

SERIES **Summary** **The 'Reader's Digest Version'**

Think of Eve as a child, and God the Father like a loving parent. God gave her simple, wise instruction: *“Don’t touch the hot stove.”* It wasn’t to control her—it was to protect her. But like many children, Eve began to reason in her mind, questioning the command: *“Maybe it’s not that hot... maybe it won’t hurt... maybe I’ll gain something by touching it.”* So she touches the stove—and just like any child, **she gets burned**. Pain, shame, and separation follow—not because God was cruel, but because she didn’t trust that His word was for her good.

That’s the same pattern we follow today when we ignore God’s Word, lean on our own understanding, and trust man’s doctrine instead. The pain that follows isn’t from God’s hand—it’s from touching what He told us not to.

The Biblical Meaning of "Serpent" and the True Deceiver: The Mind

The term **"serpent"** in Scripture is often associated with deception, wisdom, and subtlety rather than a literal talking snake or a supernatural being. In Genesis 3, the serpent is described as "more subtil than any beast of the field" (Gen. 3:1). The Hebrew word **nachash (H5175)**, meaning "to hiss, whisper, practice divination, or diligently observe," carries connotations of cunning and **cleverness** rather than a physical creature. Examining Scripture reveals that the **serpent in Genesis is best understood as a metaphor for Eve’s own reasoning—her mind processing temptation, rather than an external deceiver like Satan.**

Paul confirms this interpretation in **2Corinthians 11:3**, warning believers that just as the serpent "beguiled Eve through subtilty," so too could their **minds** be corrupted from the simplicity in Christ. This passage shifts the focus from an external deceiver to an **internal battle of thoughts and reasoning**. Additionally, the **use of "serpent" in Scripture often describes cunning individuals or groups** rather than a literal snake or fallen angel (Matt. 10:16, Matt. 23:33, Rev. 12:9).

Subtilty — the utter foe of the "simplicity" which is intent on ONE object, Jesus, and seeks none "other," and no "other" and different Spirit (**2Cor 11:4**); but loves Him with tender SINGLENESSE OF AFFECTION. Where Eve first gave way, was in mentally harboring for a moment the possibility insinuated by the serpent (her own carnal curiosity), of God not having her truest interests at heart, and of this "other" professing friend (her carnal reasoning) being more concerned for her than God.

The Tree of Knowledge: God's Law, Not a Satanic Entity

The **tree of the knowledge of good and evil** was planted by God, not Satan (Gen. 2:9). It provided **wisdom and understanding** but also carried the consequence of death due to the **inevitable failure to perfectly obey God's law**. Scripture repeatedly identifies **God’s law as the source of the knowledge of good and evil (Deut. 30:15, Prov. 2:6, Ps. 111:10, Heb. 5:14).**

Paul expands on this in **Romans 7:9-12**, explaining that before understanding God's commandments, he was "alive," but once the law came, sin revived, and he "died." **The law itself was good, but it exposed sin, bringing spiritual death—not because of Satan, but because of human transgression.** This aligns with God's warning in Genesis 2:17, **"In the day you eat of it, you shall**

surely die." The serpent's deception was not a supernatural spell but a **distortion of God's word**, leading Eve to rationalize disobedience.

The "Surely Die" Verses: Death Comes from Sin, Not Satan

Throughout Scripture, **death is consistently tied to sin and disobedience, not to Satan's influence.** Key verses reinforce this principle:

- **Ezekiel 18:4** – "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."
- **Romans 6:23** – "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life."
- **James 1:15** – "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

The repeated theme is that **death is the natural result of sin—not the work of an external devil, but the consequence of human choice.** The biblical warning is against allowing one's own **mind** to lead into deception and disobedience.

The Tree of Life: Christ and Redemption

In contrast to the tree of knowledge, **the Tree of Life represents Christ and eternal life** (Rev. 22:2, John 6:51). After the fall, Adam and Eve were barred from this tree, illustrating that **sin separates humanity from eternal life.** Yet, through Christ, believers regain access to that tree, signifying the restoration of righteousness through faith rather than the law (Rom. 3:21-22).

The curse on the serpent—crawling on its belly and eating dust—symbolizes the enslavement of the carnal mind to worldly desires and fleshly concerns (Gen 3:14, Rom 8:6-8). The enmity between the serpent's seed and the woman's seed (Gen 3:15) represents the ongoing battle between carnal reasoning and spiritual truth.

The Mind as the True Deceiver

Rather than a literal talking snake or a fallen angel, **the Genesis serpent represents Eve's own reasoning—her mind rationalizing disobedience.** Paul's writings, especially **2 Corinthians 11:3 and Romans 7**, confirm that the **battle is internal**, warning that false teachers and distorted doctrine continue to "beguile" minds in the same way. The law itself, though holy and just, brings death because it exposes sin, leaving humanity in need of redemption through Christ. The real danger is not an external Satan but **self-deception and disobedience to God's truth.**

Cain was not the literal son of Satan but rather an example of godlessness by personal choice. **Genesis 4:1-2** affirms that Eve bore Cain with divine assistance, linking his name to "acquisition," showing her belief in God's promise. His brother Abel, whose name means "breath" or "vanity," foreshadowed his short life. The contrast between their offerings in **Genesis 4:3-7** highlights Cain's rejection of blood atonement. While Abel's sacrifice was accepted due to his faith (**Hebrews 11:4**), Cain's was rejected, not because of lineage, but due to his own failure to align with God's requirements. **1 John 3:12** describes Cain as being "of that wicked one," indicating that he followed Satan's ways, not that he was his offspring. Likewise, **Jude 11** places Cain among the rebellious, associating his wickedness with personal disobedience rather than an inherited demonic nature. Cain's anger and fallen countenance (**Genesis 4:6-7**) reveal his internal struggle. God warns him that sin is like a predator crouching at his door, urging him to resist. Instead, Cain succumbs to jealousy and murders Abel (**Genesis 4:8-9**), refusing to take responsibility. His punishment (**Genesis 4:10-12**) is exile, making him a restless wanderer, a contrast to Adam, who was still permitted to toil the land. Cain's alienation deepens as he moves to Nod and marries outside of Adam's lineage, further severing his spiritual connection. Seth ultimately replaces Cain as Adam's righteous descendant. Cain's story illustrates the **consequences of free will** and rejection of God's authority. His actions mirror **Esau's rejection in Romans 9:10-13**, where Esau, like Cain, despised his birthright and married outside his kind, grieving his parents. Just as **Esau was not rejected due to lineage**, but by God's sovereign choice, **Cain was not condemned by blood but by his own actions.** Cain's life

serves as a warning: wickedness is a choice, and separation from God is the ultimate consequence of rejecting His ways.

We saw that Witchcraft is defined as rebellion against God. (Deut 18:10; 1Sam 15:23; Nah 3:4; Gal 5:20).

Antinomian church 'Christians' are in the witch category because they keep things like God's laws, racial identity, and kingdom and covenant theology covered up and thus are in darkness.

The Scapegoat and the Misdirection of Blame

The concept of the scapegoat in **Leviticus 16** serves as a profound symbol of sin removal and misdirected blame. The ritual involved two goats—one sacrificed for atonement and the other, the **scapegoat (Azazel)**, symbolically bearing Israel's sins into the wilderness. The Hebrew term **saiyr**, also translated as "devils" in other passages, underscores that the scapegoat was a symbolic vessel, not a literal entity with agency.

This imagery foreshadowed **Jesus Christ**, who bore humanity's sins (Isaiah 53:11, John 1:29), rather than any demonic figure like **Azazel** from extra-biblical sources. Unlike the mistaken view that attributes sin to an external devil, **Scripture consistently emphasizes personal accountability**. The tendency to shift blame—whether on Satan, idols, or external forces—mirrors Israel's historical missteps and contradicts biblical teachings on individual responsibility. Ultimately, the scapegoat ritual highlights God's sovereignty, the necessity of atonement, and the futility of blaming external forces for one's sins.

We saw that it is Yahweh God Himself that blinds the eyes. (Exo 4:11; Deut 29:4; Isa 6:9-10, 29:10, 44:18; Eze 12:2; Matt 13:10-16; Joh 9:39, 12:39-40; Rom 11:8; 2Thes 2:11-12)

God is sovereign over perception—He opens and closes eyes according to His will.

- **Spiritual blindness is often a form of divine judgment**, particularly against persistent sin or rejection of the truth.
- **Blindness ensures the fulfillment of God's plan**—whether it be **preserving a remnant, revealing truth at the right time, or bringing judgment upon the rebellious**.
- **Jesus confirmed this doctrine** by explaining that His teaching and mission would both **illuminate and blind**, depending on the condition of a person's heart.

The **serpent (H5175)** in the Old Testament is not a reference to supernatural devils or Satanic beings but is consistently used **poetically, allegorically, metaphorically, and symbolically** to convey deeper meanings related to judgment, deception, oppression, and consequences of sin. In **Numbers 21**, the fiery serpents represent a divine punishment for Israel's rebellion, yet their healing through the **bronze serpent** foreshadows **Christ's crucifixion** (John 3:14). However, the later **worship of the bronze serpent** (2Kings 18:4) demonstrates the human tendency to idolize symbols rather than seek the true God.

Throughout **the Psalms and Proverbs**, serpents symbolize the **malicious nature of the wicked**, those whose words are venomous and destructive. The imagery is not literal but conveys the **spiritual deafness and deception** of those who refuse divine truth. **Ecclesiastes and Amos** further illustrate the serpent as a representation of **hidden dangers**, oppressive rulers, or consequences of violating moral and civil laws.

In **Isaiah and Jeremiah**, serpents often depict **conquering nations and political forces**, showing that powerful empires like **Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt** would act like venomous creatures, striking and subjugating others. **Leviathan, the piercing serpent (Isaiah 27:1)**, is likewise symbolic of great world powers that oppose God's people. The **serpent's defeat** in these prophecies ultimately represents **God's victory over oppressive systems** rather than a battle against a supernatural evil being.

Finally, **Deuteronomy and Isaiah** affirm that **idols, which are often likened to serpents, are powerless constructs made by human hands**. The **worship of idols is equated with the belief in false gods, not literal devils**. This reinforces the biblical theme that **God alone is sovereign, and there is no rival supernatural force opposing Him**.

In summary, the OT use of **serpent (H5175) is a literary and symbolic tool** used to describe divine judgment, wicked rulers, human corruption, and oppressive nations—not an independent demonic entity. This understanding aligns with **biblical monotheism**, where **God alone is in control**, and nothing operates outside His will.

The Dragon and the Ancient Serpent, the Devil, and Satan are all Symbols for human adversaries, oppressive systems, or corrupt leadership, or groups opposing God's people, not a distinct supernatural entity.

Traditional translations capitalize "Devil" and "Satan," implying proper names, but these terms are descriptors of roles or actions.

The **serpent (G3789, ophis)** in the New Testament is a complex symbol representing **cunning, deception, and opposition** to God. It is metaphorically associated with **false doctrine, corrupt leadership, and human adversaries**, rather than a supernatural entity. The term **ophis** connects to **G3700 (optanomai, meaning "to see")**, reinforcing its link to **perception and wisdom**, sometimes for good (Matthew 10:16) and often for deception (2Corinthians 11:3).

In **Matthew 7:10 and Luke 11:11**, the serpent symbolizes the **Luciferian doctrine of spiritual illumination**, contrasting with the **bread (Jesus Christ) and fish (Christian doctrine)**. In **Matthew 23:33**, Jesus condemns the **counterfeit priesthood** of the **Sadducees and Pharisees**, labeling them as **serpents and vipers**, exposing their hypocrisy and opposition to God's people. Similarly, **John 3:14 and Numbers 21:9** use the serpent as a **lesson in faith and redemption**, as Moses lifted the bronze serpent for healing, foreshadowing Christ's crucifixion.

Paul, in 1Corinthians 10 and 2Corinthians 11, ties the serpent to **rebellion, false gospels, and mental corruption**—not physical defilement. He warns that just as **Eve's mind was deceived**, so too can believers be led away from the simplicity and purity in Christ by counterfeit doctrine—Luciferian ideas masked as truth, Judeo doctrines masked as Christianity.

In **Revelation 12:9**, the **dragon, serpent, Devil (G1228, false accuser), and Satan (G4567, adversary)** are all linked as **opposition to God's people**, often representing oppressive systems and rulers. The **casting down of the dragon** symbolizes the **political defeat of corrupt powers**, paralleling **Isaiah 14:12-15 and Matthew 24:29**. Revelation 12:14-15 depicts **Israel's migration through Europe** as the woman **receiving the wings of an eagle**, escaping persecution, while the **serpent's flood** represents **false doctrines and external invasions** attempting to destroy them. In **Revelation 20:1-3**, the binding of the serpent signifies a **restraint on opposition to Christianity**, identified with the **Holy Roman Empire (800–1798 AD)**, during which **Jews were restricted from power**. This aligns with **Revelation 3:9**, where those who falsely claimed to be **Judah** were subjected to Christian rule. The **Napoleonic Wars (1798–1804)** marked the **release of Satan**, symbolizing the resurgence of Jewish influence, particularly through the **Rothschild banking dynasty**. Napoleon's self-coronation in **1804** ended **papal authority**, shifting control from the Church to financial and political powers.

Ultimately, the **serpent in the New Testament** is a **symbol of deception, opposition, and false authority**, whether through **doctrine, individuals, or systems** that work against God's covenant people. It is a recurring motif in both judgment and redemption, reflecting the ongoing struggle between **divine truth and human corruption**.

The Old Testament never speaks of a singular “devil.” Instead, the plural “devils” (H8163 saiyr) refers to goat-like idols—false gods Israel foolishly worshipped.

Whether in the wilderness (Leviticus 17:7), through foreign gods (Deuteronomy 32:17), under Jeroboam’s false priesthood (2Chronicles 11:15), or in Canaanite sacrifice (Psalm 106:37)—these so-called “devils” were idols, not supernatural beings.

No horns, no red suits—just stone, metal, and rebellion.

“Lucifer” wasn’t a fallen angel—it was a mocking nickname for the King of Babylon, a man full of pride who exalted himself like a god.

Isaiah 14 is a prophecy concerning the downfall of the King of Babylon, filled with taunting and sarcasm directed at his demise. The passage describes how this once-powerful ruler, who oppressed nations with wrath and relentless domination, will be cast down and utterly defeated. The world will rejoice at his fall, and even nature itself will celebrate his destruction. The imagery intensifies as the scene shifts to the realm of the dead, where past rulers mockingly welcome him, asking if he has now become as weak as they are. His former glory is reduced to decay, with worms covering his body, symbolizing complete humiliation. Verse 12 famously refers to “Lucifer” (translated from the Hebrew “heylel,” meaning “morning star”), describing the King of Babylon’s fall from power—not from heaven as God’s dwelling, but from his elevated worldly status. The king had arrogantly sought to exalt himself above the “stars of God,” a metaphor for the Israelites, and aspired to divine status, declaring himself equal to the Most High. However, God mocks his pride, declaring that he will instead be brought down to the depths of the pit. The passage ultimately reinforces that this “Lucifer” is not an angelic being but a mortal man, doomed to the grave like any other ruler who falsely elevated himself. The prophecy highlights the theme of divine judgment against human arrogance and the ultimate fate of those who seek to exalt themselves above God.

The **King of Tyre** in **Ezekiel 27-28** is a prophetic lamentation directed at a mortal ruler, not a supernatural being. Tyre, a powerful mercantile city situated at the “entry of the sea” (Ezekiel 27:3), boasted of its wealth and influence, likening itself to perfection. However, its arrogance led to divine judgment. God, through Ezekiel, mocks Tyre’s self-exaltation, much like He does with the King of Babylon in Isaiah 14, using **satirical and symbolic language** to illustrate its downfall. The prophecy details Tyre’s **destruction by foreign powers**, particularly Alexander the Great, whose conquest left the city in ruins (Ezekiel 27:25-27). Ezekiel 28 continues the theme, addressing the **“prince of Tyre”** (Ezekiel 28:2) as a **mortal man**, not a fallen angel. The king, blinded by hubris, declared himself divine—*“I sit in the seat of God”*—but God responds that he is **merely a man** and will be **brought low**. The description of **“Eden, the Garden of God”** (Ezekiel 28:13) is metaphorical, referencing **Tyre’s opulence and security**, rather than the literal Eden of Genesis. Like Adam, the king of Tyre would experience a fall from privilege. The **“anointed cherub that covereth”** (Ezekiel 28:14) is a **metaphor for his high status**, akin to how **Cyrus of Persia was called “the Lord’s anointed”** (Isaiah 45:1). The **imagery of stones of fire and precious jewels** represents his **lavish wealth and divine judgment**, not an angelic origin. Throughout scripture, similar **laments and taunts** are used for earthly rulers (Ezekiel 19:1, 32:2). The **hubris of the king of Tyre**, much like that of the King of Babylon, Pharaoh, and Nebuchadnezzar, serves as a cautionary example—**exalting oneself leads to humiliation and destruction**. The **historical and geographical context of Tyre** confirms this interpretation: it was a city enriched by trade (Ezekiel 27:23) but ultimately fell because of its arrogance. The **Septuagint’s rendering** of Ezekiel 28:13, *“You wast in the delight of the paradise of God”*, further reinforces the **symbolic nature** of the passage. Ultimately, **Ezekiel 28 is not about a fallen angelic being, but about the rise and fall of a mortal king whose pride led to divine judgment**—a recurring biblical theme.

The **temptation of Jesus** (Matthew 4:1-11) presents the **“devil” (diabolos, G1228)** not as a supernatural entity but as a symbol of **opposition**, specifically from religious and political adversaries—**the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians**. These groups resisted Jesus’ mission, fearing the loss of their **authority** (John 11:48) and conspiring against Him (Mark 3:6, 12:13). The temptations

parallel the **human struggle against fleshly desires** (James 1:13-15) rather than a literal demonic being. Jesus was tempted just as we are (Heb 4:15).

The Three Temptations and Their Symbolism

1. **Turning Stones to Bread** – A challenge to **prove** His Messiahship by meeting physical needs. This mirrors how **Pharisees and Sadducees** demanded **signs** (Matthew 16:1-4), doubting His ability to provide for Himself or His people. Jesus responded by prioritizing **God's word** over physical sustenance (Deuteronomy 8:3).
2. **Jumping from the Temple Pinnacle** – A test to **prove His divine identity** through spectacle. Religious leaders continually sought **signs** (Matthew 12:38-39, Mark 8:11-12), but Jesus rejected **miraculous proofs on demand**, emphasizing **faith over spectacle** (Deuteronomy 6:16).
3. **Receiving All Earthly Kingdoms** – An offer to **gain power** through compromise, akin to aligning with **Herodians** and political forces (Mark 12:13-17). Jesus **refused worldly dominion**, reaffirming that **God alone** is to be worshiped (Deuteronomy 6:13).

The Broader Conflict: Religious and Political Opposition

Throughout His ministry, Jesus' greatest adversaries—the **Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians**—acted as the **"tempter" (peirazo, G3985)**, consistently testing Him (Matthew 16:1, Mark 8:11, Luke 20:23, John 8:6). This aligns with **James 1:14**, illustrating that temptation arises **from within and through external trials**. The **"devil"** in Matthew 4 symbolizes these **human struggles**, both internal (desires of the flesh) and external (political and religious opponents seeking to undermine Him).

Key Takeaways

- **Jesus' responses set the tone for His ministry:** He prioritized **faith, obedience, and God's mission** over personal gain, validation, or political power.
- **The religious leaders opposed Him not out of ignorance, but to protect their influence,** demonstrating the cost of true discipleship in a world driven by religious and political power.
- **The devil represents opposition to God's plan,** embodied by human adversaries and the broader struggles of the flesh.
- **The angels who ministered to Jesus (Matthew 4:11) could symbolize His true followers,** such as the **women (Luke 8:3, Mark 15:41) who provided for Him** throughout His ministry.

Ultimately, Jesus' victory over **temptation and opposition** underscores His unwavering commitment to God's purpose, serving as a **model for faithfulness** in the face of trials.

Matthew 4 Parable of the Sower

Jesus explains the **meaning of the parable** to His disciples. The **seed represents the word of God**, and the **different soils symbolize people's hearts**. The **wayside soil** represents those who hear the word but do not understand, and the **enemy snatches it away**. The **stony ground** represents those who receive the word with joy but fall away under trials and persecution. The **thorny ground** signifies those distracted by **worldly cares, riches, and pleasures**, preventing spiritual growth. The **good soil** represents those who **hear, understand, and keep the word**, bearing spiritual fruit in their lives.

Jesus emphasizes that **not everyone is meant to understand the mysteries of the Kingdom**, referencing **Isaiah's prophecy** that many will hear but not perceive because of their hardened hearts. However, **true disciples will receive divine insight**. The parable highlights the **importance of spiritual receptiveness, perseverance, and genuine faith** in producing a fruitful life in God's kingdom.

The **Parable of the Wheat and the Tares (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-40)** explains that **good and evil will coexist in the world and even within the visible church until the final judgment**. The **Son of Man sows the good seed (children of the kingdom)**, while the **enemy (devil, G1228) sows tares (children of the wicked one)**. The **harvest represents the end of the age**, when the **righteous will be gathered into God's kingdom and the wicked will be cast into fire**. The Greek word **"echthros" (G2190)**, used for "enemy," refers to a hateful, hostile adversary—one who opposes God's purposes. This parable, unique to **Matthew**, parallels other teachings on judgment, such as

Luke 3:17, where John the Baptist warns that **the wheat will be gathered, and the chaff burned**. The **mustard seed and leaven parables** in **Mark 4:30-32** and **Luke 13:18-21** similarly contrast **righteous and corrupt growth** in God's kingdom. Ultimately, this parable underscores **God's patience, the limitations of human judgment, and the certainty of final separation between the righteous and the wicked**.

The **Judgment of the Nations** (Matthew 25:31-46) describes the **Son of Man** returning in glory with His messengers to judge all nations. He **separates the righteous (sheep) from the wicked (goats)**, rewarding the former with an **inheritance in His kingdom** and condemning the latter to **everlasting fire**. The **sheep are praised** for their acts of mercy—feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, and visiting the imprisoned—while the **goats are condemned** for their failure to do the same. Jesus identifies these actions as being done **unto Him** when performed for "the least of these My brethren."

The **punishment of the wicked** is described as **eternal fire prepared for the devil (G1228) and his angels**, yet **Scripture consistently links this judgment to disobedient humans**, not supernatural beings. **Revelation 20:15** states that those not found in the **Book of Life** face eternal fire, while **Revelation 21:8** lists sinners, not demons, as destined for the lake of fire. **2Thessalonians 1:8-9** connects eternal punishment with disobedience to Christ's gospel, specifically among **Israelites**, not celestial beings. **Isaiah 66:24** presents a prophetic vision of "**men**" **suffering unending judgment**, and **Jude 1:7** cites the **destruction of Sodom**, a city of people, as an example of eternal fire. **Mark 9:43-48** underscores the severity of sin and the consequences of hellfire.

While no other Gospel directly replicates Matthew 25:31-46, **similar themes of final judgment** appear in **Mark 13:24-27**, **Luke 21:25-28**, and **John 5:28-29**, reinforcing the reality of **divine separation** between the righteous and the wicked. The **criteria for judgment** are linked to **obedience to God's law**, as detailed in **Deuteronomy 28:15-68**, which outlines the **curses that come upon those who disobey**. Ultimately, this passage highlights the **importance of righteous actions** and the **consequences of neglecting God's commands**, culminating in the final separation of **the faithful and the condemned**.

The **Word of Eternal Life** passage in **John 6:66-71** reveals a pivotal moment when many of Jesus' disciples abandoned Him, unable to accept His teachings. Jesus then challenges the Twelve, asking if they too will leave. **Peter boldly affirms their faith**, declaring that Jesus alone has the words of eternal life and is the **Son of the living God**. However, Jesus responds with a startling revelation: though He has chosen the Twelve, **one among them is a devil (G1228)**—a direct reference to **Judas Iscariot**, the one who would betray Him.

Judas' background remains **shrouded in mystery**, yet the name "**Iscariot**" (**Ish-Kerioth**) suggests he was from **Kerioth**, a town in **Judah**, though the region's **proximity to Idumea** raises the possibility that he had **Edomite ancestry**. Unlike the other disciples, who were **Benjaminites from Galilee**, Judas appears to have been an **outsider**. The **Gospels identify him as the group's treasurer**, yet also as an **embezzler**, foreshadowing his ultimate betrayal.

Judas' potential **Idumean connection** ties into the **forced conversion of the Edomites** under **John Hyrcanus (110 BCE)**, when **Idumea was annexed into Judaea**, and its inhabitants were compelled to adopt Judaeian customs. This event set the stage for the later rule of **Herod the Great**, an Idumean who rose to power and **systematically eliminated the Hasmonean priesthood**, replacing them with **Edomite impostors**. These **counterfeit priests**, whom Jesus rebuked for their **man-made traditions**, wielded religious authority, yet **they were not truly of Judah**. Jesus, as the "**Stronger Man**," reclaimed the Kingdom from these false leaders, bestowing it upon a nation that would **bear fruit**—the **true heirs of God's promises**.

Understanding **who spread the Gospel and bore fruit** clarifies **who God's people truly are**. Judas' betrayal was more than an individual act—it symbolized the **struggle between the counterfeit and the true** within the Kingdom of God.

In **John 8**, Jesus delivers a powerful rebuke to the **Pharisees**, exposing their hypocrisy and false claims to Abrahamic heritage. The **context of John 8:31-47** revolves around **truth versus deception**, where Jesus contrasts those who genuinely follow Abraham's faith with those who **reject Him** and act in opposition to God. Though the Pharisees claim to be **Abraham's descendants**, Jesus challenges them, stating that if they were truly Abraham's children, they would act like him—walking in faith and righteousness rather than plotting murder and spreading falsehood.

Jesus makes a striking declaration in **John 8:44**, telling the Pharisees that they are **"of their father the devil."** This **does not mean they are literal offspring of Satan** but rather that they align **morally and spiritually** with the adversary. In biblical language, **"father"** often denotes **allegiance, discipleship, or moral succession**, rather than physical lineage. "Father" is a metaphor for spiritual allegiance. In the Biblical language, "father" often refers to the **one whom a person follows, imitates, or aligns with morally** rather than their literal parent.

Examples from Scripture:

- **Matthew 5:9** – "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." (*Moral alignment.*)
- **Ephesians 2:2** – "You once walked according to the prince of the power of the air... the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience." (*Those who live in disobedience are called "sons" of it.*)
- **Isaiah 1:4** – "Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers!" (*Israel is called the "offspring" of wickedness because of their behavior.*)
- **Matthew 23:31** – "You are sons of those who murdered the prophets." (*Not literal sons, but spiritual successors.*)
- **1John 3:10** – "Children of God and children of the devil are manifest..." (*Spiritual alignment, not genetic descent.*)

The **Pharisees' actions—hatred, lies, and deception—mirror the traits of the adversary**, whom Jesus describes as a "murderer from the beginning" and "the father of lies."

The **early Church Fathers** also understood **John 8:44** as a **spiritual alignment rather than a literal genealogy**. Origen, Augustine, and Chrysostom all affirmed that Jesus **condemned their behavior**, not their bloodline. This aligns with **Old Testament prophetic language**, where Israel was rebuked as **"children of iniquity"** when they strayed from God (Isaiah 63:16, Deuteronomy 32:5).

Ultimately, **Jesus' words expose the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees**. Their **traditions of men** had corrupted God's laws, and they opposed the truth **not because of their heritage, but because of their rejection of Him**. By **worshiping sin and lies**, they had become "children" of the adversary.

Romans 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, **his servants ye are to whom ye obey**; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

Jesus' words in John 8 weren't just for the Pharisees—they're a timeless warning for all of us. Today, we live in a world where many people claim to be "children of God," but Jesus made it clear: it's **not what we say with our mouths, but what we do with our lives** that reveals who our true father is.

Just like the Pharisees, many today:

- **Claim religious heritage** – "I go to church," "I believe in God," or "I grew up Christian."
- **Say they believe in Scripture**, yet twist it, ("I'm saved") reject parts of it ("Just believe"), or live in direct opposition to it (the law was 'done away with').
- **Oppose righteousness**—mocking truth, attacking those who stand for it, and celebrating things that God clearly calls sin.

Jesus says that **those who lie, deceive, hate, and murder (spiritually or literally)** are following the pattern of the devil—not because they're demon-possessed or born of Satan, but because they've **aligned themselves** with the spirit of opposition, rebellion, and self-will. The term 'devil' is used to describe someone displaying **characteristics** of sin and wickedness.

It's the same today:

- When people **justify sin, promote false teachings, or oppose the truth**, (whether willingly or unknowingly) they are showing who their spiritual father is.
- In context, it's not about **who your ancestors were**, but **who you obey today**.

- You can sit in a pew and still be a child of the devil—if your heart is full of lies, pride, and rebellion, and even if you unwittingly believe lies, or trapped in one of the 33,000 denominational prisons for your mind, spirit, and soul.

But here's the good news: **We can change allegiance.**

Romans 6 says that we were once slaves to sin, but now we're servants of righteousness—if we obey the truth. Jesus calls us to leave behind the lies of the adversary (and even our own ways) and walk as true children of God by doing His will.

So the real question today is: **Who are we imitating? Whose voice are we following? Whose will are we doing?**

Because whoever we align ourselves with—**that's our spiritual father.**

It's the sin **in people's hearts**, and the systems and behaviors that reflect rebellion against God. That's what the Bible means when it talks about *the devil*.

Matthew 12:27 *And if I by Beelzebul cast out devils (G1140), by whom do **your children** cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges.*

More proof that you are the 'children' to whom you serve.

In Matthew 12:27, "your children" refers to the disciples or followers of the Pharisees who practiced exorcism. Jesus uses this reference to highlight the inconsistency in the Pharisees' accusations, questioning why His exorcisms are attributed to Beelzebul while their own followers' actions are not subjected to the same scrutiny.

Other scriptural passages that convey similar themes of spiritual alignment and authority:

John 8:44: Jesus addresses the Pharisees, saying, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." Here, 'father' signifies spiritual allegiance rather than biological descent, emphasizing that their actions align them with Satan.

Acts 19:13: This passage recounts, "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus." It illustrates that others, outside of Jesus' followers, attempted exorcisms, raising questions about the legitimacy and source of their authority.

Mark 9:38-39: John tells Jesus, "We saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followeth not us." Jesus responds, "Forbid him not." This indicates that performing exorcisms in Jesus' name was not limited to the immediate disciples, highlighting the broader context of spiritual authority.

When Jesus said, "*Ye are of your father the devil*" (John 8:44), He wasn't talking about genetics — He was talking about **behavior, allegiance, and moral identity.**

In Scripture, "**fatherhood**" often means **spiritual likeness or discipleship**, not literal descent. Just like Paul called Timothy "my son in the faith" (1Tim 1:2), and just as believers are called "children of God" (1John 3:10), "children of light" (Eph 5:8), or "children of disobedience" (Eph 2:2), **Jesus was exposing who they truly served.**

Their "father" was the devil because their hearts aligned with **lies, slander, and murder** — the same traits the Bible attributes to the *diabolos* (John 8:44). This matched what God says in **Jeremiah 7:24 and 16:12** — that people "follow the counsels and imaginations of their evil hearts," becoming children of whatever they obey (Romans 6:16).

Matthew 12:27 clinches it:

"And if I cast out devils by Beelzebul, by whom do your children cast them out?"

Jesus is pointing out **allegiance**. Their "children" — that is, **their followers** — were acting in spiritual partnership with Beelzebul by their accusations and false power structures.

This confirms the pattern:

- Just like "*sons of Belial*" in 1Sam 2:12 were rebellious Israelites.
- Just like Paul warns of "*false accusers*" (*diaboloi*) in the last days (2Tim 3:3).

- Just like the Pharisees were called “*whitewashed tombs*” — pretty on the outside, but full of death (Matt 23:27).

They were **not biologically born of a devil**, but spiritually aligned with everything that opposes truth, light, and the Kingdom.

The **Last Supper** in **John 13** takes place just before the **Passover**, marking the beginning of Jesus' final hours. **Knowing His time had come**, He demonstrates humility by **washing the disciples' feet**, symbolizing **cleansing through the Word** and setting an example of **servant leadership**. Peter initially resists, but Jesus insists that this washing is necessary for having a **part with Him**. However, Jesus declares that **not all are clean**, alluding to **Judas Iscariot**, the one who would betray Him. During the meal, **Satan (G4567 – adversary)** enters Judas' heart, prompting him to act. The term "Satan" here does not indicate **a supernatural entity** but rather the **influence of human adversaries**—the **Edomite-controlled temple system**, including the **Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians** who sought Jesus' death. Jesus identifies Judas by giving him a **sop (a piece of bread)**, signifying betrayal. Judas then **immediately leaves to carry out his plan**, stepping into the darkness both physically and spiritually.

This passage highlights **human opposition, betrayal, and spiritual blindness**, rather than **demonic possession**. The **temple elites**, Herodians, and their agents—**not supernatural beings**—are the real **adversaries** orchestrating Jesus' arrest.

Scattered Israel In Acts 10:34-38, Peter delivers a profound message about God's impartiality, emphasizing that He does not favor any person based on status, wealth, or position in society. This truth applies to all Israelites, whether in Judea or scattered among the nations, and refers to those who fear God and practice righteousness. The Gentiles in this passage are not unrelated outsiders, but Israelites who have forgotten their identity. Peter continues to affirm that Jesus Christ, the anointed Messiah, came to preach peace to the children of Israel, performing miracles as proof of His divine mission. He addresses the nature of oppression, clarifying that those Jesus healed were not under demonic possession in the traditional sense, but were oppressed by human authorities, much like the poor who are oppressed by the rich, as noted in James 2:6. This highlights the broader theme of God's justice, which opposes all forms of unjust power and control, whether exercised by rulers or other authorities.

Acts 13 Barnabas and Paul's mission in Cyprus culminates in a powerful demonstration of divine authority over deception and opposition. As they preached the Word of God, they encountered **Elymas**, a false prophet who sought to hinder the faith of the Roman deputy, Sergius Paulus. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Paul rebuked Elymas as a child of the devil, exposing his deceitful attempts to pervert the truth. As a sign of judgment, Elymas was struck with blindness, confirming the power of God and reinforcing the gospel's authority. Witnessing this miraculous event, Sergius Paulus believed, astonished by the truth of Christ. This encounter highlights the triumph of light over darkness, truth over falsehood, and God's sovereign power to remove obstacles that hinder the spread of His Word.

1Corinthians 10: Paul warns the Corinthians against idolatry by drawing parallels to Israel's failures in the wilderness, emphasizing that their disobedience led to divine judgment. He urges believers to learn from these examples, cautioning against lust, idolatry, and testing God's patience. Paul stresses that temptation is common to all, but God provides a way to overcome it. He commands them to flee from idolatry, explaining that sacrifices made to idols are actually offerings to demons. Believers must choose between the table of the Lord and the table of devils, as they cannot serve both. This passage underscores faithfulness to God and the necessity of spiritual purity.

In Ephesians 4, Paul describes the **mind apart from God** as **vain, darkened, ignorant, and blind** (Ephesians 4:17-18), echoing **Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, and Jeremiah**, which declare human wisdom **futile, corrupt, and deceitful**. In contrast, believers are **renewed in the spirit of their mind**, putting off the **old, corrupt nature** and embracing **righteousness and holiness** (Ephesians 4:22-24;

Colossians 3:10). Paul warns against **giving place to the devil (false accusers, adversarial influences)** by harboring anger, deceit, and corrupt communication, which **grieves the Holy Spirit** (Ephesians 4:27-30). Just as **light overcomes darkness**, replacing sinful influences with God's Spirit prevents **spiritual relapse**, much like overcoming addiction requires **filling the void with righteousness**. Allowing anger to fester **creates an opportunity for adversarial forces to distort minor offenses into destructive conflicts**, damaging relationships, marriages, and one's own peace. Paul's counsel—*"Do not let the sun go down on your anger"*—warns against the **multiplying effect of unchecked emotions**, urging believers to seek **quick reconciliation** and resist the **corrupting influence of ungodly opposition** before it takes root.

Armor of God: Paul describes the struggle against **evil rulers and forces of darkness** as a battle not against supernatural beings, but against **corrupt human systems of power**, including political authorities, false religious leaders, and oppressive institutions that oppose God's Kingdom (Ephesians 6:11-12). The **"spiritual wickedness in high places"** represents **governments, bureaucracies, and legal systems** that work against morality and righteousness. As true Christians, believers must **equip themselves with the whole armor of God**—the **belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, sword of the Spirit, and feet shod with the gospel of peace**—to stand against deception and oppression. This battle is a war of **ideologies, false doctrines, and wicked leadership**, aligning with biblical symbols such as **"the prince of this world" (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11)**, **"the accuser of the brethren" (Rev. 13:12)**, and **"the beast and his kingdom" (Rev. 16:10)**. The true fight is against **the evil that stems from the heart of man, expressed through corrupt leaders and institutions**, requiring Christians to stand boldly in faith and truth.

In **1Timothy 3:6-7 and 3:11**, the term *devil* (G1228) highlights specific pitfalls to avoid in church leadership. A bishop (supervisor) must be blameless, experienced, and well-respected, avoiding pride, and maintaining a good reputation among non-believers to prevent falling into their snares. Likewise, deacons must be reverent, sincere, and proven in faith, with their wives or women in service exhibiting dignified conduct, refraining from gossip and slander (diabolous), and remaining faithful in all matters—personal, household, and spiritual.

Paul emphasizes the importance of guiding those ensnared by false teachings back to truth through **gentleness, patience, and sound instruction** (2Timothy 2:24-25). The phrase *"recover themselves"* suggests awakening from a **spiritual stupor**, highlighting how individuals trapped by deception—whether through false shepherds, worldly influences, or their own carnal minds—lose spiritual freedom and act under an opposing will. The *"snare of the devil"* represents **deceptive traps** that lead people away from God's path. 2Timothy 2:26 serves as a **warning against the perils of spiritual captivity** and the **necessity of compassionate correction** to restore those led astray.

In **2Timothy 3:1-9**, Paul warns of perilous times in the last days, marked by widespread moral decay. People will be **selfish, greedy, arrogant, blasphemous, ungrateful, and unholy**, lacking natural affection and refusing reconciliation. They will be **false accusers (diaboloι, devils), lacking self-control, fierce, and hostile toward goodness**, betraying others while indulging in pleasure over God. Though appearing godly, they will deny true faith, leading others astray—especially the weak and sinful. Like **Jannes and Jambres**, they will resist the truth, but their corruption will eventually be exposed. This passage parallels the **Laodicean church age**, emphasizing the dangers of hypocrisy, deception, and rebellion against God.

In Titus 2:3 women are exhorted not to be devils, which simply means don't slander and gossip, and to behave righteously.

Hebrews 2:14-15 explains that Jesus Christ fully took on human flesh and blood to nullify (katargeo) the power of death held by the devil (diabolos), which represents opposition to God in both internal (carnal nature, sinful choice) and external (worldly influences, religious deception) forms. The concentric symmetry in this passage contrasts Christ's liberation with enslavement to sin, harkening

back to the choice in Eden—between the Tree of Life (Christ) and the Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil (God's Law). Ultimately, Hebrews 2:14 presents the devil not as an external entity with absolute power, but as the carnal inclination to oppose God, resulting in transgression and death under divine law. Through Christ, that power is broken, and believers are freed from its grip.

James 4:1-10 warns against worldliness, highlighting that conflicts and strife arise from unchecked desires and covetousness within individuals. James condemns friendship with the world as worldly-mindedness creates a barrier between believers and Jesus Christ. Verse 7 commands believers to submit to God and resist the devil, which represents human lusts, or a combination of sinful inclinations and external active forces such as the Jewish and Roman opposition. The passage urges believers to "draw near to God," calling for repentance and spiritual purification. The term "double-minded" describes individuals torn between worldly desires and spiritual devotion, similar to the divided loyalties seen in 1Kings 18:21 and Joshua 24:15. Ultimately, the passage calls for a decisive break from worldly influence and full submission to God's will.

In 1Peter 5:8, the term "adversary" (*antidikos*, G476) refers to a legal opponent, while "devil" (*diabolos*, G1228) is an epithet for human slanderers, deceivers, and persecutors. The "roaring lion" metaphor represents individuals or groups masquerading as righteous (imitating Judah, the lion tribe) while opposing God's people. To "devour" means to destroy faith through deception, slander, or persecution. Across Scripture, *diabolos* is applied to humans engaging in false accusations—Judas Iscariot (John 6:70), slanderous wives (1Tim 3:11), corrupt individuals in the last days (2Tim 3:3), and Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:10). Revelation 2:9-10 connects the term to false Jews in the synagogue of Satan. The adversary in 1Peter 5:8 symbolizes human persecutors of early Christians who faced localized hostility, social ostracism, verbal abuse, and legal threats. These afflictions sought to discredit believers, aligning with Peter's call to remain steadfast in faith amid societal opposition.

In 1John 2:18 we see that there are many anti-Christ. A term describing an individual or multitude of individuals or systems opposing Jesus Christ.

1John 3:8 Those who habitually practice sin align themselves with the adversary (*diabolos*), as sin has existed since the beginning. Christ came to destroy these works, making a sinful lifestyle incompatible with His transformative power. Those born of God possess His "seed," signifying a new nature that leads to righteousness, fulfilling prophecies of internal renewal (Ezekiel 36:26-27, Jeremiah 31:33). This distinction reveals the children of God and those who oppose Him. Cain exemplifies this opposition, murdering Abel out of jealousy because his own deeds were evil. The phrase "of that wicked one" does not imply Cain was Satan's literal son but rather a follower of rebellion, as seen in similar biblical language (e.g., "sons of Belial" or followers of Paul and Apollos). Cain, like Esau, was rejected due to his own sin.

Jude 3-16 issues a strong warning against false teachers who infiltrate the Christian community, urging believers to "contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3). Jude illustrates divine judgment through historical examples: the unbelief of the Israelites (Jude 5), fallen angels (Jude 6), and the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah (Jude 7), warning that apostasy leads to destruction. False teachers are characterized as corrupt, defiling the flesh, rejecting divine authority, and speaking evil (Jude 8-10), following the paths of Cain (self-righteous rebellion), Balaam (greed-driven deception), and Korah (defiance against God's established order) (Jude 11).

Jude 9 presents **Michael the Archangel** as a counterexample, demonstrating humility by deferring judgment to God when contending with the devil over the "body of Moses." This passage parallels **Zechariah 3:2**, where the Lord rebukes Satan in a dispute over Joshua the High Priest, symbolizing Israel. Some interpretations suggest the "body of Moses" represents Israel under the Law or Moses' writings, tying it to Jesus' debate with Jewish leaders in **John 5:46-47**. This contrast underscores the false teachers' arrogance, as they slander what they do not understand (Jude 10), unlike Michael, who recognizes divine authority.

Jude further condemns these apostates, likening them to hidden reefs, waterless clouds, and wandering stars (Jude 12-13). The "Way of Cain" symbolizes attempts to approach God through works instead of blood atonement (Genesis 4; Hebrews 11:4), reflecting modern spiritual apostasy—whether in false religious systems, corrupt patriotism, or lukewarm churches that reject Christ's sacrifice. Hebrews 9:22 stresses that "without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness." Ultimately, Jude warns that these deceivers will face certain judgment, emphasizing that true righteousness comes through faith in Christ's atoning blood, not human effort or religious distortion.

We looked at all the verses with SATAN in the OT.

God permits Balaam to accompany Balak's messengers but strictly commands him to speak only what He instructs. However, Balaam, driven by covetousness and the lure of wealth, acts hastily and disregards God's precise conditions, setting out without waiting for the messengers. His eagerness reveals an internal struggle between obedience and personal ambition. God's anger is kindled, not merely because Balaam goes, but due to the underlying motives in his heart. In response, God sends His angel as an adversary (satan) to oppose Balaam, a term similarly applied in Exodus 4:24, where Moses faces divine confrontation for neglecting circumcision. The donkey, more spiritually perceptive than Balaam, repeatedly avoids the angel, leading to Balaam's frustration and mistreatment of the animal, mirroring his spiritual blindness. The angel rebukes Balaam for his unjust treatment of the donkey and exposes his perverse path, as he prioritizes self-interest over God's command. The New Testament likens Balaam's actions to those who abandon righteousness for personal gain (2Peter 2:14-15). Balaam, realizing his sin, offers to turn back, but the angel allows him to proceed under the condition that he speaks only God's words. This passage highlights the danger of letting personal desires overshadow divine directives, illustrating that true prophetic insight requires spiritual awareness, humility, and unwavering obedience to God's will.

Hannah, deeply distressed by her barrenness, endures constant provocation from her rival wife, Peninnah, leading her to fervent prayer and a vow to dedicate her son to God if granted one. Unlike a satanic adversary, Hannah's adversary is her human rival, who exacerbates her suffering, similar to other biblical instances of familial rivalry and affliction. Misunderstood by Eli the priest as being drunk, Hannah clarifies her sorrowful prayer, and Eli blesses her request. God hears her plea, and she gives birth to Samuel, whom she dedicates to the Lord, fulfilling her vow.

In 1Samuel 29:4 the Philistine commanders oppose David's inclusion in the battle, referring to him as an 'adversary' to them.

In 2Samuel 19:22, after Abishai suggests executing Shimei for cursing David, David rebukes his own men who were adversaries to the peace and unity of the nation

In 1Kings 5:4 there were no adversaries to challenge Solomon's peaceful reign.

The **phrase "sons of God"** consistently refers to **God's covenant people, Israel**, throughout Scripture. In Genesis 6, it signifies the righteous descendants of Adam who later intermarried with the unrighteous, leading to moral corruption. In Job, the term denotes **faithful worshipers assembling before Yahweh**, mirroring the practice of Israelite gatherings. Various Old Testament passages, including **Deuteronomy 32:8, Psalm 29:1, and Hosea 1:10**, affirm that the **sons of God are the chosen lineage of Israel**, not angelic beings. The New Testament upholds this theme, with **John 1:12, Romans 8:14, and Galatians 3:26** emphasizing **sonship through faith in Christ**, which restores Israel's rightful place as heirs of the covenant.

The **Nephilim of Genesis 6** were not angelic-human hybrids but tyrannical men of great renown. The phrase **"sons of God"** is never applied to angels in a redemptive or covenantal sense but always to **righteous individuals in relationship with God**, reinforcing the biblical theme of divine inheritance and obedience.

The Book of Job presents the most extensive use of the term **sawtawn** in the Old Testament, appearing **14 times**, always referring to an adversary rather than a supernatural being. In Job 1, the

Satan is not a demonic figure but an **unrighteous, envious man** who infiltrates the assembly of the **sons of God**—righteous believers gathering before Yahweh. The term "Ha-Satan" (H7854) simply means "the adversary" or "the enemy," a **role** rather than a proper name. This adversary challenges **Job's faithfulness**, accusing him of serving God only because of divine protection and blessings. Yahweh allows Job to be tested under strict limits, paralleling other biblical trials, such as **Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22:12)** and **Hezekiah's confrontation with the Assyrian threat (2Kings 18:30)**. Similar accusations occur throughout scripture, questioning whether one's devotion to God is sincere or conditional on prosperity—seen in **Israel's wilderness complaints (Exodus 16:3)**, **Nehemiah's opposition (Nehemiah 4:2)**, **Jesus' temptation (Matthew 4:3-10)**, and **Peter's testing (Luke 22:31-34)**. These accounts emphasize the **testing of faith** under adversity, proving genuine devotion beyond personal gain. Job's steadfast endurance **contrasts figures like Judas (Luke 22:3-6), who betrayed Christ for worldly benefits**, reaffirming the biblical theme that true faith withstands trials.

In Job 2, the adversary (ha-Satan) again infiltrates the assembly of the **sons of God**—righteous believers before Yahweh—challenging Job's integrity. Like Psalm 82, where God rebukes unjust rulers, this scene underscores divine authority over earthly affairs. The adversary, depicted as a **lawless wanderer** (Hosea 9:17), accuses Job of serving God only out of self-preservation, insisting that Job would curse God if physically afflicted. Yahweh permits Job's further testing but forbids his death. Job is struck with painful boils, a **symbol of affliction** paralleling the **Egyptian plagues (Exodus 9:9-11)** and national suffering from Assyrian invasions (Nahum 3:19). Job's suffering foreshadows the **Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53**, emphasizing endurance despite innocence. Ultimately, Job 2 reaffirms God's sovereignty, as **Job later acknowledges that his suffering is from Yahweh, not a rogue evil being (Job 19:21)**. This passage reinforces the theme that faith must withstand adversity, mirroring trials faced by figures like **Abraham, Hezekiah, and Jesus** in their ultimate tests of devotion.

Job 16:9-14 describes Job's adversary as a hostile and ungodly figure who attacks, mocks, and torments him. The language used—such as "tearing," "gnashing teeth," and "compassing with archers"—draws parallels to military conquest, particularly the Assyrian invasion and the fall of Jerusalem. Scholars also connect Job's suffering to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah and King Hezekiah, both righteous figures enduring affliction.

Job laments that God has delivered him to the wicked, highlighting his sense of abandonment. The siege imagery, including "breach upon breach," reinforces the idea of being overwhelmed by relentless attacks.

This adversary mirrors the Satan in Job 1-2, not as a supernatural being, but as a known human enemy. The Satan orchestrates Job's suffering through external forces—fire, wind, and invading raiders—while also inciting mockery and torment. The narrative emphasizes human opposition, suffering, and perseverance rather than a cosmic struggle between God and fallen angels. Job's story ultimately illustrates the endurance of faith and the eventual vindication of the righteous.

Job 38 Some scholars interpret Job 38:7 not as a reference to Genesis creation but as symbolic of Israel's formation as a nation. In this view, the "sons of God" represent Israel, rejoicing at their covenant with God, aligning with Exodus 4:22 ("Israel is my son, my firstborn") and Deuteronomy 14:1 ("You are the sons of the Lord your God"). Job 38 begins with God speaking from the whirlwind, challenging Job's understanding of divine governance. The phrase "Gird up now thy loins like a man" suggests military readiness, paralleling Isaiah 5:27, which describes the Assyrian army's preparedness.

The creation imagery in Job 38 traditionally emphasizes God's control over the physical world, but an alternative interpretation sees it as a metaphor for Israel's deliverance and national identity. The "foundation of the earth" may represent Israel's establishment, while the "morning stars" and "sons of God" symbolize Israelite tribes rejoicing at their deliverance, much like the singing after the Red Sea.

crossing (Genesis 37:9, Exodus 14:27). The sea in Job 38:8-11 is interpreted as Egypt, with the "proud waves" representing its army, ultimately subdued by God's power (Psalm 77:16-19). Further imagery in Job 38:12-21 contrasts light and darkness, where commanding the morning symbolizes Israel's freedom from oppression, and darkness represents exile and suffering, echoing Isaiah 9:2 and 60:2. The references to hail, rain, and deep waters (Job 38:22-30) are seen as divine judgment and restoration, where hail represents judgment on Egypt (Exodus 9:22-26), rain signifies blessing, and deep freezing symbolizes Assyria's defeat. The celestial imagery in Job 38:31-38, including Pleiades, Orion, and Mazzaroth, serves as a rebuke of astrology and foreign influences, reinforcing that God, not the stars, controls Israel's fate (Isaiah 47:13-14).

Job 38:39 - 39:30 shifts to animal symbolism, where lions represent Assyrian or Babylonian kings, wild oxen symbolize Israel's strength, and eagles signify divine guidance and deliverance, similar to Exodus 19:4 ("I bore you on eagles' wings"). Ultimately, this interpretation presents Job 38 not as an account of Genesis creation but as a poetic reflection on Israel's formation, deliverance, and destiny. The "morning stars" and "sons of God" are Israel praising God for their redemption, fitting the broader biblical theme of creation language applied to national deliverance, as seen in Isaiah 43:1-7 and Psalm 89:6 ("sons of the mighty").

David laments the strength and increasing number of his adversaries, who wrongfully hate and repay his good with evil. He expresses the common struggle of the righteous facing opposition despite their pursuit of good. In Psalm 71:13, he calls for divine justice against his enemies, trusting in God to bring them to shame and dishonor. Psalm 109, a powerful imprecatory psalm, further develops this theme, with David detailing the betrayal he endures and appealing to God for judgment. His adversaries are not supernatural beings but men who deceitfully oppose him. The Hebrew verb **sātan** (to oppose) is repeatedly used 6x, emphasizing their role as slanderers and accusers. David prays for severe retribution upon them, desiring their downfall as a reflection of divine justice.

Zechariah 3:1-4 is often interpreted as a heavenly courtroom scene where "Satan" functions as an accuser. However, some scholars argue that this figure represents human adversaries opposing Joshua the high priest and the returning exiles, symbolizing opposition to the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple. Historically, after the Assyrian exile, foreign populations, including Canaanites and Edomites, were resettled in Samaria (2Kings 17:24-28), creating tension between returning exiles and local inhabitants. This opposition is evident in Ezra and Nehemiah, where figures like Sanballat and Tobiah actively hindered reconstruction efforts.

Zechariah's vision highlights God's sovereignty in restoring His people. Joshua, clothed in filthy garments, represents Israel's sin, but God's rebuke of Satan and the removal of Joshua's iniquity demonstrate divine grace and restoration. The vision parallels the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16), where the high priest atones for Israel's sins, foreshadowing messianic fulfillment through the "Branch" (Zec 3:8). The passage underscores that Israel's restoration is God's work, not dependent on human merit. The broader theme of divine rebuke—seen in God's judgments against nations, nature, and individuals—reinforces the certainty of God's justice and the removal of sin from His chosen people.

The Temptation of Jesus, as recorded in Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, and Luke 4:1-13, portrays His testing in the wilderness following His baptism. Led by the Spirit, Jesus fasted for forty days before encountering the "devil" (G1228 diabolos, slanderer/accuser) or "Satan" (G4567 Satanas, adversary). These terms are used interchangeably, emphasizing both the slanderous and adversarial nature of the opposition. The first temptation ("stones" to bread) challenges Jesus' divine Sonship through physical need, countered by Deuteronomy 8:3—man lives by God's word, not bread alone. The second involves the Temple's pinnacle, where Jesus is tempted to prove His identity by jumping, countered with Deuteronomy 6:16 against testing God. The final temptation presents dominion over earthly kingdoms in exchange for worship, which Jesus rebukes with Deuteronomy 6:13—worship belongs to God alone. The "tempter" (G3985 peirazo) is linked in scripture to the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians, who repeatedly tested Jesus throughout His ministry. His resistance demonstrates His victory over sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3) and sets an example for overcoming temptation. The devil

"departed for a season" (Luke 4:13), implying ongoing opposition through religious and political adversaries, rather than a supernatural being. This testing prepared Jesus for later trials, culminating in Gethsemane and the cross, where He remained obedient to God's will.

In Matthew 16:13-19, Jesus questions His disciples about His identity, leading Peter to boldly declare, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus affirms that this revelation came from God, blesses Peter, and declares that His **Ekklēsia** will be built upon "this rock." He grants the keys of the kingdom, symbolizing spiritual authority to bind and loose. However, in **Matthew 16:20**, Jesus instructs His disciples to keep His identity secret, as misconceptions about the Messiah's role persisted—many expected a political liberator, while Jesus' mission was spiritual. In **verses 21-23**, Jesus begins to reveal His coming suffering, death, and resurrection, but Peter, misunderstanding the necessity of Jesus' sacrifice, rebukes Him, saying, "This shall not be unto thee." Jesus responds sharply, calling Peter "Satan" (G4567), as his words mirror the adversarial temptation to abandon the cross. This rebuke underscores the contrast between human reasoning, which seeks to avoid suffering, and God's divine plan of redemption. Peter's well-meaning but misguided resistance serves as a reminder that even the faithful can unknowingly oppose God's will when they prioritize human concerns over divine purposes.

In **Luke 13:10-17**, Jesus heals a woman who had been crippled for eighteen years due to a "spirit of infirmity," described as being "bound by Satan." Jesus **"looses"** her, symbolizing liberation from oppression rather than Satanic possession. The synagogue setting and Sabbath timing emphasize the contrast between **Jesus' mercy and the legalism of the Pharisees**, who object to healing on the Sabbath. Jesus rebukes their hypocrisy, pointing out that they untie their animals for water, yet object to freeing a "daughter of Abraham" from her suffering. The **eighteen-year period parallels Israel's past bondage under foreign oppressors (Judges 3:14; 10:8), reinforcing the theme of deliverance from religious burdens**. The phrase "bound by Satan" reflects **the oppressive traditions of the Jewish rulers, akin to how Acts 10:38 describes the priesthood as 'the devil' oppressing the people**. The Greek term for "oppressed" (G2616 *katadunasteuo*) refers to **harsh control and opposition by rulers**, linking this event to Jesus' broader mission of **freeing people from the Pharisaic traditions that distorted God's law (Colossians 2:14)**. This healing not only restores the woman physically but also symbolizes Jesus' role in **breaking the burdensome "traditions of men" that had enslaved Israel under religious legalism**.

Luke 22:1-6 and the Role of "Satan"

As the Feast of Unleavened Bread approached, the chief priests and scribes sought a way to kill Jesus but feared the people (Luke 22:1-2). Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, was approached by adversaries—agents of the temple system—who sought to betray Jesus (v.3-4). The phrase "Satan entered Judas" (v.3) does not necessitate a supernatural entity but can mean that an enemy (human adversary) came to him, offering a plan to betray Christ. The Greek phrase *eiserchomai eis* ("entered into") is used elsewhere to mean "approached" or "came to" (Acts 16:40).

Judas, known for his greed (John 12:6), agreed to betray Jesus for money (v.5-6), aligning with the interests of the Edomite-controlled temple system, including the Pharisees, chief priests, and Herodians. The term *Satanas* (G4567) in this context refers to human opposition rather than a distinct supernatural being, consistent with biblical usage (John 6:70, Matthew 16:23). This fits within broader biblical themes of enmity, as seen in the Wheat and Tares parable (Matthew 13:24-30) and the Edomite-Cain connection (John 8:44, Matthew 23:35). Judas, as a "tare," grew among the wheat of the disciples until his betrayal.

During the Last Supper, the disciples argued over who among them was the greatest (Luke 22:24). Jesus rebuked them, contrasting **worldly leadership**, which seeks power and status, with **kingdom leadership**, where greatness comes through humility and service (Luke 22:25-26). He reminded them that He Himself came as a servant and assured them of future honor in His kingdom, where they would sit on thrones judging Israel (Luke 22:28-30).

Immediately after, Jesus warned Peter that **Satan sought to sift all the disciples like wheat**—testing and shaking their faith (Luke 22:31). This "Satan" represents the carnal mind and human free will, which can lead to weakness and failure. Jesus, however, **prayed for Peter's faith to endure** and instructed him to strengthen his brethren once he repented and turned back (Luke 22:32). The word "**converted**" (**turned, changed, recovered**) signifies Peter's renewal after his failure. Though **regeneration happens once**, conversion can happen repeatedly as believers struggle, repent, and grow stronger. This passage highlights the **ongoing spiritual battle, the power of Jesus' intercession, and the redemptive nature of repentance**—turning failures into opportunities for strengthening others.

The Synoptic Gospels (**Matthew, Mark, and Luke**) do not mention **Satan or the devil** during the Last Supper. Instead, they emphasize **Judas' human agency** in making a deal with the chief priests **before** the meal (Matt 26:14-16, Mark 14:10-11, Luke 22:3-6).

In John, **Satan's entry marks Judas' final surrender to his role in betrayal**, aligning with the Gospel's theme of **spiritual forces at work (John 1:5, 3:19, 12:35)**.

The **Greek terms "devil" (diabolos) and "Satan" (satanas)** serve different purposes:

- **"Devil" (diabolos, G1228)** = slanderer, accuser, adversary (Judas' **character**).
- **"Satan" (satanas, G4567)** = adversary, enemy of God's purpose (Judas' **role** in Jesus' betrayal).

Thus, **John presents Judas as under Satan's influence long before the betrayal (Judas' role)**, while the **Synoptics focus on Judas' personal decision and external temptations**.

In John 12:27-36, Jesus speaks of His impending death and its cosmic significance, emphasizing that His crucifixion will bring judgment upon the world and cast out its corrupt rulers. The "world" (kosmos) refers to the existing order—specifically, the religious and political system dominated by the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodian rulers, and Rome, who opposed Jesus and sought to maintain power. The "prince of this world" has traditionally been interpreted as Satan, but in this context, it refers to the Jewish Temple authorities and their oppressive legalism, as they rejected Jesus Christ's authority and aligned with Rome to preserve their rule (John 19:15). The phrase "shall be cast out" signals the fall of this corrupt order, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD, fulfilling Jesus' prophecy (Matthew 24). By His death and resurrection, Jesus broke their hold on the kingdom, ushering in the New Covenant (Hebrews 8:13). This event prefigures the ultimate casting out of all adversaries of God's Kingdom, the defeat of death, and the establishment of righteousness (Matthew 13:41-42, 2Peter 3:10-13, Revelation 20:10, 14). Adam Kotsko's *The Prince of This World* traces how the concept of the devil evolved from representing oppressive rulers in early biblical thought to justifying authority in later Christian tradition. Initially, the devil symbolized tyrants like Pharaoh, but with Christianity's rise to power under Constantine, it shifted to represent those who resisted authority. Medieval theology reinforced this, using the devil to legitimize suffering and justify state and religious control, a pattern still reflected in modern power structures, where dissenters and marginalized groups are demonized.

In John 14, Jesus emphasizes that love for Him is demonstrated through obedience to His commandments, aligning with divine wisdom and truth. He promises the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to guide and strengthen believers, offering a peace that transcends worldly turmoil. However, He warns of the coming "prince of this world," referring not to a supernatural being but to corrupt political and religious authorities—such as the Jewish leadership and Roman rulers—who conspired against Him. These powers, driven by manipulation, deception, and self-preservation, falsely accused Jesus and sought His death, yet they had no true claim over Him. The "political spirit" operates through pride, control, and ideological division, distorting truth and leading people away from God's wisdom. Unlike earthly rulers who seek dominance, Jesus exemplifies humility, truth, and servanthood, calling His followers to reject worldly corruption and stand firm in divine righteousness.

In **2Corinthians 4:1-15**, Paul defends the integrity of his ministry, emphasizing transparency, perseverance, and the power of the gospel in contrast to spiritual blindness. He acknowledges that the gospel is veiled to those who are perishing, attributing this blinding not to Satan but to **"the god of this age"** (G165, *aiōn*), a phrase that early Christian writers—including Irenaeus, Chrysostom, Augustine, and Aquinas—understood to refer to **God Himself, not Satan**. This interpretation aligns with **Isaiah 6:9-10 and Romans 9-11**, where divine hardening is attributed to Yahweh as an act of judgment upon the unbelieving. The parallel between **2Corinthians 4:4 and 4:6** further supports this view, as both verses describe God's control over light and darkness—**blinding some while illuminating others**. Paul's reference to **Genesis 1:3** reinforces this, presenting God as the sovereign One who both withholds and bestows spiritual sight.

Paul and his fellow ministers endure hardships—affliction, persecution, and even physical suffering—yet they remain steadfast, knowing that their suffering mirrors Christ's, and through their trials, His life is manifested in them. They carry the **"treasure" of the gospel in frail, earthen vessels**, signifying that their power is from God, not themselves. Though death works in them, it brings life to others, as they stand firm in faith, trusting in **the resurrection promise**—that just as **God raised Jesus, He will also raise them up**. Paul concludes that their suffering ultimately serves **the greater good**, increasing **thanksgiving and glorifying God through grace**. This passage highlights the divine orchestration of spiritual illumination and judgment, affirming that **God alone determines who sees the truth and who remains blind**.

Acts 4:32-37 describes the early Christian community as unified and selfless, with believers voluntarily sharing their possessions to ensure that none lacked. Barnabas, a Levite from Cyprus, is highlighted as an example of true generosity, selling his land and donating the proceeds to the apostles for communal distribution. This spirit-led giving stands in stark contrast to the deception of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11. Unlike Barnabas, they secretly withheld part of their sale while pretending to donate the full amount. Peter, through the Holy Spirit, discerned their deceit, rebuking Ananias for allowing "Satan" to fill his heart, equating his lie to a direct offense against God. "Satan", being the metaphorical **role** of his own carnal desires of greed and pride leading him to sin. Scripture emphasizes that sin originates in the heart (Jer 17:9; Mark 7:21-23; Pro 4:23). Peter clarifies that their land was theirs to keep or sell, and their sin was not in withholding funds but in deceitfully misrepresenting their offering. Ananias falls dead upon hearing Peter's words, followed by his wife Sapphira three hours later when she perpetuates the lie. This divine judgment, reminiscent of instances like Gehazi's punishment in 2Kings and Nadab and Abihu's fate in Leviticus, instills great fear in the early assembly. The contrast between Barnabas's sincerity and Ananias and Sapphira's hypocrisy underscores the Holy Spirit's active role in the early assemblies, affirming the importance of honesty and integrity before God.

In Acts 26:12-18, Paul recounts his dramatic encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. He heard the voice of Jesus, questioning his persecution and declaring, "It is hard for you to kick against the goads." This phrase, drawn from Greek literature, symbolizes the futility and self-inflicted harm of resisting divine will, much like an ox injuring itself by kicking against a prodding goad. Paul's persecution of Christians was not only harmful to them but also a rebellion against God's purpose. Jesus then commissions Paul as a witness to both the things he has seen and future revelations, sending him to the 'lost sheep' among the nations to open their eyes, turn them from darkness to light, and free them from *the power of Satan* to God. The "power of Satan" represents deception, false teaching, and spiritual blindness that keeps people in opposition to God. Through the gospel, individuals are liberated from ignorance and rebellion, receiving forgiveness of sins and a sanctified inheritance through faith in Christ. Scripture often personifies sin and Satan to illustrate their influence over the unredeemed, with terms like "Satan" and "the devil" representing adversarial roles, false systems, and human sinfulness (Rom 7:13). This passage encapsulates the transformative power of

the gospel, bringing enlightenment, deliverance, and eternal inheritance to those who turn to God in faith. These people are turned from their own will to the Will of God.

Paul opens **Romans 9** with deep sorrow for Israel, acknowledging their unique privileges—adoption, covenants, the Law, temple service, and the promise of the Messiah. However, he clarifies that not all who are among Israel are truly of Israel, introducing the principle of **divine selection**. Using **Isaac and Ishmael**, he demonstrates that lineage alone does not determine covenant status, but rather Yahweh's sovereign choice. **Ishmael and Keturah's sons** were of Abraham's flesh but not counted as the covenant seed—only **Isaac, the son of promise**, was chosen, prefiguring Jacob's election over Esau.

Paul then focuses on **Jacob and Esau**, emphasizing that Yahweh's choice was made **before birth, not based on works but on His divine purpose** (Romans 9:11-13). Esau, though the firstborn, despised his birthright and married into cursed Canaanite bloodlines, becoming the **father of Edom, a perpetual adversary to Israel**. Malachi 1:2-3 and Obadiah confirm that Yahweh **hated Esau**, condemning his lineage to destruction. Paul anticipates objections to God's justice, asserting Yahweh's **absolute sovereignty**, citing Pharaoh as an example—hardened to fulfill Yahweh's purpose, just as Esau and his descendants serve as **vessels of wrath fitted for destruction** (Romans 9:17-22).

The **potter and clay metaphor** (Romans 9:20-23) underscores Yahweh's right to shape nations, making **Israel the vessel of honor** and Esau-Edom the vessel of dishonor. Paul reaffirms that Yahweh **endures the wicked for a time** to magnify His power, but ultimately **Esau's line (Edomites) is doomed**—“*There shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau*” (Obadiah 1:18). The **Edomites infiltrated Israel**, masquerading as Judahites (John 8:44, Revelation 2:9-10), but were always the **tares among the wheat**, false brethren destined for destruction.

Paul concludes by reaffirming **the restoration of scattered Israel** (Romans 9:24-29), citing **Hosea and Isaiah**—Yahweh promised to **regather the lost sheep of Israel** (from out of the nations), bringing back those once called “*not My people*” (Hosea 1:10, 2:23). Yahweh **purifies His people** and **removes all Canaanite infiltrators** (Zechariah 14:21). Ultimately, **Esau's descendants (Edomites) will be wiped out**, and Yahweh's true **vessels of mercy**—Jacob's seed—will inherit the promises.

Romans 16:17-24 serves as Paul's final exhortation to the Roman Israelites, warning them to mark and avoid divisive individuals who promote doctrines contrary to the gospel. These false teachers use smooth words and deception to mislead the faithful, serving their own desires rather than Christ. Paul draws parallels to past warnings, urging believers to remain separate from corrupt influences. He commends their obedience and urges them to be wise in goodness while staying innocent of evil. In verse 20, Paul assures them that God will soon crush Satan under their feet, referencing the impending destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, which fulfilled prophecy and broke the power of the Jewish ruling class. The Greek phrase “**en tachos**” (shortly) consistently implies swift divine action, reinforcing that God's intervention would be decisive. This passage connects to **Genesis 3:15, Luke 10:19, and 1John 3:8**, emphasizing both Christ's victory over evil and the believers' authority through Him. The prophecy reflects both a historical fulfillment and an ongoing spiritual victory, culminating in the final defeat of Satan at Christ's return.

1Corinthians 5, Paul condemns the widely known case of incest within the Corinthian congregation, emphasizing that even pagan societies would not tolerate such immorality (1Cor 5:1). Fornication, including incest, was strictly forbidden in the Law (Lev 18:8; Deut 22:30), as seen in the case of Reuben, who lost his birthright for lying with his father's concubine (Gen 35:22, 49:4). Instead of mourning and disciplining the offender, the Corinthians were prideful and complacent (1Cor 5:2). Scripture mandates the removal of unrepentant sinners to preserve the sanctity of the community (Deut 13:5; Matt 18:15-17; Eph 5:11). Though absent, Paul exercises apostolic authority to pronounce judgment (1Cor. 5:3; 2Cor. 10:8), calling for the individual to be cast out “to Satan” (1Cor 5:5). This phrase does not refer to a literal Satan but to expulsion into the secular world, removing divine protection, where adversarial forces may either consume him or bring him to repentance (Luke 15:16;

Psa 109:6). The goal is correction, not destruction, ultimately aiming for the offender's salvation in the day of Christ.

In 1Corinthians 7:1-16, Paul addresses questions about marriage, celibacy, and relationships between believers and unbelievers. He advises marriage to prevent fornication and uphold moral integrity. Spouses have mutual authority over each other's bodies and should not deprive one another, lest Satan (their desires) tempt them due to lack of self-control. For mixed-faith marriages, he advises believers to remain with unbelieving spouses if they are willing, as the unbelieving partner and children are "sanctified" through the believer, meaning they are set apart within the marriage, benefiting from exposure to Christian faith. However, if the unbeliever chooses to leave, the believer is not bound, as God calls them to live in peace. In **2Corinthians 2:1-11**, Paul addresses the case of a previously expelled church member (**1Corinthians 5**) who has now repented. Paul urges the congregation to **forgive and restore him**, affirming that his past punishment was sufficient. Paul warns that failing to forgive could give **Satan (the adversary)** an advantage, as **unforgiveness breeds division and spiritual harm**. When we stray from God's path, we become **adversaries (little Satans)** to **Yahweh, our fellowship, and society**. If we refuse to forgive a repentant sinner, we risk **playing the role of Satan**, fostering discord instead of **restoring unity in the body of Christ**.

Paul emphasizes the **divine mercy** that sustains his ministry, compelling him to preach with sincerity, renouncing deceit and manipulation (2Cor 4:1-2). He acknowledges that the **gospel is veiled** to those perishing, whose minds are **blinded by the "god of this world"** (4:3-4). While many interpret this as Satan, biblical patterns suggest that **God Himself blinds and hardens** those who reject Him, as seen in **John 12:40, Romans 9:18, and Isaiah 6:9-10**. This **judicial hardening** is God's response to persistent rebellion, giving people over to their own delusions (**2Thess. 2:10-12, Romans 1:21-28**). Early church figures such as **Hippolytus and Cyril of Jerusalem** recognized the possibility of Yahweh being the one who blinds, aligning with divine judgment themes throughout Scripture. Paul likens **God's act of illumination** to creation, where **"Let there be light"** symbolizes **spiritual enlightenment** in believers (4:6). Those who reject God's law are ultimately **rejected and blinded** (**Hosea 4:6, Psalm 81:11-12, Acts 28:26-27**), reinforcing that rebellion, whether personal or societal, results in **divine judgment and spiritual blindness**.

In **2Corinthians 10:3-6**, the Apostle Paul emphasizes that the spiritual warfare Christians engage in is not against supernatural entities like demons or a singular Satan figure, but rather against **worldly ideologies, corrupt systems, and human reasoning that oppose the knowledge of God**. The **real spiritual battle** in Scripture is **not against supernatural demons but against human corruption, false ideologies, and oppressive leaders** who resist God's laws.

- **Religious leaders** who distort God's truth (**Matthew 15:7-9, Matthew 23:13-15, Jeremiah 23:1-2**).
- **Political rulers** who oppose righteousness (**Exodus 5:2, 1Kings 18:17-18, Isaiah 10:1-2**).
- **Deceptive ideologies** that lead people astray (**2Corinthians 10:3-5, Ephesians 6:12, 2 Timothy 3:13**).

Paul, in **2Corinthians 11:1-15**, warns the Corinthians of false apostles corrupting their faith, likening their deception to that of **Eve in Genesis 3:1-6**. He expresses **godly jealousy**, desiring to present them as a **pure bride to Christ** (2Cor 11:2), urging them to remain in **singleness of devotion** (*G572 haplotes*) toward Christ rather than being **led astray by cunning deceit**. The **Greek word "beguiled" (exapataō - G1818)** means **to deceive or mislead**, indicating **mental, not physical, corruption** (Rom 7:11, 1Tim 2:14). The **serpent (G3789 ophis)** represents **false doctrine and corrupt reasoning**, not a literal Satanic being. Paul's concern mirrors **Colossians 2:8**, warning against **philosophy, vain deceit, and traditions of men** that distort God's truth. The **"simplicity in Christ"** refers to **undivided faith**, contrasting with Eve's **double-mindedness** (James 1:8) when she entertained **carnal reasoning** instead of trusting God's Word. Paul's metaphor of the Church as a **chaste virgin** (2Cor 11:2) speaks of **spiritual purity**, not physical virginity, reinforcing that **Eve's**

deception was intellectual, not sexual. Scripture **nowhere** describes her fall as a **sexual act**, and the **Tree of Knowledge** represents **moral discernment, not physical defilement** (Gen 3:22). The **Luciferian doctrine**—rooted in the pursuit of "forbidden knowledge"—mirrors **false gospels** promoted by **denominational church systems** that embrace **worldly philosophies, lawlessness, and self-exaltation** under the guise of enlightenment. **Without the truth of God's Word and a Christ-like mind, one is inevitably corrupted.**

In 2Corinthians 11, Paul warns against false apostles infiltrating the church, deceiving believers by masquerading as servants of Christ. He expresses concern that, just as Eve was deceived, the Corinthians might be led astray by a different Jesus and a false gospel. This warning extends to all ages, urging believers to discern truth from deception. Supporting scriptures such as **Matthew 7:15, 24:24, 2Peter 2:1, 1John 4:1, and Acts 20:29-30** emphasize the persistent danger of false teachers.

In **2Corinthians 12:1-7**, Paul shares his visions and revelations but emphasizes that to keep him humble, he was given a **"thorn in the flesh"**, described as a **"messenger of Satan"** to buffet him. This thorn symbolizes persistent trials, adversaries, or hardships rather than a literal demonic being, aligning with biblical passages where **thorns** represent human opposition (**Numbers 33:55, Joshua 23:13, Judges 2:3, Ezekiel 28:24, Hosea 2:6**). Paul frequently speaks of human opponents as adversaries (**2Cor 11:13-15, 1Thess 2:18, 1Tim 1:20**), supporting that Satan is a **role**, not a supernatural entity. Scripture even applies **satan (H7854) as adversary to humans (1Sam 29:4, 1 Kings 11:14-25), legal opponents (Psa 109:6, Zec 3:1-2), the Angel of the Lord (Num 22:22, 32), and even God Himself (2Sam 24:1, 1Chr 21:1)**. Paul, a former zealous Pharisee, learned humility through affliction, teaching that **Yahweh uses adversaries to correct and refine His people.**

Paul expresses gratitude that the Thessalonians received the word of God sincerely, despite suffering persecution from their own countrymen, similar to the assemblies in Judaea who faced hostility from the Jews. He accuses these Jewish opponents of killing Jesus and the prophets, driving out the apostles, and hindering the spread of the gospel to the 'lost' sheep, thus incurring divine wrath. In 1Thessalonians 2:18, Paul attributes his inability to revisit the Thessalonians to being hindered by "Satan," which is interpreted metaphorically as the Jewish opposition he frequently encountered. This adversarial role played by the Jews is evident throughout Acts, where they plotted to kill Paul, incited riots, and brought legal accusations against him in cities like Damascus, Jerusalem, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, Ephesus, and Caesarea. This interpretation aligns with the broader use of "Satan" as a metaphor for human adversaries in Scripture, including references to the "synagogue of Satan" in Revelation, depicting hostile Jewish groups opposing the early Christians.

Paul cautions the Thessalonians not to be easily unsettled by claims that the day of the Lord has already occurred, explaining that a falling away (apostasy) and the revelation of the "man of sin" or "son of perdition" must precede it. This "man of lawlessness," empowered by the role of Satan, will perform deceptive signs and wonders to mislead those who reject the truth. Biblical terms like "the lawless one," "the wicked one," and "the evil one" symbolize adversarial forces against God's will. The "lawless one" in 2Thessalonians 2:3-10 is a future figure who opposes divine law and seeks to exalt himself above God, while "the wicked one" in Matthew 13:19 refers to Satan (the role) snatching away the word sown in hearts. In 1John 3:12, Cain is described as being "of that wicked one," indicating his actions were aligned with evil, not suggesting a satanic lineage. Similarly, "the evil one" in Matthew 6:13 underscores Satan's adversarial role. These terms metaphorically represent opposition to God's righteousness, highlighting the spiritual battle between good and evil. In 1Timothy 1:20 Paul's reference to delivering Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan reflects a disciplinary action intended to correct their blasphemous behavior by removing them from the church's protective environment and leaving them to the secular world and consequences of their actions, thereby encouraging their repentance and eventual restoration.

1 Timothy 5 provides guidance on church conduct, focusing on relationships within the Christian community, support for widows, and leadership behavior. Guidelines for supporting widows emphasize discerning between true widows—those without family and devoted to service and prayer—and those with family, who should be supported by their own. Paul advises against enrolling younger widows for church support, suggesting they marry, bear children, and manage their households to avoid falling into idleness and becoming targets for slander by adversaries (non-believers or critics). The term "adversary" (G480: *antikeimenos*) refers to those seeking to discredit the church, while "Satan" (G4567) in verse 15 symbolizes a deviation from faith and alignment with sinful practices, highlighting the dangers of idleness and improper conduct. Again, revealing Satan is a role or a condition of being in opposition to God and kingdom.

2 Peter 2 warns against false prophets and teachers who introduce destructive heresies, deny Christ, and exploit believers for personal gain, leading to swift judgment. Peter draws historical parallels to emphasize that divine judgment upon the ungodly is certain. The reference to "angels that sinned" in verse 4 is interpreted as a mistranslation, with the Greek term *angelos* meaning "messengers" rather than celestial beings. This phrase refers to human leaders, such as those in the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Numbers 16), who rejected divine authority and faced judgment. The term "Tartarus" is seen as a symbolic representation of disgrace or spiritual darkness, not a literal underworld. The "chains of darkness" signify spiritual bondage or separation from God, aligning with Jude 1:6. This interpretation suggests that Peter's warning remains focused on the dangers posed by human false teachers and leaders who lead others astray.

In **Revelation 2:9–10, 13, 24, and 3:9, Satan (G4567)** is depicted not as a supernatural angelic being but as a symbol of **oppressive systems, religious frauds, and political adversaries** opposing **God's Kingdom and Christianity**. The **"synagogue of Satan"** refers to groups falsely claiming to be **Judahites** but were actually **Canaanite-Edomite infiltrators** seeking to corrupt and persecute true believers. The **devil (G1228)** in **Revelation 2:10** represents the Temple and the **Roman authorities** who imprisoned Christians, portraying human adversaries acting with **slandering and oppressive intent**. The reference to **"Satan's throne"** in **Pergamos** symbolizes the city's role as a center for **pagan worship and imperial power**, indicating **political and religious opposition** rather than a literal demonic entity. Similarly, the **"depths of Satan"** in **Thyatira** point to **corrupt doctrines and pagan practices** infiltrating the church. Throughout these passages, **Satan** embodies the **religious, political, and ideological enemies** that sought to **undermine and persecute** the early Christian assemblies.

In Revelation 12:1-6, the woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars, symbolizes the house of Israel, reflecting Joseph's dream in Genesis 37:9-11. This imagery emphasizes Israel's role and destiny, not a literal heavenly figure. The scepter and gathering in Genesis 49:9-10 suggest Judah's leadership among the tribes, aligning with the authority implied in Joseph's dream. Similarly, Deuteronomy 33:13-17 highlights the prominence of Joseph's descendants, while Isaiah 60:1-3's imagery of light supports Israel's elevation as a guiding light to nations. Daniel 12:3 parallels the stars to the righteous, reinforcing the theme of authority and recognition. The sun and moon as symbols of covenant in Psalm 89:35-37 and the birth pains in Micah 4:8-10 further align with the themes of rulership and dominion.

The red dragon with seven heads and ten horns represents a coalition of adversarial nations, linking to the oppressive world empires of Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, and extending to the end-times "Mystery Babylon." The dragon's actions against the woman highlight the ongoing enmity between the descendants of Jacob (Israel) and Esau (Edom), exemplified by the Herodian dynasty's persecution of Jesus and the early Church. The casting down of the dragon symbolizes a loss of political power rather than a literal fall, drawing parallels with the fall of Babylon's king in Isaiah 14:12-15. In this context, "heaven" represents rulership and authority, while "earth" refers to the ruled populace.

The man-child born to the woman, destined to rule with a rod of iron, is interpreted as regathered Israel, with a specific application to the United States, "born in a day" on July 4, 1776, fulfilling Isaiah 66:7-9. The woman's flight into the wilderness for 1260 days reflects a period of divine protection and sustenance, symbolizing the preservation of Israel's faithful remnant. The war in heaven between Michael and the dragon is seen as a symbolic portrayal of the political and spiritual conflict between Jacob's covenant descendants and Edomite rulers, rather than a literal celestial battle. The dragon's defeat and casting down to earth signify the overthrow of oppressive systems and the establishment of God's kingdom authority.

In Daniel 10:21, Michael is referred to as "*your prince*," signifying his role as a protector and representative of God's covenant people. This title can be understood symbolically as the **mind of Christ**—the spiritual mindset aligned with God's truth—standing guard over the faithful. In contrast, the "*prince of this world*" (John 12:31) represents the **carnal mind and worldly systems** that oppose divine righteousness. Thus, Michael's protective role reflects the inner spiritual battle between **godly understanding** and **worldly deception**.

Revelation 17 describes a vision shown to John by one of the seven angels. The vision reveals a woman, called *Mystery, Babylon the Great*, who symbolizes a corrupt world system that controls nations and persecutes Christians. She is depicted as a prostitute seated on a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns, representing a powerful coalition of nations or empires. The woman is adorned in luxurious attire, holding a golden cup filled with abominations, signifying her wealth and moral corruption. The seven heads of the beast symbolize seven mountains (or nations) and seven kings—five fallen, one ruling, and one to come briefly. The ten horns represent ten future kings who will align with the beast for a short time, uniting their power against the Lamb (Jesus Christ). However, the Lamb will ultimately overcome them, as He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The waters upon which the woman sits symbolize peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages, illustrating her global influence. The chapter emphasizes that *Mystery Babylon* is not a spiritual devil or Satan but a powerful earthly system that opposes God's people, drawing parallels to Daniel's visions of oppressive kingdoms. The "war in heaven" is interpreted as a conflict between earthly rulers and the kingdom of God on earth.

Revelation 20:1-10 symbolically portrays the defeat of oppressive political and religious powers represented by Satan, the devil, and the dragon. The angel with the key and chain symbolizes divine authority to restrain these forces, preventing widespread deception but not minor evils. The thousand-year binding represents an extended period of righteousness, not a literal timeframe, reflecting the period since Christ's first coming when oppressive religious traditions, particularly those of the Jewish Pharisees, were bound. The reign of the saints during this time signifies the spiritual authority of believers, judging the world through their faith and obedience. With the end of this period, the resurgence of corruption is symbolized by Satan's release, representing the rise of financial, political, and religious powers deceiving nations through institutions like the United Nations, World Economic Forum, and global banking systems. The coalition of adversaries encompasses both secular forces and false Christianity, opposing true Christian values. Ultimately, the devil and these corrupt systems are cast into the lake of fire, symbolizing their complete destruction and the establishment of divine justice and a righteous kingdom on earth.

Full Study: <https://www.thinkoutsidethebeast.com/devil-satan-serpent/>

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