

## **Part 3: The Enemies of God and the Work They Are Doing**

**By Clovis E. Miller**

This is the fifth in a series of articles entitled: Beyond the Basics of Faith. In previous articles we have explored the Person and Nature of God; the Person of Jesus Christ; the Person of the Holy Spirit, and the missions of the latter two, set to effect the redemption of mankind. In the current article we will more fully address the origin of sin, the enemies of God, and the work they are doing in defiance of His will.

### **The Mystery of Iniquity: Where it all began**

Where did sin come from? In the New Testament, the phrase "mystery of iniquity" (II Thess. 2:3,7), is used in reference to the coming into the world of one identified as the "man of sin". The word "mystery" (Strong's Greek #3466) is taken from the Greek word, "mysterion" (pronounced moos-tay'ree-on), and according to Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, carries the following meaning: "a hidden purpose or council; secret will...the mystery of lawlessness, the secret purpose formed by lawlessness, seems to be a tacit antithesis to God's saving purpose, 2 Th, ii 7". This is contrasted with the "mystery of Christ" (Eph. 3:1-3, 4-5), which was not understood until the time of His earthly appearance. That mystery involves how God would judge sin through His Son; thereby establishing a pathway through which humanity could be retrieved from its fallen state.

Christian tradition accepts that rebellion against God originated with the freewill decision of one created entity: Satan (sometimes referred to as "Lucifer"). The passages of Isa. 14:12-15 and Ezekiel. 28:12-15, 16-19 are most frequently quoted as providing the basis for the understanding we have concerning this issue.

From Isaiah we read:

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exhalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north,;

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."

In traditional Christianity, an analogy is seen here as being drawn between the King of Babylon, and the one said to have fallen from heaven (Lucifer): [Click Here](#) for a more thorough understanding of the use of this name, as found on the Wikipedia website.

Verse 12 in the Isaiah passage, is the only place in scripture where the word "Lucifer" is used. In Hebrew (Strong's Hebrew #1966), it is defined as, "the morning star". In Luke 10:18, Jesus stated, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven". According to the words of Jesus, Satan was thrown down, from his heavenly position, with the speed of a bolt of lightning.

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (#4098), defines the word "fall" (πίπτω, in Greek) as, "to be thrust down".

Curiously enough, Jesus Himself, is referred to as "the bright and morning star" in Rev.22:16. In Isa. 14:14, we have the one who aspires to be like God (i.e. the counterfeit morning star); who as "Satan", appears as being transformed into an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14 : Matt. 6:23). In Jesus, we have the true "star" which arose out of Jacob (Num. 24:17 ; Matt. 2:2 ; John 12:46).

In the Book of Revelation, stars are also seen as symbols which denote angels (Rev. 1:20 ; Rev.9:1 :Rev.12:3-4). In Eph.6:11-14, 15-18 it is related, that man's battle with wickedness, while personal, is not with "flesh and blood"; but with external enemies identified as: "the devil" and the principalities and powers which have given their allegiance to him. I Pet. 5:8 brings greater emphasis to the personal identity of the leader of those who are enemies of both God and man.

Of the sixty times that the word "Devil" is used in the New Testament, thirty five times it is translated from the Greek word "diabolos" (Strong's Greek #1228), and refers to a specific entity, who is described as the "traducer", "accuser" or "slanderer" (i.e. "...that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan...the accuser of the brethren." Rev. 12:9-10). In the Old Testament, we see Satan as both a deceiver (Gen. 3:1-3,4-5), and an accuser, or defamer (Job 1:8-11, Job 2:3-5). The remaining instances of the word "Devil" are translated as demons, or demonic spirits (Strong's Greek #1140) who follow the leadership of Satan. In the Jewish Talmud, the chief of all wicked angels, is named as "Samael":

" The wicked angel Samael, the chief of all the Satans (Deut. R. xi,10) - in this way is the army of the evil angels and their captain designated..." (From: Everyman's Talmud", by A. Cohen, P. 54).

In the Isaiah passage (verse 12), the word use for "fallen" is "nephal" (Strong's Hebrew #5307). Two of the meanings of this word are to "cast down, or "throw down". Nephal (pronounced naw'fal) is the root word from which comes "nephyl" (pronounced nef'eel) which is said to refer to the giants born of angels (benei elohim - "the sons of God"), through relations with the daughters of man (Gen.6:1-4). These angels appear to be those mentioned in Jude 1: 6, which had kept not their first estate. There is nothing to suggest that relations between normal men and women would produce giants. In Judaism, one interpretation of the phrase, "sons of God"

mentioned in Gen. 6:2 and Job 1:6-8, is that they are fallen angels. If the sons of God mentioned there were human, then why was Job, "...a perfect and upright man...", not counted among those present? Had he been among those at that meeting, he obviously would not have been unaware of the plot hatched against him by Satan (Job 1:9-11).

The point made in the Isaiah passage is that the same fate was waiting to befall the King of Babylon, which had come to the original rebel (Satan, or Lucifer). Be he a king, or Satan himself, no one will be allowed to exalt himself in such a manner before almighty God.

In Ezekiel 28, a similar analogy is made between the "anointed cherub" and the King of Tyrus:

"Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom and full of beauty.

Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, and the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and the gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou was created.

Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thy iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more."



Illustration For John Milton's "Paradise Lost" by Paul Gustave Dore (1832-1883)  
Image used through Wikimedia Commons

Once again, the fate of a great king is foretold in a prophetic scenario (Luke 10:18 ; Isa. 14:15 ; Rev. 12:7-10 ; Rev. 20:1-3). There are several things in this passage which do not seem to relate to the King of Tyre: 1)"...Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God..." 2) "...Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth..." 3) " I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God...". They do however, appear to be consistent with the Isaiah passage, which gives a similar analogy concerning the "King of Babylon".

Are Satan, fallen angels and demonic spirits real entities? Many people scoff at such an idea. In scripture however, Jesus certainly addressed them as real (e.g. Matt. 4:8-11 ; Mark 5:2, 7-9 ; Luke 4:33-35); speaking to them frequently. One only has to look at the increasing level of lawlessness going on in the world, to realize that some sinister force is motivating the trend. In fact, scripture prophetically warns of a massive breakdown in the laws of society, which will exist in the "last days" (II Tim.3:1-4; Matt. 24:37 ; Gen. 6:11-13), principally because people are motivated to reject the love of truth (II. Thess. 2:8-10, 11-12). Where does the motivation come from? What propels the escalation of lawlessness? Scripture basically points us back to the passages mentioned above (Isaiah 14 ; Ezekiel 28 and Ephesians 6). It's the final chapter in the ongoing war between God, and those who oppose Him. The outcome has been pre-determined, though it's realization is yet future. The bottom line is: God wins!

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It seems appropriate, at this point, to incorporate understanding from another short article on this website entitled, "The Power of Free Will and Satanic Manipulation". It really cuts to the heart of what the current article is all about.

"For the most part, we, as Christians, or as non-Christians for that matter, don't realize how powerful our God given free will is.

There is a highly organized Satanic Government, composed of fallen angels and demonic spirits in place in the spiritual realm (Eph. 6:12). Satan is neither omniscient, nor omnipresent. He cannot be everywhere in the world at the same time as God is; therefore he entices people to sin by working through the various levels of the power structure under his control, through which he manipulate the free will of mankind. Control of it, is what Satan covets most, because in it he seeks to gain power over God. The narrative of Scripture, from beginning to end, makes this quite clear. The Devil and his satanic government, feed their rebellion against God, through the manipulation of our free will. If they were unable to manipulate our will, they would be powerless against humanity.

Look at how Jesus, acting not as God, but as a man, was able to thwart their power by refusing to allow His own free will to be manipulated by them. Jesus, as the Son of God, was fully apprised of the deception employed by Satan against Adam and Eve; and was therefore able to confront him from a vantage point of strength. His refusal to submit to the temptations which were presented to Him by Satan, rendered the enemy powerless. Even in death, He gained total victory over them, and set the example for us to follow (Col. 2:15). According to Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, the word "spoiled" (#554) in the verse in Col.2, means, "wholly to strip off for one's self... despoil, disarmed:..." Jesus stripped the enemy of the power which they had wielded over the people, who according to scripture, were living their lives in fear of death because of the power Satan held over them (Job 2:4-6 ; Heb. 2:14-15). Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines "despoil" as, "to strip of belongings, possessions, or value: pillage". Jesus effectively took the power of death away from Satan (Rev.1:18).

If there is a single phrase which describes the character of Satan and the members of his power structure, it is this: **THEY ARE ALL DEVIOUS MANIPULATORS**. The manipulation of the free will of people is a prime source from which Satanic power is derived, strengthened and maintained. It is the food upon which they thrive.

The point at which the enemy can manipulate our free will, is the point at which we begin to lose our freedom. There is a breaking point at which casual and willful submission to sin becomes coercive. Once we cross that line, we enter into a specific bondage under the satanic manipulators, and become, as Scripture puts it : Servants or Slaves of Sin (John 8:34 ; Rom.

6:17-20 - (Strong's Greek #1401)). As we submit our will to their prompting; through the many temptations which they bring before us, their ability to compel us to do their bidding is dramatically increased. Persons in this condition, may sincerely want to stop sinning; but have become so blinded to the truth about what has happened to themselves, that they are unable to find the way out of the situation. The Good News is; that even that person can be set free from the bondage of the enemy. It's really a matter of understanding the truth about who the enemy is, what they are trying to achieve; and also to know that such a person has every right to take back control of their own God given freewill (Ezekiel 18:21). Making proper choices, to avoid being manipulated by the enemy, or to get free of their grip, requires discernment; and discernment comes by having a sound knowledge of the truth. The knowledge of the truth we need to defend ourselves, is found in the Word of God and delivered to us with power, by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26).

The beginning of the process of restoration is found in that we understand that the purpose of temptation, or the enticement to commit sin, is a personal attack against each and every one of us. Its purpose is straight forward: to enslave us so that our free will can be manipulated in the enemy's rebellion against God. It's obvious that from their point of view, that the most effective way to strike against God is to destroy what God loves. That would be you and me. Temptation loses its appeal when we come to the realization that its purpose is aimed at our destruction. That's the real eye opener, and the key to breaking their grip on our lives! The awareness that Satan and his government are not only at war with God; but are at war with you and me as well, is a crucial component in the recovery of the freedom God has given us. Part of the mission of the Holy Spirit is to continuously remind us of this important issue, and empower us with the strength needed to withstand the attacks of the enemy (Eph. 6:14-17).

God has given each of us a sense of self-preservation. Why then, are we so unaware, and seemingly unconcerned by the danger that Satan and his government poses to our well being? Is it our, "out of sight, out of mind" thinking? That's what the enemy is counting on. They are banking on the idea, that we are blind to what they are attempting to do through us; and sadly to say, most of the world is in that condition.

If we allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit, He will keep us safe by making us aware of the truth. A person cannot be deceived or misled, if they understand and adhere to the truth. The enemy can prevail only in as much as they can deceive us. As Jesus said, '...the truth shall make you free.'(John 14:16-17, 26 ; John 8:32)"

The Son of God was sent into the world to redeem humanity from the curse which had fallen upon it as a results of the disobedience of Adam and Eve (Gen.2:16-17 ; Gen.3:9-12). Jesus was anointed with the power of the Holy Spirit (i.e. the Spirit of Truth), that He might dispel the deception of those "principalities and powers" (Eph. 6:12), in confirmation of His special role as

our redeemer.

In looking at the work of the Holy Spirit, we see Him as the "sent one" and the "anointing one". He is identified in scripture as both our comforter, and our teacher. He enlightens and empowers believers with the anointing of truth, which further dispels the deception and rebellion of wicked powers, denying them that which is necessary to prevail over us. His anointing however, comes only at the level at which we are open to receive it. If a person desires to be in the center of God's will for their life, they need do only this: love what God loves and hate what God hates (Job 1:8 ; Ps. 45:6-7 ; Heb 1:8-9 ; John 8:42 ; John 14:21). Please don't gloss over the last statement. It is an effective point, which if considered, can modify our behavior so that the truth which God knows about us, is redeeming truth and not condemning truth.

One of the things which God loves is unfettered truth (i.e. truth which is unshackled from our denominational or doctrinal biases). One man's truth points to another man's error, and vice versa. The unyielding insistence that others see the truth exactly as we see it, is the reason that so many denominations exist today. The enemies of God seize upon this issue to incite division among believers. To be sure, people need to cling to the truth which they understand, yet without being anchored to the point that they are not open to further revelation. None of us are privy to the whole truth, so we cannot afford to close the door to better understanding. The Holy Spirit doesn't present "versions of the truth" to different people or groups. He is the purveyor of absolute truth in which there is no variance. As stated elsewhere on this site, "...truth is not a matter of personal opinion; nor is it arrived at through the democratic process...". The Bible doesn't teach us that the truth needs to be protected (it's not in danger of being disproved); but rather that it needs to be pursued (John 8:31-32).

To often, our unyielding will against considering the feelings and understanding of others concerning truth, hampers the love which should exist among all believers. It's a problem which the enemies of God have exploited from the earliest days of the Church. We all need to be on guard against the tendency to filter or dilute the truth in order to make it confirm what we believe (Pr. 14:12 ; Pr. 16:2). Truth is not a tool to be manipulated to achieve the ends which we desire: that's how the enemies of God view it. We also need to be honest in our awareness, that the inherent tendency towards sin, which resides in all mortals, can taint our perception of truth (Jer. 17:9), making us susceptible to being misled or attacked by the enemy. The heart of the battle is in the fact that the Holy Spirit is come to present the truth to as many as can receive it, while the enemies of God are seeking to press forward in blatant denial of it.

In Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, we see two distinct persons, sent from the Father, having missions which are in total harmony, with achieving His perfect will and purpose. Every cognizant created being has to deal with the freewill choices presented to them; and as said elsewhere on this site: "...the choices we make in our lives will ultimately confirm the truth which

God has always known about us..."

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Sin produces seed which are evil thoughts and memories. At the heart of every such seed is a rebellious attitude toward God. The enemy uses evil thoughts and memories to manipulate our will to draw us into, and keep us in bondage. This, they do through temptation. It's a vicious cycle aimed at achieving total dominion over us. Sin's seed reside in us as memories of sinful acts, which are given extended life through the enhancement of our imaginations. Scripture tells us that we are to "cast down imaginations", and bring every such thought into captivity (II Cor. 10:5); identifying it as sinful and destructive. Every effort must be made to cast down such things as unfit for a believer to consider, or dwell upon. Forgetting those things which are behind, we should press forward towards that which is from God (Phil. 3:13-14).

Freewill is a God given quality which allows us to express our love and allegiance to God, or assert our independence from Him. There are consequences for each and every choice we make. Positive choices lead to positive consequences, and negative choices lead to negative consequences (Gal. 6:7-8). The permission to choose between right and wrong, doesn't affix God's seal of approval to everything we do. It's the test we are all put to; just as Adam and Eve were tested in the garden (Gen.2:16-17). Unfortunately, when we choose to sin, we tend to underestimate the severity of the consequences attached to it; because often we don't see any immediate effect from it. To be sure, the cumulative effect of continuously engaging in a sin can have life altering consequences, even if we should cease from practicing it. Once unleashed, the degenerative nature of sin, will run its full course, at least in our physical bodies (Rom. 6:23).

Demonic spirits are compulsive meddlers, who are continuously probing into the affairs of peoples lives, seeking to find any weaknesses in us which may be used to advance their agenda of rebellion against God. The enemy knows our weaknesses better than we do. They will not waste their time attacking a person's firm resolve to reject certain ideas and actions, although they may probe that resolve, from time to time, looking for any changes in attitude.

Our freewill remains intact until the enemy is successful in exploiting a weakness, so that a sin, or sins, gain dominion over us. At that point, a portion of our freedom to choose is surrendered. It's possible to be in bondage to one sin; while adamantly rejecting another. One may be bound by the sin of lying; yet be free of bondage of stealing. Nevertheless, bondage is bondage, whether it be to one sin or many sins. The more a person practices sin, the greater its power, or dominion over them, becomes. Beware that seeds of sin, like natural seeds, can lie dormant within us, until such a time as sufficient attention is given, to enable them to germinate and restart the cycle. Sin replicates itself through the seed which it produces. That is a simple, but



very powerful truth.

The more truth we understand, the more it hampers the enemy's ability to attack us. This is also a basic, but powerful truth. A person cannot be deceived if they clearly understand and adhere to the truth about something. The enemy relies on uncertainty in our understanding to gain an advantage over us. Uncertainty gives them the opportunity to plant that seed of doubt in our minds ("...yea, hath God said..." (Gen. 3:1)). It is vital that we understand what, "...God hath said...". That's why studying scripture is so important. We must be vigilant to retain the truth which we have learned, lest being forgetful, even momentarily, we give the enemy an entry way into our life. Need an incentive? Just embed Ps. 66:18 and Prov. 15:3 in your heart and mind.

People who are in bondage to sin are basically living in a spiritual stupor. Their perception of truth has been skewed or distorted, so that its power is ineffective. They are kept in this condition by means of satanic control, which is fueled through their submission to the temptations of sin. Skewed or distorted truth is worse than a "bald faced lie", because it often gives a person a false sense of security. So long as we continue to water (contemplate) the seeds of sin; they will continue to produce the same results. Seeds watered, produce plants: Plants cultivated and watered, produce seed. The process is repeated over and over in our lives, just as it is in nature.

People effectively make themselves enemies of God through the delusion and bondage of sin. It's only when we learn the truth about our condition, that we are in a position to get free from that bondage, which has been perpetuated through deception. Truth alone can crack deception, and give us the strength we need to come out of bondage. It is only through God's Holy Spirit: the Spirit of Truth, that we can gain the knowledge which will set us free. God is extremely gracious to forgive anyone willing to call upon Him (Ps. 145:8 ; Ezekiel 18:21-23).

The enemy is active 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They never tire or rest from their agenda (even though it is futile). They will use every opportunity presented to them to manipulate a person's will. They will manipulate others to do or say things against you; and if given the opportunity, they will prompt you to do the same against others. While God is calling all people to return to Him: the enemy is doing everything in their power to prevent that from happening. They have one goal: to bring glory and honor to their leader, Satan. They are rebels, who have literally beheld the majesty of the Almighty Creator, and turned their backs against Him. Demonic spirits do not fight fairly, and will use anything, and everything, available to them to strike their adversaries. For them, everything is on the table. They are beings with no honor, having not a trace of decency within themselves. The enemy will never stand idly by and watch you do something which promotes the cause of God. They will oppose you vehemently, so don't think it strange when it happens.

It is a certainty, that a day of judgment is set whereby God will bring the rebellion against Him to

a close. At the appointed time, He will execute final judgment upon all of His enemies. There will be no escaping the day, and no arguments accepted against the administration of divine punishment. The judgment will be final; no appeals will be considered.

Matt. 8:12 ; Heb. 12:18 ; 2 Pet. 2:4,17 ; Jude 1:6,13

Ex.10:21 speaks of a darkness which may be felt; yet there is a far greater unfathomable darkness (Matt. 22:13), into which all the wicked will be cast: A place of permanent and total isolation, from which even cries for mercy cannot escape.

The good news is, that no living human being need enter such a condition. God calls every person everywhere to forsake their rebellious attitude towards Him, and He will abundantly pardon (Isa. 55:7). Otherwise, all such are destined to enter the same place prepared for Satan and his angels (Matt. 25:41), never to be seen or heard from again. God is deadly serious about what He will allow to exist in His everlasting presence. Sin will have no part in the new world which He shall bring forth (Rev.21:27). By judgment day, every individual will have made their irreversible decision to either follow God's will, or to stand in opposition to Him.

### **In Summary:**

There is an ongoing battle in the creation which God has brought forth. It is between the forces of good and evil (those who stand with God, and those who oppose Him). Basically, all cultures understand that this conflict between right and wrong; good and evil, not only exists, but is a continual condition.

In Christian understanding: the unrelenting rebellion in the spiritual realm, was instituted ages ago by a being identified in scripture as Satan, or the Devil (Rev. 12:9). Through deception, he brought the curse of death upon the whole human race (Gen. 3:1-3, 4-5). As offspring of the first human parents (Adam and Eve), we have inherited a disposition having the same inclination to disobedience towards God, which took root in them. The whole of humanity is engulfed in this problem; no one is exempt. It is a part of our inherited nature. While we are not chargeable for the sins of Adam and Eve, or our own parents for that matter (Ezekiel 18:20), we are certainly responsible for our own transgressions.

Heb. 2:14-18

If the enemy cannot persuade you to submit your freewill to temptation; they have no other power to use against you. Jesus nullified their power by refusing to submit to temptation (Col. 2:15). The temptation to sin can be rather blatant, or it can be quite subtle. Proper and effective discernment is something which only the Holy Spirit can provide.

If God hates sin, and I profess to love God; then I should hate sin as well. Moreover, I should

even hate being tempted by the enemy to sin against God. The only redeeming value in being tempted to sin is that it gives us the opportunity to express our allegiance and love for God by rejecting it. Sin is the transgression of the law, and therefore is rebellion against God Himself. If I truly love God, my heart should be set to follow those things which He approves and loves. It is not possible to follow this line without rejecting the things which are not approved by Him.

Unless we develop an intense hatred for sin; we will continue to be subjected to it by the wicked spirits who have an iron-fisted grip on this world. Although we can never be free from temptation, as long as we live in these mortal bodies; we can thwart the efforts of the enemy by our hatred of sin and the goals which they are trying to achieve through it. If the enemy cannot persuade us to submit to the enticements which they put before us, what power can they exert over us? There has to be a clear line drawn in our thinking. I am on this side; the enemy is on that side. For the believer, the days when the enemy says, "come on over for a visit!", should be over. Beware! The closer we stand to the line, the greater the possibility that we may step over it. So then, we need to put as much distance between ourselves and the enemy as possible. That distance can be increased by knowing and understanding the truth; and that through the Word of God. We must always be aware of the enemy's presence, and on guard against any temptation which they may present to us. As previously stated, the point at which the enemy can manipulate our will, is the point at which we began to lose our freedom.

Most of us are not careful about how we exercise our freewill. We don't protect it in such a way as to prevent the enemy from gaining access to it. Freewill is our opportunity to show how we really feel about God. Sin can never be manipulated by us to a positive end; but it can be manipulated by the enemy to a destructive end, if we fail to properly control our freewill.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life..." (Jas. 1:12)