853. Satan is left untranslated nineteen times. It is also translated as adversary twelve times, resist once and withstand on one occasion. By looking up the places where the translators have selectively translated the Hebrew word "satan" as adversary we can learn a great deal about this Hebrew word and how translators intentionally manipulated the English translation to promote their false, self-accommodating presumptions concerning the Bible.

### A Divinely Obedient 'Satan' Angel

One of the places where the Hebrew word 'satan' is translated adversary identifies an obedient angel.

**Numbers 22:22** *And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an **adversary** (translated from "satan") against him.*

An obedient angel, performing God's will, acts as a "satan" (adversary) to the prophet Baalam. This is a righteous, obedient angel being called satan. This is exactly the opposite of the popular Christian concept of the word, resulting in such a God-degrading concept.

### The Man After God's Own Heart Was a Satan

**1 Samuel 29:4** *And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an **adversary** (translated from satan) to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? should it not be with the heads of these men?*

In this account the Philistine princes accuse David, the anointed king of Israel, to be a possible "satan" to them in their impending battle with the Israelite army. David was a man in great favor with God, described as a "man after God's own heart." He certainly wasn't a wicked immortal angel, despite the fact that he is called satan by the Philistines.

### God Commissions Various 'Satans' Against the King

**1 Kings 11:14,23,25** *And the LORD stirred up an **adversary** unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king's seed in Edom. <sup>23</sup>And God stirred him up another **adversary**, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah. And he was an **adversary** to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad did: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.*

Each highlighted 'adversary' in these verses is translated from the Hebrew noun satan. It is God that

commissioned these satans to act against the divinely appointed king of Israel. Just as God sent the obedient satan angel against the prophet Balam, God sends these political and military satans against King Solomon. It is impossible to presume these applications indicate a wicked immortal angel. That is why the translators selectively translated the word satan in these references as adversary, to perpetuate their preferred myth of the immortal wicked angel called satan, allowing them to transfer blame for their temptations to someone other than themselves.

### God Presents Himself As Satan

The parallel accounts in 2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21 each describe the same incident. King David improperly initiates a military census. God offers David three punishments: three years of famine, three months of military defeats or three days of plague. David chooses three days of plague. The Samuel account explains how God instigates this test of King David.

**2 Samuel 24:1** *And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.*

Yet the Chronicles account tells us the one who moved David to consider the military census was satan.

**1 Chron. 21:1** *And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.*

In one account we are told that God initiated this test for David and in the other account we are told satan did this. There are no contradictions in scripture. This is not inaccurate. God was a 'satan' to David and Israel. He was their adversary in this affair. God calls Himself satan. The Creator is certainly not a wicked angel that rebelled against himself, but he does consider the title 'satan' to be appropriately applied to Himself in this account. The word 'satan' simply indicates as adversary or one who opposes. There is no evidence for any application to a wicked immortal angel.

### Jesus Declares the Apostle Peter to be Satan

**Mark 8:33** *But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.*

Jesus addresses his student Peter as "satan." The Son of God was not mistaken, despite the fact that he opposes modern Christian doctrine by his use of the term 'satan'. Although Peter did not qualify as a wicked immortal angel, he was acting as an adversary in opposing Jesus at that time, rebuking Jesus concerning the explanation of his impending death.

These inconsistencies with the concept of popular Christianity, along with the total absence of any warnings about the temptations of a wicked immortal angel compel the Bible reader to reject the common Christian understanding that the noun 'satan' is the proper name of a wicked immortal angel.

### What Is the "Devil" ?

The word "devil" is an English transliteration from the Greek word "diabolos." Diabolos is simply a Greek term signifying a *false accuser* or *malicious slanderer*. Diabolos is another word that has been selectively translated to protect distorted Christian teachings, although this word is quoted exclusively from the New Testament, as the very few old testament references using the term 'devil' clearly cannot possibly be stretched into any application concerning a wicked immortal angel.

In each of the following New Testament references the phrase "false accuser" and the term "slanderer" has been translated from that same Greek word *diabolos*... as can easily be verified in any concordance. The same Greek word that is selectively translated "devil" is translated other ways when the context inconveniently eliminates any possibility of an application to a wicked immortal angel. Yet again translators have selectively translated the same Greek word into different English words to reinforce a popular



distortion of Bible truth.

**Titus 2:3** *The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers (diabolos), not given to much wine, teachers of good things.*

The Apostle Paul warns that elder sisters in the among the believers should not be devils (*diabolos*).

**1 Timothy 3:11** *Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers (diabolos), sober, faithful in all things.*

Timothy is instructed by the apostle Paul that the wives of church leaders should not be a devil... slanderers... *diabolos*. Since this would be ludicrous if transliterated as "devil", the translators chose to actually translate the word *diabolos* into its true English meaning in this context, in order to perpetuate their distortion of divine truth.

**2 Timothy 3:1-3** *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers (diabolos), incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good.*

This prophecy states that in the last days, in the body of believers, some will qualify as *devils... diabolos*. Mortal believers certainly cannot qualify as immortal wicked angels. Therefore the translators chose to use the correct English term, so as not to highlight their deceitful pattern of promoting the continuation of the God despising doctrine of an immortal being that can sin without dying.

**John 6:70-71** *Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil (diabolos)? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.*

The disciple Judas is identified by Jesus as a *diabolos*. Judas was not a wicked immortal angel, but he certainly was a false accuser.

Why have Bible translators selectively translated the Greek noun "diabolos?" Why do they inconsistently present it as a name in some contexts and not in others? Examining the total use of the word *diabolos* throughout its New Testament applications eliminates any possibility of having it applied as a proper name or any sort of reference to a wicked immortal angel.

However, there are strange expressions in the Testament where it appears that "the devil" is being presented as a living, sentient being intent on promoting ungodly behaviour. Jesus was *tempted of the devil* in the wilderness. In Christ's parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13 it is the devil that is described as the sower of the tares among the wheat. James tells us to resist the devil and he will flee from us. How are we to understand these expressions?

Initially it should be noted that no such expressions are used throughout the entire Old Testament section of God's Holy Bible. The New Testament writings cover a time period spanning less than 100 years from the birth of Christ to the Apostle John's revelations on the island of Patmos. The Old Testament covers a period of 4,000 years. Are we going to suggest that Abraham, the friend of God, was unaware of this devil... or David, the man after God's own heart? Are we going to suggest that all the great prophets God spoke through had no concept of this devil, an evil immortal angel that can supposedly sin without dying? The truth of the matter is that scripture is using a communication tool that society uses constantly. It is called personification.

## Personification is a Common Tool of Expression

Personification is a communication tool. It describes an expression where an inanimate object is given the qualities of a person. We have expressions like... the sign **said** ... the stereo is **dead**... this car **eats** gas...etc. However, signs do not speak; stereos are not alive in the first place; and cars do not sit at the dinner table with the rest of us. These are simply expressions that 'personalize' things around us. We give human names to ships and cars and hurricanes. We refer to boats as if they were women (ie. she's a beauty). We think of many things as extensions of ourselves and speak of them as if they were alive and had human capabilities. We even sweet-talk these inanimate objects when they are 'tempermental.' Personification is a common form of expression in our society. Should it be surprising that the Bible uses the same communication tool of personification?

### Money is personified:

**Matthew 6:24** *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

Mammon is an old English word meaning money. Money is presented here as our master, as if we are a slave that is owned by money. Money is spoken of as if it were a person. It is personified.

### Wisdom is personified

**Proverbs 3:13-16** *Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.*

Wisdom is not a woman and has no hands, but is certainly personified. This person-ifying of wisdom is just a very common tool of communication. Words carry emotions and impressions. The powerfully presented but unspoken thought is that as strongly as a man desires a beautiful woman, he should desire wisdom. Personification is a communication tool that adds emotion and subconscious impressions to our words. The practice of personifying is frequently employed in society as well as the Bible.

### Sin is personified

In reference to our current consideration we should understand that sin itself is repeatedly personified in scripture.

**John 8:34** *Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*

Jesus does not say one will become the servant of a wicked immortal angel He does say that sinners are the servants of sin. He presents sin as a slave-owning master. Jesus Christ personified sin, using an expression that makes sin seem like a person.

Sin is expressed as a powerful king and a harsh master repeatedly in scripture.

**Romans 5:21** *That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Sin does not technically reign, as it is not a person. It is a concept. Yet the Apostle Paul uses the same personification expression as Jesus Christ in reference to sin.

**Romans 6:6,12,18,20** *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not **serve sin**... Let not **sin** therefore **reign** in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof... Being then made **free from sin**, ye became the servants of righteousness... For when ye were the **servants of sin**, ye were free from righteous-*

ness.

Righteousness, along with sin, is being personified here in Romans.

**Romans 7:8,13-20** *But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*

Sin is described as a sentient force within Paul. It has an agenda and takes advantage of opportunities. We have already considered these thoughts in the section dealing with the nature of man and earlier in this section. We know that Paul is speaking about human nature and how it works against his spiritual interests and goals. Paul expresses this opposition as sin, thereby personifying sinful human nature. Therefore it should not be any wonder that the sin nature within us might be personified and defined as our "adversary" (satan) and our "accuser" (devil). We find this to be exactly the case repeatedly throughout scripture.

### Sin Personification Examples

Here are some parallel accounts displaying the personification of sin (the sin provoking nature of man) where an identification of adversary or accuser defines the working of human nature in its sin producing activities. In this first example two members of the body of believers sold some property, offered part of the sale price to the elders but pretended it was to the total sale income. They wanted to have their cake and eat it too.

#### Satan Did It

**Acts 5: 3** *But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land?*

#### Ananias Did It On His Own

**Acts 5:4** *Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.*

Verse three tells us that something identified as 'satan' inspired Ananias to lie to the Holy Spirit. The capitalization of satan, suggesting a proper name, is a whim of the translator with no linguistic foundation whatsoever. The oldest Greek texts from which our Bible is translated use all upper case letters. The use of capital letters throughout the New Testament is entirely the uninspired creative whims of the translators. Verse four tells us that Ananias had no outside assistance in his decision to lie to the Holy Spirit. The deed was contrived exclusively by himself issuing unassisted from his own heart. This is an example of how our sinful human nature is personified as our adversary, our satan. If a wicked immortal angel were truly to blame for this lying inspiration then verse four would be a false statement. Ananias would not be exclusively responsible for this sinful plan. Since we know Ananias was responsible then we know that the satan/adversary describes something that is inherently Ananias himself. The adversary of Ananias was the sin inspiring human nature all believers fight against so that we might not qualify as the servants of sin. In this context the satan/adversary is the personified sin tendency of human nature.

Withdrawing fellowship (formal and social association) from the community of believers indicated de-

living one to satan for the purpose of spiritual discipline.

**1 Corinthians 5:3-5** *For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

**vs13** *But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*

In verse five Paul recommends the Corinthian body of believers deliver to satan the man who was living with his father's wife. Yet in verse 13 he tells them to ostracise the young man from their social and spiritual activities. This is not a contradiction. Both commands are equivalent. The noun satan in verse 5 has unjustifiably and inappropriately been capitalized as if it is a name (in order to reinforce the myth of the sin promoting fallen angel) While Paul would never have suggested delivering a brother to a wicked fallen angel he would certainly require the unrepentant errant brother to be abandoned to society and ignored completely by all of the believers in an attempt to instill reflection, shame and encourage repentance. The "satan"/adversary in this context is the society of the world whose goals and joys and interests are entirely self-centered and oppose those of the believers. "Putting away from among yourselves" is equivalent to "delivering to satan."

## **Who or What did Jesus Destroy and Who or What has the power of Death?**

### **I. Christ Came to Destroy the Devil**

**Hebrews 2:14** *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.*

This verse states specifically that the purpose of Christ was to destroy the devil. and accomplished this through his death. Are we going to suggest that he failed? Yet, if we presume the devil is a wicked immortal angel that is still active in the world then we have to conclude that the death of Christ failed to achieve its goal. Additionally, it would be impossible for Christ to destroy anything that is immortal. Jesus testified that angels cannot die (Luke 20:36). How could Jesus come to destroy someone that cannot be destroyed? Obviously, this expression of the 'devil' cannot identify an evil immortal angel.

If we understand that by dying Jesus put to death the cause of sin (human nature/the devil), as he had no personal sins to die for, then we can see his death as successful. Christ's death has opened the door of opportunity to all those he approves of to join him in his escape from the power of sin and death. This understanding is ratified when we read the next reference.

### **I. Christ Came to Destroy Sin**

**Hebrews 9:26** *For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

Christ's sacrificial death destroyed sin. Yet in chapter 2 and verse 14 we are told that the death of Christ destroyed the devil. Hebrews tells us Jesus died to destroy the devil and that he died to destroy sin. This is because the 'devil' is presented as a personification of the sin producing feature of human nature.

#### **I.a. The Devil Has the Power of Death**

**Hebrews 2:14** *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of*

*death, that is, the devil.*

According to Hebrews chapter two it is the devil, the false accuser and slanderer, that has the power of death. Yet we repeatedly read elsewhere that it is sin that has the power of death. Either we have a contradiction or the devil is a personification of sin, as in the sense of sin producing human nature.

### **I.b. Sin Has the Power of Death**

**Romans 5:12,21** *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

It is sin that is the cause of death. It is sin that has the power of death.

**Romans 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

It is sin that empowers and qualifies death. This is the exact same expression as the devil having the power of death. Sin producing human nature and the 'devil' are synonymous.

**1 Corinthians 15:56** *The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.*

It is sin that produces death, with the parallel to a venomous sting... just like a serpent that was instrumental in the failure in Eden that introduced death into a previously "very good" creative order.

**James 1:14-15** *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

The Bible is emphatic that it is sin that empowers death.

Is it sin or is it the devil that has the power of death? It is both! The devil is the pseudonym of sin. The devil is the personified sin-producing, cursed nature of man. The concept of a wicked immortal angel is impossible for each and all of the many reasons presented. Our great enemy and barrier to divine blessing is not a wicked immortal angel. It is our own self-deceptive, self worshipping, ego driven nature concentrated in our hearts. Temptation is not introduced into our lives from an exterior source. The origin is interior. It comes from inside us. This is our enemy. This is human nature, also sometimes scripturally referred to as sin in the flesh, the devil and satan. This is what Jesus executed in his body on the cross since he was transgression-free. He produced no sin and therefore was uniquely capable of destroying the source of sin.

## **Will the Real Lucifer Please Stand Up**

If there were a wicked immortal angel that was the greatest enemy of God and man, there would be some scriptural record of his origin. Since the impossibility of the existence of a wicked angel has been established we know there can be no legitimate record of an origin. However, there are three places in scripture where presumptions and illegitimate definitions of scriptural terms are employed to suggest these accounts chronicle the fall of a rebellious immortal angel. We will examine each of these accounts to determine why these presumptions are made, why they are groundless for this conclusion concerning an impossibly wicked immortal angel and what they truly reference.

**Isaiah 14: 9-15** *Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou*

*become like unto us? <sup>11</sup>Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. **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! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: <sup>14</sup>I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.*

This is the only Bible reference where the title 'Lucifer' is used. It is presumed that since Lucifer fell from heaven and that he was one who wanted to ascend into God's residence and place his throne above the stars of God and be like the most High, then Lucifer must be one of God's immortal angels who rebelled against Him. This misunderstanding is based on an unfamiliarity with Bible terms as well as an unwillingness to carefully read all of the context. However, these are only symptoms of the foundational motivation for distancing the source of sin from ourselves, blaming God for the existence of this malevolent antagonist and extending the original lie of the serpent that sin does not necessarily lead to death therefore concluding that immortality (the nature of the Creator) is unclean... having the capacity to sin without dying.

This address to Lucifer does not begin in verse 9. It begins in verse 4 where Isaiah is commanded to apply these words to the king of Babylon... *That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!* This address to the king of Babylon continues through to verse 23 where this proverb against the king of Babylon ends. Even in verse 22 Babylon is still being directly referenced.

Here is the entire proverb that the prophet Isaiah is directed to address to the king of Babylon. Isaiah 14:4-23 ***That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon,** and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! <sup>5</sup>The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. <sup>6</sup>He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, **he that ruled the nations** (This doesn't describe an immortal angel. It refers to a king of nations, the emperor of Babylon) *in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. <sup>7</sup>The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. <sup>8</sup>Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. <sup>9</sup>Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. <sup>10</sup>All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? **art thou become like unto us?** (An immortal angel cannot become like the corpses in the grave. It is a contradiction of his nature as immortals do not possess the capacity to die). <sup>11</sup>Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. <sup>12</sup>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! (Lucifer is a name that means "daystar" indicating a glory so bright it shines even in daylight. It is a title of honor that a king or emperor might be given by the politically ambitious, similar to "your majesty.") <sup>13</sup>For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: <sup>14</sup>I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. <sup>15</sup>Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. <sup>16</sup>They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; <sup>17</sup>That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? <sup>18</sup>All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. <sup>19</sup>But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet. <sup>20</sup>Thou shalt**



*not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned. <sup>21</sup>Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. <sup>22</sup>For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD. <sup>23</sup>I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts.*

The question might arise as to how the king of Babylon might presume he could ascend into heaven and exalt his thrones above the stars of God and ascend above the heights of the clouds and be like the most High. This is simply a very consistent use of common symbolic expressions throughout scripture. The familiarity with these patterns of expressions demands the exclusive logical application of these thoughts to the king of Babylon. In fact this language is used exactly as presented against the greatest king of Babylon in a dream the prophet Daniel interpreted for Nebuchadnezzar about a hundred years after Isaiah's proverb that we are considering was issued against the king of Babylon. In Daniel chapter four we read of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a massive tree that grew up into the heavens above the clouds. This tree was cut down to the ground... falling from heaven. Let's listen to the prophet Daniel's interpretation of the king of Babylon's dream:

**Daniel 4:19-23** *Belteshazzar (Daniel's Babylonian name) answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies. The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: **It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it.***

It should be understood that 'heaven' is a term used in scripture that does not exclusively apply to God's remote home. It can refer to the atmosphere, as it is used right here in Daniel's dream interpretation. In verse 21 we read of the "fowls of heaven" that live in this dream tree that reaches up into heaven. Unless we are suggesting God has a pigeon problem in heaven then we must conclude that the word heaven here simply means the sky. This shouldn't be surprising as even our godless society frequently uses the term heaven or heavens to simply mean the atmosphere or sky. Heaven is also a term used Biblically to represent that which is politically elevated. An example of this is where the Apostle Paul speaks of his preaching commission.

**Ephesians 3:8-10** *Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto **the principalities and powers in heavenly places** might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.*

Paul was not commissioned to commute to heaven and instruct God and Christ and the angels about the gospel. He was sent to the politically elevated, such as the Jewish Sanhedrin ruling body, Felix the Roman Governor, Agrippa the king and Ceasar the emperor. Should it be any wonder that the king of Babylon is spoken of as wanting to ascend into (the political) heaven and be like God? We have already learned that it is God that rules in the kingdoms of men. Nebuchadnezzar wanted to be like God, to rule the world. He would be cut down.

This expression of Babylon's 'heavenly' ambition is referenced by the prophet Jeremiah.

**Jer. 51:52-53** *Wherefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will do judgment upon her graven images: and through all her land the wounded shall groan. **Though Babylon should mount up to heaven**, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the LORD.*

Israel is also spoken of as having fallen from 'heaven' by Jeremiah.

**Lamentations 2:1** *How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger!*

Jesus speaks of how the city of Capernaum would fall from heaven to hell for having reacted with passive ambivalence to his miraculous works.

**Matthew 11:23** *And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.*

The thought that the king of Babylon would harbor political ambitions that would be expressed as ascending to heaven is perfectly consistent with all the rest of scripture. This expression does not demand or even support the delusion of a impossibly sinful immortal angel that rebelled against the Creator.

The fact that the king of Babylon wanted to place himself above the stars of God simply means that he wanted to conquer and rule the kingdom of Israel, which was God's kingdom. God chose the people of that kingdom, He appointed their form of government, chose the judges and kings and prophets and priesthood, as well as writing the laws, determining the borders and assigning detailed rules concerning religious worship. The kingdom of Israel was also the kingdom of God and was referred to that way throughout the Old Testament writings. These descendants of Abraham were repeatedly paralleled to the **stars** of heaven. God promised Abraham that his descendants would be like the stars of heaven (Gen. 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; Ex. 32:13; Deut. 1;10; 10:22; 28:62; Neh. 9:23). The fact that the king of Babylon wanted to exalt himself above the stars of God simply means that he wanted to conquer God's kingdom of Israel and place himself above God's throne in Jerusalem, ruling over the stars, the descendants of Abraham.

This proverb in Isaiah 14 has an exclusive application to the king of Babylon. There is no confusing language that would suggest we should insert an immortal angel into the middle of this proverb. The real Lucifer was the king of Babylon, the political daystar of his age whose political and military glory was even visible in daylight... which is exactly what the title 'lucifer' actually means: daystar.

## **No. 2 The Corruption and Fall of the Anointed Cherub**

Ezekiel 28 provides another outline that is incorrectly presumed to apply to the impossible rebellion and fall of an immortal angel. Once again this lamentation is directed against a political entity and language is used that supposedly should eliminate any application to a human being and identify an immortal angel. Let's review the text.

**Ezekiel 28:11-19** *Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, <sup>12</sup>Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire,*

*the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.*

It is presumed that much of this language cannot possibly apply to the mortal king of Tyre and therefore must apply to an immortal angel. This presumption portrays a distinct unfamiliarity with Bible expressions as well as the history of the relationship between Tyre and God's kingdom of Israel. It is suggested that this text could not exclusively refer to the prince of Tyre because he was not perfect, was never in Eden, was never in the mountain of God, could not be described as an anointed cherub and could not have walked up and down the stones of fire. Yet we can easily demonstrate how all the expressions in this lamentation apply perfectly to Tyre's kingship and do not offer any imaginary avenue of substitution by an impossibly wicked immortal angel. This will also defend God's insistence to the prophet that this is a legitimate proverb against the political authority in the city-state of Tyre. In fact we can immediately eliminate any possible application to any immortal entity by reading the last statement of this lamentation in verse 19. *All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and **never shalt thou be any more**.* It is impossible for an immortal to stop existing. "Never shalt thou be anymore" could never be applied to any immortal angel. According to Jesus the angels are immortal (*Neither can they die anymore for they are equal unto the angels...* Luke 20:36). Since an angel cannot die then they could never be condemned to non-existence. Therefore, this lamentation cannot possibly be applied to an angel. The political **office** of the king of Tyre certainly did cease to exist. The city was ultimately destroyed by the Greeks under Alexander the Great. The kingship of Tyre has never existed since that time. The land where that wealthy and powerful city once stood continues to be a barren shoreline, just as Ezekiel predicted.

The context of this lamentation is significant. Chapters 26-28 of Ezekiel deal with God's distaste for what Tyre had become and his divine judgements upon the city, the politicians, the merchants and the citizens.

**Ezekiel Chapter 26** deals with the twofold destruction of the city. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon destroyed the first city of Tyre. However, the city was rebuilt on an island a quarter mile out in the Mediterranean Sea. Alexander the Great spent nine months in a massive military siege that forever eliminated the city of Tyre from the face of the earth along with the office of the king of Tyre. This chapter details the divine judgement against the **city**.

**Chapter 27** details God's objection to Tyre's pride, arrogance and greed. This is a divine judgement against the **merchants** and their exploitive commercial habits.

**Chapter 28** reports the pompous claim of the prince of Tyre that he considers himself a god, but he is just a man (vs. 2). This chapter presents God's judgement against the political failures of arrogance, exploitive behaviour and betrayal. There is no record of any fall of an immortal angel within this divine ad-

dress concerning the failures of Tyre and its divinely imposed judgments. This chapter details the divine judgment against the office of the **king** of Tyre.

### **The History of Tyre**

We need to familiarize ourselves with the Biblical history of Tyre as it relates to God's kingdom of Israel. This is very important in understanding how this lamentation applies exclusively to the office of the king of Tyre.

Tyre was once a supportive ally of Israel under the kingship of David and Solomon (2 Samuel 5:11; 1 Kings 5:1,7-12). Tyre was a protective ally to the north of Israel, operating as a fair and honest trading partner. However Tyre shifted their political and commercial relationship from supportive ally to parasitic exploiter during the reigns of the descendants of King David and King Solomon. This is evidenced by repeated references to God's judgements for their immoral behaviour and betrayals.

**Amos 1:9-10** *Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant: But I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus, which shall devour the palaces thereof.*

**Joel 3:4-8** (God is speaking) *Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? will ye render me a recompence? and if ye recompense me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head; Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things: The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border. Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own head: And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off: for the LORD hath spoken it.*

**Ezekiel 26:2-3** *Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up.*

Historically, Tyre had been a supportive and protective ally bordering God's kingdom to the north. As Tyre grew richer and richer and more influential from their Phoenician mastery of shipping they degraded into an arrogant parasitic exploiter of Israel and Judah.

### **The Anointed Cherub with Perfect Beauty upon the Holy Mountain of God**

Let's examine the expressions that supposedly suggest these thoughts must have some application to an immortal angel. *Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.*

*Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty...* God somewhat sarcastically addresses the office of the king of Tyre. What should be understood is that the English word 'perfect' is a poor translation from the Hebrew word. Our word 'perfect' signifies flawless. That is not the meaning of the

Hebrew word *kaylil* from which 'perfect' was offered as an appropriate translation. *kaylil* indicates a completeness, a wholeness or full maturity. It is also translated as *wholly, all, every whit, utterly and whole*. It is not that the king of Tyre's appearance would send a jealous supermodel running away in tears. The fact that the King of Tyre was "perfect in beauty" was a sarcastic expression indicating that nothing more could be added for improvement. In fact this was a claim of the city of Tyre... perfect beauty (Ezekiel 27:3 *And say unto Tyrus, O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O Tyrus, thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty*). This understanding aligns with the expression that the king of Tyre "seals up the sum." He finishes the equation. He is the answer to the question. Ain't he just grand! God employed sarcasm to address the vanity and extreme overconfidence of the king of the commercially ultra-successful city of Tyre.

*Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God...* While this may again be a sarcastic expression, the location of Eden could well have encompassed Tyre if we understand the River Gihon (one of the four rivers bordering the Garden of Eden; Genesis 2:11-14) to correspond to the area of Jerusalem where we find the Gihon spring. Eden may also represent a geographic area God has assigned to His chosen servants, whether they be Adam and Eve or the children of Israel. Whichever application is intended we know it has to have an application to the king of Tyre as this is what God said. There is no necessity to stretch this expression beyond the divinely appointed geographical application of the king of Tyre; thereby suggesting God didn't know what He was talking about.

*every precious stone was thy covering...* These "precious stones" are highly significant because they cement the application of this address to the sins of political Tyre in reference to God's kingdom of the tribes of Israel. Every one of the stones mentioned, along with the gold, are present in the breastplate of the Jewish High Priest. Each of those stones represented a tribe of Israel, according to God.

**Exodus 28:15-21** *And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. Foursquare it shall be being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof. <sup>17</sup>And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a **sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle**: this shall be the first row. <sup>18</sup>And the second row shall be an **emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond**. <sup>19</sup>And the third row a **ligure, an agate, and an amethyst**. <sup>20</sup>And the fourth row a **beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper**: they shall be set in **gold** in their inclosings. <sup>21</sup>And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; **every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes**.*

All of the stones mentioned as a covering for the king of Tyre specifically represent tribes of Israel. This divine lamentation against the king of Tyre presents the understanding the Tyre was once highly favored by God due to their close relationship with His kingdom. Tyre had many divine advantages. However, they abused those advantages and betrayed their friendship to Israel and took advantage of the divine favor and status they had enjoyed. Therefore these judgements against the city, the merchants and the political authority are being commanded.

*Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so...* One might legitimately ask how the king of Tyre qualified to be called God's anointed cherub that covers. This is a reference to the golden ark of the covenant that was the central article of worship in the inner, Most Holy section of the temple. The Jewish High Priest was the only person allowed to approach this ark and strictly for one day each

year on the Day of Atonement. By God's design this golden ark had two cherub's whose wings stretched over the ark. One faced the south and one faced the north as it sat in the temple. All the Jewish people associated themselves with this ark. In a sense, this ark represented their nation. Just as a northern cherub spread its wings over the golden ark, so Israel's northern protective ally known as Tyre would offer a northern defense to any invader targeting God's kingdom of Israel. Tyre was appointed (the meaning of "anointed") by God as the northern cherub that covers his kingdom. The language of this lamentation applies perfectly to the king of Tyre to whom this judgment was addressed and requires no exception.

*thou wast upon the holy mountain of God ...* The "holy mountain of God" can refer to both Jerusalem (constructed on Mount Zion and Mount Ophel with the temple resting on Mount Moriah) as well as the entire nation of Israel, however it does not refer to God's residence in heaven.

**Ezekiel 20:40** *For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your oblations, with all your holy things.*

**Daniel 9:16** *O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.*

**Joel 2:1** *Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand.*

**Joel 3:17** *So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.*

**Zechariah 8:3** *Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain.*

The Holy Mountain of God (Jerusalem) was certainly accessible by the king of Tyre. We are not required to find another application for this expression other than the top political office in Tyre to which God directed these words in the chapter being considered.

*Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee...* If we are to understand this phrase to indicate technical sinlessness then we would have a problem applying the phrase to the kingship of Tyre. However, the word 'perfect' does not indicate sinlessness in the Hebrew language in which the Old Testament was originally written. Perfect means whole or complete or mature or fully formed. A couple examples of why we know that this word perfect cannot mean absolute sinlessness follows:

**Genesis 6:9** *These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.*

Noah was described as "perfect" by God, but he wasn't sinless. Noah did not qualify as our Messiah.

**Genesis 17:1** *And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.*

God commands Abram to be perfect, which was not possible for Abram. However, it was possible for Abram to be spiritually mature.

**Job 1:1** *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.*

Job was perfect, but he certainly wasn't totally sinless.

The kingship of Tyre had demonstrated integrity and faithfulness to God's people.... until Tyre turned and became exploitive and damaging. They had been mature (perfect), but now iniquity had been dis-

covered in them.

### Never Shalt Thou Be Any More

**Ezekiel 28:18-19** *Therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.*

The final terms of the divine condemnation completely obliterate any application to a rebellious immortal angel. God says *never shalt thou be any more*. This is repeated in verse 21 at the end of the chapter: *I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord GOD*. The office of the king of Tyre was cease to exist... forever. That cannot be said of any immortal. Immortals cannot cease to exist, or they were never immortal in the first place. We have noted the son of God claims that angels cannot die (Luke 20:36). Therefore this condemnation of 'ceasing to be' cannot possibly be applied to an angel.

### No. 3: War in Heaven?

The most common reference used to support the misconception that there was a loyal immortal angel named Satan who rebelled against God and was thrown out of heaven along with all his allies is found in the book of Revelation.

**Revelation 12:7-9** *And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

If we are willing to rip these verses out of their context... and if we presume all of the currently popular definitions of these terms without defining them scripturally... and we don't compare these thoughts to any other part of scripture for confirmation or correction... then we can be comfortable that the popular understanding of a rebellious immortal angel being ejected from God's home would be correct. If this is our dramatically limited level of effort in understanding the Creator of heaven and earth then how can we claim to be worshippers of the God of truth?

Before we can determine what these verses represent we should understand the divine rules offered for reading the book of Revelation productively. At the very beginning of the book the rules are presented.

**Revelation 1:1-4** *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants **things which must shortly come to pass**; and he sent and **signified it** by his angel unto his servant John: 2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. 3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of **this prophecy**, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

The very first thoughts presented in this book of Revelation tell us that the visions the Apostle John is about to experience are intended to be understood as prophecies and that they will be communicated through sign (signified). Therefore we can understand that everything presented in the book of Revelation would begin to happen in the near future (from the time of John's visions on the Island of Patmos about 96AD). The visions would present events that would begin shortly and progress even beyond our present time. These prophetic revelations would be presented by sign through visions. John described what he saw in the best terms he could. These prophecies were not dictated to John as if he were a ste-

nographer. This is God's pattern. He uses similitudes, requiring us to think.. to think as He thinks.

**Hosea 12:10** *I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.*

These foundational instructions indicate the rules for understanding how we can determine the truth concerning the the whole book of Revelation. Everything in the book had to happen after 96AD and they are symbols that we have to interpret. These visions are not literal.

Now that we have determined the rules from Jesus Christ concerning this series of visions we can turn our attention back to John's vision in Revelation 12. Whatever heavenly war is indicated here could not occur until after 96 AD, by the interpretation rules of the son of God at the beginning of this revelation to John. We also have to understand these verses are part of a larger picture. They are part of this vision John experiences. What about the timing? Are we going to suggest that this supposedly sinful, rebellious angel was allowed to commute back and forth from heaven to earth, corrupting God's creation in Eden, tempting the Son of God in the wilderness and torturing parts of God's essences known as immortal souls in the fiery subterranean realm of hell to which this angel has not even been sent to yet? That certainly sounds wildly contradictory! It also degrades the Heavenly Father as unaware, incapable or apathetic. We are assured scripturally that this God-degrading understanding is impossible.

**Psalms 5:4** *For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.*

Another confirmation that only God's will is done in heaven is presented in Christ's prayer pattern.

**Matthew 6:10** *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

If Jesus was aware of a commuting wicked angel (supposedly responsible for his temptation in the wilderness after his baptism) then he would know that God's will was not being accomplished in heaven. Yet the Son of God recommends that we pray for God's will to be done in the earth **as it is** in heaven. If we are to understand that heaven is a staging platform for the ultimate wickedness and betrayal of a formerly loyal immortal angel then Jesus is certainly asking us to promote the same thing on earth. I certainly hope that sounds highly doubtful to all of us. This should call into question the impossibility of a violent, universe crashing war in God's residence between incredibly powerful beings incapable of being destroyed. In fact, we will see that this is simply symbolic language and not the heaven of God's home but the political heavens of mankind that are so often referenced in both the Old and New Testaments.

The problems with this popular misunderstanding of a wicked immortal angel mushroom when we consider the greater context of this vision. This supposedly immortal angel known as Satan is described in detail so that we can know exactly what he looks like.

**Rev. 12:3-4** *And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.*

So if we are going to understand verses 7-9 literally (as well as presuming the term definitions that are offered by many Christians) then we also must understand the description of Satan literally in the previous verses. Otherwise we would not be consistent. Unless we want to look at this prophecy as symbolic (as Jesus indicates in the first verses of this book) then we must accept that there could only be two angels in existence, since just one of them would have a tail large enough to sweep a third of the stars of the universe toward the planet earth. We would also have to understand angels to be red with seven heads... talk about ugly! Yet when we test this understanding with the rest of scripture we find this description is impossible to accept literally. Angels look just like men. In the majority of the interactions between angels and men the angels are not initially distinguishable from men. If they were all red with seven heads and an incredibly massive tail it would be impossible for Abraham and Jacob and Joshua and Manoah's wife and the mother of Jesus and others to presume they were simply mortal men. It



would be impossible to *entertain angels unawares* (Hebrews 13:2).

Without doubt, this vision in Revelation chapter 12 is a symbolic representation of an event that would happen **after** 96AD. Our primary focus now is not explaining prophecy. To provide the proof of interpretation for this vision would be another book in itself. However, rather than remove one possible understanding without filling that vacuum let's briefly explain what this prophetic vision represented.

There would be a war in the political heavens between paganism and Christianity. The delusional imaginings of the human heart that created the pagan gods with all their human-like failings had enjoyed political authority through the four great world-powers of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. However, a man named Constantine would encourage a battle for that political authority between the followers of paganism (dragon) and the followers of Christianity (symbolized by a pregnant but unmarried woman). Paganism (the satan adversary and devil malicious slanderer) lost the battle and was ejected from its heavenly power base (elevated political status). Constantine converted pagan temples to Christian temples and converted the wealth and lands dedicated to pagan worship across the Roman Empire to Christian control. However, under Constantine the corruption of the Christian church accelerated dramatically. The pagan Roman dragon (from Daniel 7) became the Christian dragon in a very short time, as indicated in Revelation 12. The dragon is a large serpent, therefore an extension of the scriptural symbol of mankind's inherent sinfulness. The dragon is a symbol of man's sinfulness multiplied politically, indicating political and military powers. Under Constantine Christian doctrine degraded into mirror images of pagan doctrine with the names simply being changed to protect the guilty. Pagan holidays and practices were assimilated into Christian life as the Christians were seduced by their newly acquired political influence and wealth. This is an exceedingly brief overview of John's prophecy of the war in heaven described in Revelation 12, however this understanding can be proven definitively by defining the 'signified' terms of Revelation chapter 12 and comparing that to historical record.

We have considered the only three places in scripture where Christian religious leaders go to suggest a record of a traitorous immortal angel and his wicked immortal followers being ejected from heaven after a fierce battle. We have seen that this understanding is completely unfounded and quite God-degrading.

## What About Demons?

Demons are popularly believed to be immortal angels that participated in an impossible angel rebellion in heaven. It is believed they had the capacity to decorporealize themselves into a spirit essence and inhabit human beings inflicting some form of disease or suffering upon them. It will be demonstrated this is an impossible understanding. It has already been scripturally determined that immortal angels do not have the capacity to sin. In fact believers were prophetically warned of this very misunderstanding about demons by the Apostle Paul.

**1 Timothy 4:1-3** *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.*

It should be noted that the highlighted word "devils" in verse one is translated from the Greek word *daimonion* which is the plural form of *daimon*. Greek is the language with which the New Testament books were originally written. This Greek word *daimon* is different from the word *diabolos*, also translated devil, that we have previously examined. *Daimon* (and its plural form of *daimonion*) is the exclusive Greek word that is used to indicate this supposedly health damaging spirit entity called demons. Therefore, Paul is warning us that Christians will develop false doctrines which will include delusions con-

cerning demons. The current popular Christian understanding, developed well after the Apostles died, qualifies as the fulfillment for this prophecy.

### Where Are All the Old Testament Warnings?

The first issue to be addressed must be the isolated appearance in scripture for this expression of demon possession as an explanation for disease. Out of the more than 4,000 years of Biblically recorded history the references to demon possession are limited to the 3 1/2 years of Christ's ministry following his baptism and prior to his death and resurrection. Demons are popularly believed to be immortal angels that participated in an immortal angel rebellion in heaven. It is believed they decorporealized themselves into spirit essence and inhabit human beings inflicting some form of disease, mental disorder or suffering upon them. It will be demonstrated this is an impossible understanding. It has already been scripturally determined that immortal angels do not have the capacity to sin, therefore the entire God-degrading premise is utterly impossible.

### Who Are the "Angels that Sinned?"

Perhaps this would be a good time to address the phrase in the King James translated version of the Bible where Peter refers to "angels" that sinned.

**2 Peter 2:4** *For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.*

Initially this phrase seems to suggest that immortal angels do actually have the capacity to sin. However, that understanding would contradict God's principle of death being the wages of sin. If immortal angels can sin without dying then God's principle is false and it would be possible to sin without dying, just like the serpent testified in Eden. This issue is just another example of an intentionally poor translation designed to reinforce popular and historical God degrading doctrinal mistakes. These are not "immortal" angels that sinned and were cast down to "hell." This "hell" is different from all the other "hell" references in the entire New Testament. It is the Greek word *tartarus* (exclusively used in this one reference) and refers to the deepest part of the earth where the pagan Greeks believed the elder gods were imprisoned by Zeus, the chief Greek god. Peter certainly didn't believe in pagan Greek mythology or the Greek pantheon or their religious imaginations. Peter was referring to **mortal** messengers of Yahweh who sinned and died in a violent earthquake where the earth opened up and swallowed these false servants of God alive and then closed up, burying them alive... far, far deeper than a simple six foot deep grave.

Let's examine the text. Peter's letter warns his readers about false teachers **within** the brotherhood. The verses immediately previous to verse four makes this understanding very clear.

**2 Peter 2:1-3** *But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be **false teachers among you**, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.*

Peter is warning the brotherhood about false teachers and false leaders within their own community. These men will covet the influence and commercial gain they can achieve through the promotion of heart-driven doctrinal delusions. Peter then goes on to give examples of this experience in the past and how God has dealt with these promoters of lies. Therefore the very first example Peter offers must align with his immediately previous reasoning or Peter is just speaking disjointed gibberish. In addition to the context of Peter's thoughts it should be understood that the "angels" spoken of here are not the immortal angels of heaven that are not capable of sinning. The Greek word Peter uses that is translated "angels" is

the word *aggelos*. This word does not necessarily indicate an 'immortal' angel. The word simply means 'messenger' or one who is sent. The same word *aggelos* is selectively translated *messenger* several times in the New Testament where the context absolutely eliminates any possible application to an immortal heavenly angel. Jesus uses this word to apply to John the Baptist:

**Matthew 11:10-11** *For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my **messenger** (*aggelos*) before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

Jesus obviously did not mean that John the Baptist was an immortal angel... just like Peter did not intend anyone to believe that immortal angels can sin. However the translators certainly did want us to believe that distortion of divine truth and therefore chose to translate *aggelos* as angels in this particular instance as opposed to how they translated that same Greek word as simply "messenger" in other places.

In Luke's account of this same incident this same word *aggelos* is used to identify students of John the Baptist that John had sent to inquire of Jesus.

**Luke 7:24** *And when the **messengers** (*aggelos*) of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?*

The Greek word *aggelos* simply means a messenger. It carries no implication of mortal or immortal nature, which is why the word is used for both immortal angels, a mortal prophet of God (John the Baptist) and the mortal students of that prophet. Therefore; taking into account the line of Peter's reasoning and the meaning of the word Peter used, his reference to messengers (*aggelos*) that sinned cannot indicate immortal messengers. We do find an incident described in scripture matching Peter's description exactly. There were divinely appointed men of God who rebelled against their position and promoted themselves to positions God forbid. God opened up the earth and closed it upon them, burying them alive very deep in the earth. This is the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram described in Numbers 16 where the Levites presumed to promote themselves to the status of priests, which was divinely limited to the sons of Aaron.

**Numbers 16:31-33** *And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.*

This fits the exact pattern of Peter's letter. Peter is warning believers not to be complacent about doctrinal truth because there will always be false teachers among the community of true believers. He then offers historical examples of this. It is mortal messengers of God that have the capacity to sin. Immortal messengers (angels) do not have the capacity to sin. God's nature (immortality) is not not an unclean and vile state where sin has any existence whatsoever.

This reference in Peter's letter, so deceptively translated, is the only place in scripture that directly suggests that immortal angels have sinned. The poor translation by men who do not want their doctrinal perversions undermined have improperly inserted the word "angel" where the context and divine principle demands that "messenger" would be the correct English translation.

Renewing our consideration of the odd limitation of demon possession to the 3 1/2 year ministry of Jesus, it should be noted that the Old Testament has nothing to say about the danger of demon posses-

## The Dramatically Isolated "Demon" References

Renewing our consideration of the odd limitation of demon possession to the 3 1/2 year ministry of Jesus, it should be noted that the Old Testament has nothing to say about the danger of demon possession or how to prevent it. Outside of the gospels in the New Testament, we see that Paul, James & John only speak of demons in the context of false religion. These observations should inspire some doubt and questions concerning this popular Christian understanding.

We are asked to believe that wicked immortal angels inhabit the bodies of human beings for the purpose of inflicting discomfort, involuntary muscle action or imbalanced mental activity... or all of the above. The first false premise is the understanding that immortal angels have the capacity to practice wickedness, while not having to die for the sins they practice, since they are immortal. This alone eliminates any possibility of this misunderstanding of demon possession.

Historically the only evidence we have of a similar thought process in the Old Testament is in the context of false worship. For example: In 2 Kings 1:2-4 we see that the King of Israel sends to inquire of Baalzebub (this is the pagan god of the city of Ekron, a Philistine city). Baalzebub was the lord of the flies (associated with the manure pile) and therefore thought to be in control of disease and sickness. Notice the prophet Elijah's response to this inquiry concerning the King's disease to a pagan god... *"Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron?"* The understanding that disease is controlled by evil godlike entities is a sign of the absence of understanding and faith in the LORD. It is the same today.

### Pagan Imaginations About Demons

The pagan Greeks imagined that demons were the disembodied spirits of dead people. These 'demonai' served the pagan gods ... Zeus and his imaginary crew on Mt. Olympus. This can be demonstrated by reading ancient Greek writers.

- Homer was the famous Greek author of *The Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. He called his pagan gods "daimones." This is the same Greek word for demons in the Bible, in its plural form.
- Hesiod was another famous Greek who claimed that when a good man died he became a *daimon* (demon).
- Plato, the famous Greek philosopher, praised Hesiod for this conclusion.
- Hippocrates, an ancient Greek but known as the father of modern medicine, disagreed with these conclusions and wrote an essay on what was known as the "sacred disease." Today this "sacred disease" is known as epilepsy. In Hippocrates day (and in Christ's) epilepsy was understood as demon possession. Hippocrates claimed that this condition was a disease and not demon possession and that the priests and exorcists were exploiting the people on this issue. Today epilepsy is treated with medicine, not exorcists.

The Jews, as well as other nations, adopted the politically correct Greek thinking of their rulers, which persisted into the Roman era. The Romans practiced the same pagan religion as the Greeks, but with different names for their own gods. This is why we have no Biblical reference to demon possession during the isolated Jewish environment of self-government. This delusion of demon possession was a Greek understanding that was passed along to the Jews during the time of political and commercial Greek domination, continuing into the era of Roman domination which included the ministry of Jesus Christ which is the only period in the Bible when we read of demon possession to explain physical and mental diseases.

**Josephus**, the famous Jewish historian who was a contemporary with Christ's apostles, demonstrates how the Jewish people had been contaminated by this pagan demon doctrine of the Greeks and Romans. He wrote that the demonia are the spirits of wicked men that can enter a person and even kill them if they receive no help. Consider the statement of the Pharisees in Matthew 9:34 ... *But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.* The Pharisees, who Jesus referred to as whited sepulchres, liars, hypocrites and serpents, accepted this feature of Greek paganism. I am sure we can accept the understanding that serious Bible students don't want to align ourselves doctrinally with those that Christ finds highly objectionable. That would certainly be unwise.

### Demon Control or Disease?

Disease and mental disorders are often used interchangeably in the gospels with demon possession. It was an expression, an idiom, of the society in which Jesus actively preached. It is interesting to note that the 'dispossessed' are often spoken of as being "healed," as opposed to being dispossessed.

In Matthew 15:21-28 a mother understands her daughter's problem as demon possession. Jesus simply commands that the woman receive her desire and then the child is spoken of as being made "whole." Yet in Mark 7:29-30 we read concerning the exact same incident where Jesus commands the removal of a demon. The thoughts are synonomous. Demon possession was simply that society's understanding of the operation of disease.

Consider the expressions in the account recorded in Mark 9:17-29. In this incident a boy suffering from epilepsy is diagnosed as demon possessed. When we compare this account to the record in Matthew 17:14-18 we see it expressed as both demon possession and being cured (as opposed to being dispossessed). Demon possession was simply a verbal expression of that period to explain disease. This misunderstanding of demon possession is a mutation of the understanding that man's wickedness does not issue from within us. Man constantly wants to shift blame. Disease, suffering and death are the natural outworking of the terms of the Edenic curse inflicted for sin. If sin were removed, there would be no disease or suffering of death.

In the same sense that sin is often personified in scripture we find that a natural effect of sin (disease) is also spoken of in personification terms:

- In Mark 1:40-42 we are told that the disease of leprosy "departs," as if it had arrived and visited for awhile and then went on its way.
- In Luke 4:39 Jesus rebukes the fever of Simon Peter's mother-in-law and then it left. We rebuke children and telemarketers, not excessive temperatures. This is another biblical use of personification. The high body temperature didn't pack up its belongings and leave for a temporary vacation, yet we read that it "left."

Diseases cannot be addressed and communicated with and they cannot travel as if they were acquaintances or associates. However, due to that society's expressions concerning the effects of the Edenic curse of suffering and disease, human suffering is spoken of as something apart from ourselves and possessing individual intelligence, purpose, and presence. This is why we only find these expressions in the gospels. It was a feature of that society.

Today we successfully treat disease and mental disorders with medicine and therapy, not priests or exorcists. There is absolutely no scriptural basis for degrading our Creator in presuming that immortal, wicked beings promote physical and mental illnesses.

## But What About . . .

What about the satan in Job? Don't we have a 'satan' among the sons of God who inflicts horrible suffering on a righteous servant of God?

**Actually, no!** We certainly do have a satan among the sons of God but it is not this satan that is responsible for Job's horrible suffering. That would be God... according to the beginning and end of the divinely inspired record.

Casual Bible readers often assume that since this 'satan' or adversary is among the sons of God that he is among angels. That would be an incorrect understanding. The *sons of God* is a phrase that indicates the body of believers where we find mortal, faithful men and women who know and practice God's truth.

**Romas 8:14** *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are **the sons of God**.*

**Philippians 2:14-15** *Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, **the sons of God**, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;*

**1 John 3:1-2** *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called **the sons of God**: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be:*

The sons of God are enlightened human beings whose ambition is to emulate their Heavenly Father. Job's adversary was one of us. This satan-adversary may have been a person (or even persons) who were jealous of Job's elevated position among the sons of God (the body of believers), his wealth and presumed righteousness. This adversary certainly displays resentment of Job with his harping about Job's supposedly underserved favor. This adversary suggests that the removal of that favor will leave this supposedly righteous man cursing his Creator.

**Job 1:6-9, 12; 2:1-7** In poetic fashion (in the original Hebrew language this book is presented in poetic form) Job's enemy (this jealous and resentful member[s] of the body of believers) complains about Job's supposedly phony righteousness. This "son of God" resents Job's advantages and claims that without his wealth and family and respect Job's false righteousness would crumble. It is God that permits and actually inflicts the crushing blows. Despite the fact that the poetic fashion suggests God simply authorizes another's use of force, the rest of the book makes it clear that God is the only powerful source capable of inflicting the terms of Job's suffering. Job saw his experiences as trials from God and no other source.

**Job 19:6,8-13** *Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net. He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths. He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head. He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: and mine hope hath he removed like a tree. He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as one of his enemies. His troops come together, and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle. He hath put my brethren far from me.*

Job knew it was God that had overthrown him and inflicted all of his suffering. He simply didn't understand why.... yet. There wasn't any doubt in Job's mind that the only one capable of executing these actions against him was God.

**Job 23:10** *But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*

Job is referring here to trials from God. Job understands God to be the only possible author of his suffering. In fact everyone within the book of Job exclusively recognized God as the only possible author of Job's incredible sufferings.

**Job 42:11** *Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been*

*of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over **all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him**: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.*

Job's satan, or adversary, was simply one of the true believers who was jealous of the elevated status and privilege of Job and complained that his faithfulness was illegitimate, propped up by privilege and not integrity. Job's suffering was not experienced for the sadistic pleasures of an impossibly wicked immortal angel, accommodated by baiting the Heavenly Father in conversation. Job's suffering was intended to save the satan adversary, to purge the acrid resentment improperly harbored against a truly righteous man. The book of Job reflects the experiences of a greater man who would suffer to save those unworthy of him. Jesus also had a "devil" among the sons of God (Judas among the disciples) who was instrumental in orchestrating Christ's sufferings. Jesus suffered torture, humiliation, trumped up charges, a kangaroo court and a horrible death to save those less worthy than himself... very similar to Job.

One great purpose of the book of Job is to demonstrate the incorrect understanding of the illegitimate principal of exact retribution. This heart-generated false doctrine presumes that whatever happens in our lives is a direct response to our moral behaviour. Therefore if we suffer misfortune, that is proof of our wickedness. If we are wealthy, that must mean we are righteous. If we are poor, we must be wicked. This is the false reasoning behind the historical philosophy of the divine right of kings.. that since they are kings then they have been appointed by God and therefore everything they do is right. This was the reasoning of Job's three friends. This was the understanding of the Jewish people during Christ's ministry. When Jesus declared that it would be harder for a rich man to get into the kingdom of heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle his disciples were aghast. Their response was *who then can be saved*. In other words, if rich people can't be saved then how are we poor people ever supposed to expect participation in the promised kingdom. This conclusion sprang from the common understanding that the rich qualified for wealth on the basis of their righteousness and the poor were financially disadvantaged because of their righteousness deficiencies. The book of Job obliterates the delusion of exact retribution that is frequently promoted by the privileged. If being financially disadvantaged and suffering was proof of wickedness then we would have to conclude that Jesus Christ was incredibly wicked, which is as ludicrous as the premise.

The satan of Job was among the sons of God. He (or they) was a member of the body of believers. This adversary (satan) of Job never had any inherent power to inflict suffering. The presumption that this satan was a wicked immortal angel is based on the presumption that the Hebrew noun satan is a proper name.

### **But What About .... Christ's Wilderness Temptation?**

**Matthew 4:1-11** *Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the*

*world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.*

This "satan" is simply an adversary. There appear to be two possible satan identifications. We already know this could not refer to a wicked angel, as immortal angels are not capable of sin. The first possibility is a human tempter that introduced these thoughts into Christ's mind, such as the questioning of his status (**if** thou be the son of God) and the offer of advantage in exchange for support. Some suggest the Jewish High Priest could have been this adversary tempter in the wilderness. The other possibility is that the temptations issued from within Jesus from the human nature he came to defeat. In this understanding Christ's adversary would be the sin producing nature he was born with, inherited from his mother which is why a sin offering had to be offered by Mary for giving birth to Jesus. While either explanation can apply, this second understanding seems more credible as the environments described are literally impossible. There is no mountain on this planet from which all the kingdoms of the world can be viewed and Jesus could not be both on the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem and in the wilderness at the same time. These environments could be very real in his mind but contradictory in reality.

Some Bible students object to the possibility of a human nature adversary, oddly presuming that temptation alone is sin. We are specifically told that Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are (Hebrews 4:15). Therefore he had to experience internally generated temptations. Temptation is not sin. It is surrendering to temptation, the conception of lust (James 1:14-15) that constitutes sin. We must be very careful, in that the insistence that this wilderness satan-tempter **must** have been an exterior source (like the High Priest) suggests an understanding that Jesus never experienced internally generated temptation. That understanding would degrade the victory of the Son of God, invalidate the righteousness of his resurrection and separate Jesus from the rest of humanity as their representative. The wilderness satan tempter may have been a human being and may have been our human nature enemy. However, it is very clear the temptor was not a wicked, immortal angel commuting from heaven to earth under the oblivious eyes of Christ's heavenly Father.

## Conclusion

The concept of an immortal god of evil that was formerly good is product of the original serpent's lie in Eden. The serpent presented the contradiction of the Creator's warning that disobeying Him would mean death. The serpent said that although Adam and Eve would break the one law of the Creator they would not surely die. The serpent introduced the idea that sin does not require death. This is the basic premise of an immortal sinner, that although one contradicts the righteousness of the Creator that they don't have to die. The concept of an immortal sinful creature is a declaration that God is a liar and the serpent was the telling the truth. Death is clearly defined throughout God's word as the cessation of life, eliminating the capacity for continuing sin (contradictions of divine righteousness). There is no work or thought or emotions after death, unless one is resurrected from the state of death. This Pagan and Christian perverse doctrine of immortal sinners is a displacement of accountability from ourselves and an indictment against our Creator. This perversion of divine truth fits the absolute pattern of all false doctrine. It is God-degrading and flesh-exalting. Anyone respecting this understanding is greatly disrespecting the eternal principles of the Creator of all things.