

## Restored Truth Bible Study #16 – Satan the Devil

### August 17, 2013

Why do we live in such an evil and perverse world? What is behind all the problems this world has had, is currently having, and will continue to have until Jesus Christ returns? In this Restored Truth Series of Bible Studies, it is important to understand that mankind's rejection of God and His law is the main reason for the problems this world experiences. However, there is another major reason behind the problems this world. This is the topic of this Restored Truth Bible Study.

There is an interesting comment made about this world in Revelation 12:9. It is a fact that goes unacknowledged by the vast majority of people living on this earth. Only a small few really grasp the significance of what this world is about. John writes that *the whole world has been deceived*. This whole world is deceived.

The Greek word for *deceived* means to cause to roam from safety, truth, or virtue. Picture a young animal that strays away from the safety of its herd. Suddenly it finds itself in a race with an adversarial foe intent on taking its life. That is what has happened to this world. It has roamed away from the safety, truth, and virtue of God.

The word *whole* means whole or all, or complete in extent, amount, time or degree. The word *world* refers to land, or the terrain part of the globe; specifically, in ancient history it referred to the Roman world. A better understanding applies to the inhabited or habitable world. The land or territory where people live is considered the world. This is the world John says is deceived.

2 Cor. 11:3 is the starting point for this world's deception. *I fear...[Paul says] lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

The start of this world's deception goes all the back to the Garden of Eden. The word *deceived* Paul uses is a different word from the one John used. It means to seduce wholly, to completely deceive.

Jesus Christ was very much aware that this world has been deceived and gave a very pointed warning to His disciples in Matthew 24.

*Matthew 24:4 And Jesus answered and said to them, take heed that no one deceives you.*

The word *deceives* is the same word John used. Christ warns His disciples not to allow someone to cause them to roam from safety, truth, and virtue. As mentioned previously, the vast majority of people in this world lives in deception. One would be considered crazy to think the whole world is deceived.

Yet when people come into God's Church, they are taught exactly what the Bible teaches, and the Bible teaches that the whole world is deceived. As people spiritually mature in God's Church by sticking with God's truth and continuing to grow and learn more about the Bible, the reality of what John says about this world becomes clearer. The depth of the deception the world is living under is staggering. It is not enough just to see the deception; it must really be understood. To do so requires getting below the surface to see how much deception is prevalent in everything this world is about.

Who is responsible for the world being deceived? Revelation 12:9 provides the answer. *So, the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, who deceives the whole world.*

Satan the devil is the one responsible for the deception of the whole world. Who is Satan the devil? Where did he come from? How has he deceived the whole world? To answer these questions, turn to Ezekiel to understand the origins of Satan the Devil.

Ezekiel 28 is a chapter that speaks about two individuals. The first is the Prince of Tyre, and the second is the King of Tyre. The Prince of Tyre is reference to the 'beast' of Revelation 13, who will rise to power in Europe and bring the world to the point of complete and utter destruction. He will lead the armies of this world to fight against Christ when He returns. This human leader will be thrown into the lake of fire along with the false prophet by Christ for their refusal to acknowledge God's power and truth. The King of Tyre is someone totally different. He is not a human, but spirit having eternal life.

Eze. 28:11 *Moreover, the word of the Eternal came to me saying, (vs 12) Son of man, take up a lamentation for the King of Tyre...[Lamentation refers to a mournful song] and say to him, thus says the Lord God: you were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. (vs 13) You were in Eden, the garden of God: every precious stone was your covering the workmanship of your timbrels and your pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created.*

The King of Tyre is Satan the Devil. Satan is a created being, created by God. The word *created* means absolutely to create. The word '*perfect*' in verse 12 points to God's creation of Satan where it says 'you were perfect in beauty' meaning his creation was complete, the whole. It can also refer to the burnt sacrifice was fully or entirely consumed.

In the sacrificial system of ancient Israel, a sacrifice consumed fully was a sacrifice that was completely pleasing to God. When Satan was created there wasn't a flaw in him. God was satisfied with this created being. He was a beautiful, created being. He was the pinnacle of God's creative power, the very best that God could create.

In Ezekiel 28:14 more information is given about the King of Tyre. (v14) *You were the anointed cherub that covers...[A cherub is one of three different types of angels mentioned in the Bible, cherubim, seraphim, and archangels] I established you...[God says] You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of the fiery stones...[This perfectly created cherub was at the very throne of God] (vs 15) You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created.*

This angelic being had perfect character. In other words, he was sinless. The Hebrew language describes the anointed cherub that covers as one entwined as a screen, to fence in, to cover over, or to protect.

What does it mean when it says 'the anointed cherub who *'covers'*'? Exodus 25:10 provides the answer. In this passage God is giving Moses instruction about building the Ark of the Covenant.

Notice what the Ark of the Covenant consists of: Exodus 25:10 *And they...[Referring to the artists and builders] shall make an Ark of acacia wood. Two and a half cubits shall be its length, a cubit and a half its*

*width, and a cubit and a half its height...*[God is very specific on the measurements for this box of acacia wood] (vs 11) *And you shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and you shall make on it a molding of gold all around.* (vs 16) *You shall put into the Ark the testimony which I gave you...*[Referring to the two tablets of stone on which God had written, with his own finger, the Ten Commandments] (vs 16) *And you shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length, a cubit and a half its width.* (vs 18) *You shall make two cherubim of gold...*[Two images of cherubim, just like in Ezekiel 28] *of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat.* (vs 20) *And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another, the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat.*

The mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant represents God's throne with two cherubim facing each other covering the mercy seat with their wings.

Ex. 25:21 *And you shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark; and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I will give you.* (vs 22) *And there I will meet with you. I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the cherubim which are on the ark of the testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.*

The Ark of the Covenant was a physical representation of God's throne over which the cherubim covered it with their wings. Notice, the Ten Commandments are positioned underneath God's throne. These commandments are the very foundation of God's way of life. This angelic being was at the very throne of God. This is what it means to be the anointed cherub who covers.

Ezekiel does on in verse 15: *You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created...*[This anointed cherub was perfect in his ways. The word *perfect* here means entire, literally/figuratively/morally. It refers to integrity, truth, without blemish, complete, full, perfect, sincerely sound, without spot, undefiled, upright, or whole. This is not referring only to how he was created, but his character too. This angelic being was someone who was perfect in character, obeying God's law and doing what God said to do.

Again, notice he was created. Satan was created a magnificent cherub angel. He served at God's throne, the headquarters of the entire universe. He obeyed God's law and he interacted with all the other heavenly hosts: *until iniquity was found in you*. In other words, he no longer was perfect in his character. He no longer obeyed God's law.

The word *iniquity* refers to moral evil. Iniquity is simply wickedness, a wicked act, perverseness, or being unjust or unrighteous. It is something that refers to sin in its nature. This is about the very nature of the individual. It is about what a person is. Satan, at one time, before iniquity was found in him, had character that was perfect. Then his character changed to iniquity, which is sin in its nature as deceitful and dishonest. It is a nature which does not do things or see things as equal and right. It is a nature that is unfair in its dealings; and because of this change in character and nature, Ezekiel reveals God's response.

Ezekiel 28:16 *By the abundance of your trading, you became filled with violence within...* [Within himself, in the center of his capacity for thought and action] *and you sinned...* [The word *sinned* means to miss the mark. It refers to an act of thought, word, or deed. *Sinned* differs from *iniquity*. Iniquity deals with the spiritual condition of a person. Sinned deals with the actions of a person. It is important to understand sin and how God describes it] *Therefore, I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God...* [Satan was put out of the government of God] *and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones...* [The first half of verse 17 continues to deal with Satan. The second half of this verse switches back to the Prince of Tyre] (vs 17) *Your heart was lifted up...* [Became proud] *because of your beauty, you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor*. Satan thought of himself as very important.

More information is provided about this anointed cherub. His name was not originally Satan.

In Isaiah 14:12 *How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!...* [The original name of this anointed cherub was Lucifer, which simply means daystar] *How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations...* [When God cast Satan out of heaven, what did He do? He threw him back to this earth. Satan has been able to weaken every nation throughout the course of human history through his unseen influence. The word '*weaken*' means to prostrate, overthrow, or decay. Verse 13 begins to provide insight into Satan's thinking and what led him to become a sinful angelic being]

(vs 13) *For you have said in your heart...*[Speaking about the very core of his being] *I will ascend into heaven...*[The third heaven where God resides] *and I will exalt my throne above the stars of God...*[Lucifer had a throne. Satan maintains that throne today. What does a throne picture? It is the symbol of rulership? It was rulership over the earth, which God had given Lucifer] *I will exalt my throne above the stars...*[angels] *of God: I will also sit on the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north* (vs 14) *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the most High.* Isaiah reveals at the end of verse 14 why Lucifer rebelled against God. He wanted to be God. He wanted to have everything God had. He wanted God's power, God's authority, and to be worshipped just like God.

Luke 4:5 lists one of the temptations tried to use on Christ during His 40 days & 40 nights of fasting in the wilderness. It is worth noting the accounts in Luke 4 and Matthew 4 are not the same. Luke 4 deals with Satan's temptation of Christ during the 40 days and 40 nights, while Matthew 4 deals with the temptation at the very end of the 40 days and 40 nights.

Notice what Satan does with Christ. Luke 4:5 *Then the devil taking him up on a high mountain showed him all the kingdoms of the world...*[Satan's use of the word 'world' is the same world John uses in Revelation 12:9. He is speaking of the inhabitable world. This word was used to describe Roman Empire which was the predominant empire at the time of Christ's temptation] *all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.* (vs 6) *And the devil said to him, all this authority I will give you...*[Satan's own words prove he has authority over the governments of the earth] *and their glory: for this has been delivered to me: and I give it to whomever I wish.* (vs 7) *Therefore, if you will worship before me, all will be yours.* Who gave Satan this authority? Who gave him this power? God did!!!

Notice here that Satan tempts Christ by offering all he had, all he had control over, if only Christ would just do what, violate or break the first commandment by worshipping Satan.

As mentioned previously, Matthew 4:8 occurs at the end of the 40 days and 40 nights. Satan here strikes Christ when He is at His weakest physically. After 40 days and 40 nights of fasting, most human beings

would be dead. Christ was able to survive physically based on the power of God's Holy Spirit working in Him. This is the last temptation Satan would throw at Christ.

Matthew 4:8 *Again, the devil took him up on an exceedingly high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory...*[Satan's use of the *world* here refers to the world as created, ordered and arranged. It applied to the sum total of the material universe, the beauty in it, and the sum total of persons living in the world. What Satan is offering Christ is total control of the entirety of the earth] (vs 9) *He said to him, all these things I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me...*[This concession reveals what Satan was wanting to get out of Christ] (vs 10) *Then Jesus said to him, away with you, Satan...*[Get out of here] *for it is written you shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.* (vs 11) *Then the devil left him, and behold, the angels came and ministered to him.* [This is Satan was defeated by Christ for rulership over the earth. Christ exemplifies the instruction of James 4:7] *Therefore, submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

In any of life's encounters, troubles or difficulties that Satan is behind, if one will submit to God, Satan has no choice but to give up his effort and leave. Christ demonstrated James 4:7 in both Luke 4 and Matthew 4.

In Luke 4:6 Satan says: *All this authority I will give to you and their glory: for it has been delivered to me.*

Who gave Satan this authority? Who put Satan in a position to govern this world? The word authority means privilege, force, capacity, competency, freedom, mastery; to refer to a magistrate or a super-human, or a potentate, a token of control or delegated influence. Who gave this authority to Satan? Who delivered it to him? The word *delivered* means to surrender, yield up, entrust, or transmit.

The one who gave Satan his authority over the world is the One who created Satan. It also comes from the One who created this earth and this vast material universe this earth spins around in. It is also the One who created the human beings that live on this earth in His image. The One who did all this creating is the great Creator God of your Bible.

God gave Satan his authority. God delivered this world over to Satan's power. He did so before Satan had corrupted himself; when Satan was Lucifer, perfect as God had created him. This is how Satan got his authority. That's how Satan got his power. This is how Satan became ruler of this world. Just because Satan sinned, God did not immediately remove Satan from his position of authority. As a matter of fact, in Matthew 4, Christ qualified to replace Satan; but he was not replaced over 2000 years ago. Christ will replace Satan soon at His 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming.

Understanding how Satan has used his authority over this earth, will help explain how this world has been deceived and the terrible conditions people live under.

First of all, understand the art of deception, and it is an art. The art of deception requires the ability to do two things.

1. the truth has to be maligned, distorted, and covered up. That's the first thing needed to become a deceiver – malign the truth, cover it up, say that it is not so, say that things aren't what they really are.
2. provide a well-crafted counterfeit made to look like the truth that is promoted as truth, enforced as truth, and followed as truth.

Every attempt to bring out what is really true must be attacked and called out as false. As mentioned early in this Bible Study, to think that the whole world has been deceived would cause those in government, academia, and business to consider such a thought as crazy. That is part of the art of deception.

The only way to deal with deception is to understand what truth is, embrace the truth, and fight against all attempts to undermine it; and even then, it's a very tough battle to fight.

So, the art of deception requires two things:

- 1) malign, distort, and cover up the truth
- 2) promote as truth something false, enforce it, and follow it

This is what Satan has been able to do to this world. Why has he been so successful? Because Satan is able to influence people to practice the art of deception. This requires people to have certain deceptive characteristics.

The first characteristic is to be a convincing liar. Notice how Christ describes Satan in John 8.

John 8:44 *You are of your father the devil...*[These Jews had made the correct claim they were the children of Abraham] *and the desires of your father you want to do...*[Christ accuses these Jews of wanting to behave the very same Satan does. Christ provides insight into the level of deception Satan has pawned off on this world] *He was a murderer from the beginning...*[Referring to the murder of Abel in Gen. 4] *and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him...*[Satan has no truth in him] *When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

When dealing with liars, one must realize a satanic spirit is in operation. When a person lies, they are operating under the influence of a satanic spirit. Lying has no place in God's way of life.

The second characteristic is to operate without being seen. Satan is good at deception because he operates unseen.

Eph. 2:1 *And you were made alive who were dead in your trespasses and sins...*[Referring to those of God's Church in Ephesus] (vs 2) *In which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.*

Satan is a spirit being. The spirit world is undetectable to the five senses. In 2 Kings 6, the story of a young man who was an aide to the prophet Elisha illustrates this point. The army of Syria had surrounded the city of Dothan where Elisha and the young man were staying. This young man went out and saw that the city was surrounded by a large army, which troubled him greatly. He told Elisha about the army and Elisha took him out and said there are more of us than there are of them. Elisha then ask God to open the young man's eyes to see this angelic army that surrounded the Syrian army.

The spirit world is not detectable through the five senses. It can't be seen; it can't be heard; it can't be tasted; one cannot smell it or feel it. This is what gives Satan a distinct advantage over human beings.

The third characteristic of an artful deceiver is found in 2 Corinthians 11.

2 Cor. 11:14 *No wonder, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.*

It's important to understand when studying about Eve being deceived in the Garden of Eden, it describes Satan as a serpent. The same serpent John writes about in Revelation 12. Satan did not appear to Eve as a serpent like people would understand it. This is because the word serpent in the Hebrew refers to the bright, shining one. Remember how God created Satan. He created him as a very beautiful being. Imagine if Satan could be seen today. His created characteristics of beauty would still be in him. Satan is able to transform himself into something that looks good, that looks righteous, that looks right. In essence he is a chameleon. He can change his appearance not only to operate unseen, and undetected, but to also look good. Of course, all that is done because he is a deceiver.

How does one counter deception? As will be seen in this Bible Study it is very important to counter deception for the safety and protection of God's people. So, how is countering deception effectively done?

In His prayer to God the Father before being arrested, Christ stated in John 17:17 *Sanctify them by your truth: your word is truth.* God's word is truth. Anything that deviates from God's word is false.

Notice something else about God's word.

Ps. 117:2 *For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endures forever.* God's truth is always going to stand.

God cannot be worshipped without following the truth.

John 4:24 *God is Spirit: and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth.*

Look at some contrasts between God's truth and Satan's lies. Here is one example of Satan's direct presence in an interaction and another where he is not mentioned in scripture as being present, but his influence is very much in play. In the Garden of Eden, God provided Adam instruction about the two trees.

Gen. 2:15 *Then the Eternal God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it. (vs 16) And the Eternal God commanded the man saying, of every tree of the garden you may freely eat (vs 17) But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat: for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die.* God's instruction very clear, eat of this tree and live, eat of the other and die.

Notice how Satan doesn't come to Adam but goes to his wife.

Gen. 3:1 *Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Eternal God had made. And he said to the woman, has God indeed said that you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?... [Satan is twisting God's word. God told Adam, you can eat of every tree of the garden except one. Satan is making an implication here that is much different than what God said] (vs 2) The woman said to the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. (vs 3) But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, you shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die... [Eve demonstrates a good understanding of what God said] (vs 4) Then the serpent said to the woman, you will not surely die... [Satan proves Christ words in John 8:44 that he is the Father of lies] (vs 5) For God knows that in the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened; and you will be like God, knowing good and evil... [Satan makes a claim to Eve that appeals to her and convinces her that if she will eat of this tree, she will become like God] (vs 6) When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise... [She accepted Satan's lie] She took of its fruit and ate; she also gave to her husband with her and he ate.*

Adam wasn't deceived by Satan's claims. He committed an act of rebellion against God's instruction. This is an example of how Satan works and how he undermines God's truth.

Ex. 19 provides another example of Satan in operation without being directly mentioned in the scriptures. There are a variety of examples throughout the Bible that show Satan's influence without directly mentioning him. This example deals with the Israelites who had just come out of Egyptian slavery. This occurs between crossing the Red Sea and the receiving of the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai. This is what God intended and wanted for the Israelites.

*Ex. 19:5 Now therefore if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to me above all peoples: for all the earth is mine. (vs 6) And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel. (vs 7) Moses came and called for all the elders of the people and laid before them all these words which the Eternal commanded him. (vs 8) Then all the people answered together and said, all that the Eternal has spoken we will do...[Israel agreed to God's words] So Moses brought back the words of the people to the Eternal.*

Then, just a short time later while Moses was up on Mt. Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments, notice what happened.

*Ex. 32:1 When the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, come, make us gods that shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him...*

How would this particular line of thinking gotten these actions started? It got started through rumor, through people becoming disgruntled, through human reasoning concerning the length of time Moses was on Mt. Siani. Instead of remembering what Israel had agreed to, their promise faded into memory. Notice how Moses' brother Aaron responded to Israel's pressure.

*Ex. 32:2 Aaron said to them, break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters and bring them to me. (vs 3) All the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. (vs 4) He received the gold from their hand and he fashioned it with an engraving tool and made a molten calf; then they said, this is your god, O Israel, that brought you*

*out of the land of Egypt...[Aaron tells a bald-faced lie. Who is behind that?] (vs 5) So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation, and said, tomorrow is a feast to the Eternal.*

Aaron promotes his actions with a false celebration. Without directly mentioning Satan in this example, his influence is very much behind Israel's actions.

Deception is something Jesus Christ, Peter and Paul were very concerned about.

*2 Cor. 11:2 For I am jealous for you...[Paul writes] with godly jealousy, for I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. (vs 3) But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ...[How can this take place?] (vs 4) For if he who comes preaches another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit, which you have not received, or a different gospel, which you have not accepted, you may well put up with it.*

Satan is able to deceive through false messages that seem to be well-reasoned based on certain facts but not all the facts. When examined closely these false messages are based on illogical human reasoning which appear very logical. This is how Satan operates and he has a ton of false messengers in this world.

Notice how Paul is speaking about false ministers and how they operate. He says:

*2 Cor. 11:11 Why? Because I do not love you? God knows...[Paul is referring to not taking any money from the Corinthians, but using financial means from other places to take care of himself while he was in Corinth] (vs 12) But what I do, I will continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast... [Speaking of men who wanted to be recognized just like God's true ministers] (vs 13) For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. (vs 14) And no wonder...[Don't be surprised] for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. (vs 15) Therefore it is no great thing...[It's nothing grand, spectacular or wondrous] if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness; whose end will be according to their works.*

False ministers of this world look good; they sound good; they project the authority of God, but when their messages are closely examined and compared with the scriptures, flaws in reasoning begin to appear. A thorough examination reveals the lies being promoted to people who buy it hook, line and sinker without really checking it out. This is how Satan is able to deceive the world.

It is vital to understand how Satan works against God's truth. This example deals with John the Baptist.

*John 1:6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. (vs 7) The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light...[The light is Jesus Christ] that all through him might believe. (vs 8) He was not that light...[John the Baptist was not the light] But was sent to bear witness of that light...[This was John the Baptist's commission. He proclaimed Christ was coming] (vs 9) That was the true light, which gives light to every man coming into the world. (vs 10) He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world did not know him. (vs 11) He came to his own, and his own did not receive him.*

Here the Creator of this universe, the actual One who did the creating, the Word who became Jesus Christ, was not accepted by his creation. Why is that? What is behind all of this activity against the light?

*John 3:17 But God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (vs 18) He who believes in him is not condemned: but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (vs 19) And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil...[Why were they evil? Remember what Christ said in John 8 to the people He was speaking to. He said you are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do] (vs 20) For everyone practicing evil hates the light... [Hates the truth, hates the message of Jesus Christ] and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed...[God's truth points out where people are wrong. People don't want to be told they are wrong. God's late apostle, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong said, the hardest thing for a person to do is to admit that they are wrong] (vs 21) But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.*

People don't naturally respond to the light, which is why they don't respond to the truth. In speaking again about of ministry, Paul writes:

2 Cor. 4:2 *But we [The ministry] have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. (vs 3) But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. (vs 4) Whose minds, the god of this age, has blinded who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*

Satan actively works against the truth by concealing it from people. He has been doing this from the very beginning. and he has been from the very beginning. Notice now how Satan attacks the light.

Hopefully, this Bible Study is raising awareness about how Satan the devil operates. When one knows how Satan works, he can much more effectively be countered. When Christ was explaining his crucifixion to His disciples, Peter took issue with what Christ was saying. So, he decided to let Christ have a little piece of his mind. Christ's response to Peter is very insightful.

Mark 8:31 *And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes... [Notice Christ points to the religious leadership of the Jews as the ones who would be responsible for His death] and be killed, and after three days rise again. (vs 32) He spoke these words openly. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him... [Peter got on to Christ about what he was saying] (vs 33) But when he... [Christ] had turned around, and looked at his disciples, He rebuked Peter saying, get behind me Satan: for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.*

Peter thought what he was doing was correct and in Christ's best interest. Yet Christ said exactly the same thing to Peter He said to Satan at the end of the 40 days and 40 nights of fasting. *Get behind me Satan.* Christ did not look at Peter as being the problem. Christ recognized Peter was being influenced by Satan the devil. The spirit Peter was projecting went against the very plan of God. Here Satan the devil is actually influencing with the individual who would become the very head of God's Church. This ought to raise a

level of awareness about how Satan operates unknowingly in people. Peter certainly wasn't aware he was being used by Satan in this instance.

Notice how Satan worked through Judas Iscariot to have Christ identified and arrested. Here are three examples where Satan's hand was involved in what was going on with human beings at the time right before Christ was crucified.

*Luke 22:1 Now the feast of Unleavened Bread drew nigh, which is called Passover. (vs 2) And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people...[The religious leadership wanted to get rid of Christ and feared that if the people knew it they would rebel and revolt against the priests] (vs 3) Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve...[Here is another person that was very close to Christ that Satan worked through] (vs 4) So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him to them. (vs 5) And they were glad and agreed to give him money. (vs 6) So he promised and sought opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of the multitude.*

These religious leaders wanted Judas to betray Christ in such a manner that would not draw attention to their motive for wanting Christ dead. Notice this takes place prior to God's spring holy days beginning. This interaction between Judas and religious Jewish leaders occurred a few before the Passover in John 13.

This passage shows Christ and His disciples observing the Passover meal together. Christ has just washed the disciples' feet, including those of Judas Iscariot.

*John 13:21 When Jesus had said these things, he was troubled in spirit and testified and said, most assuredly I say to you, one of you will betray me. (vs 22) Then the disciples looked at one another perplexed about whom he spoke. (vs 23) Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples whom Jesus loved...[John] (vs 24) Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom he spoke. (vs 25) Then leaning back on Jesus' breast he said to him, Lord, who is it? (vs 26) Jesus answered, it is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it. And having dipped the bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot,*

*the son of Simon. (vs 27) Now after the piece of bread Satan entered into him. Then Jesus said to him what you do, do quickly.*

Does Satan enter somebody and leave, and re-enter somebody and leave again, and re-enter somebody again? No, he does not. Satan was actively working through various individuals to get rid of Christ to prevent Him from fulfilling His purpose in coming to the earth as a human being. Remember, Satan was behind Herod's decree to kill all male children under the age of two in Bethlehem hoping to kill Christ. Satan was the one who put the pressure on Christ when He was fasting 40 days and 40 nights. Through Judas, Satan is again going after Christ, knowing Christ is going to be killed. Satan was very much involved in the events surrounding Christ's horrible crucifixion, putting on the pressure and utilizing those who are close to Christ to bring it about.

Judas moment of betrayal came in the Garden of Gethsemane.

*Matt. 26:47 And while he was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people...[Understand who sent this multitude out to get Christ] (vs 48) Now his betrayer [Judas] had given them a sign saying, whomever I kiss, he is the one, seize him. (vs 49) And immediately he went up to Jesus and said, greetings Rabbi, and kissed him. (vs 50) And Jesus said to him, friend, why have you come? Then they came and laid hands-on Jesus and took him away.*

In Luke's account Christ actually says to Judas, *are you going to betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?* That's exactly what happened and Satan was involved all the way. Behind the scenes he was influencing people, moving people, motivating people, getting people to take certain actions against Christ. It's important to understand how Satan operates in attacking. He works through people.

Satan is after those who comprise God's Church. Notice Christ's words to Peter in Luke 22:31:  
*And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, indeed Satan has asked for you that he may sift you as wheat...*

It is a chilling thought to know Satan comes after people? Yet, Satan wants to sift all in God's Church. He wants the opportunity to get God's people. To pressure them to break their baptismal commitment and turn back from the calling God has extended to His people. The history of God's Church is filled with examples where Satan has been successful in turning members away from God's truth. Satan is a serious threat who must be guarded against.

However, verse 32 is very encouraging: Christ says, *But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail: and when you have returned to me, strengthen your brethren.* Christ made these comments right before Peter would deny Christ three times on the night of His arrest.

In time, Peter would come to understand how Satan operates. A considerable amount of time exists between the events of passed Luke 22 and what Peter writes in I Peter 5. This is written in the context of the ministry, but still, can be beneficial for those not ordained.

1 Pet. 5:6 *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God...*[What does it mean to humble oneself under God's hand? It simply means to forsake the human way of looking at things and look at how God wants things done. It was Satan's pride that caused him to rebel against God. God gave him rulership over the earth, but Satan wasn't happy with that. He wasn't humble. He wasn't appreciative]*\_humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time...*[When is this? At the sound of the seventh trumpet] (vs 7) *Casting all your care upon him; for he cares for you.* (vs 8) *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.*

That's right. Satan is especially after the ministry. Satan is out there. He is real and he is looking to destroy the membership of God's Church trying to hold fast to God's truth. This is not something to be feared. It is just a reality that needs to be recognized. It is part of the calling God's people have to deal with.

Peter provides the way for how to deal with Satan in verse 9. 1 Pet. 5:9 *Resist him...*[Don't give in] *Resist him steadfast in the faith...*[Which means living God's way of life] *knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.* Peter is referring to other ministers of God's Church.

Satan is always actively working against God's people. Notice how Satan attacked the Smyrna era of God's Church.

Rev. 2:9 *I know your works...*[Christ says] *and tribulation, and poverty, (but you are rich)...*[Rich in the context of obedience to God] *and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews...*[Those claiming to be true Christians] *and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan...*[The congregation of Satan, Satan's children. Notice how Satan works against the Church directly through other people, in this case through the government] (vs 10) *Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer: indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison...*[Does this mean Satan is going to grab people up by the nap of the neck and put them behind bars? No, he is going to influence the authorities under his control to arrest God's people you and throw them in jail] *that you may be tested: and you will have tribulation ten days: be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life.* The fight against Satan the devil is not an easy fight, but it is not a fight to be feared either.

Look at this in connection with the Pergamos era.

Rev. 2:13 *I know your works and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is: and you hold fast to my name and have not denied my faith, even in the days in which Antipas...*[Meaning against the pope or anti-father] *was my faithful martyr, who was killed among you where Satan dwells.* This speaking about the martyrdom of God's people.

Notice what is said about Satan's attack on the era of Thyatira.

Rev. 2:24 *Now to you I say, and to the rest of Thyatira...*[Those who are left] *as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan...* [Who have not embraced the false doctrines Satan has promoted within God's Church] *as they say, I will put on you no other burden.*

Notice how Satan goes after God's Church with a vengeance in the end times. This is a future event yet to occur. It actually occurs shortly after the beginning of the final six months of great tribulation.

Rev. 12:13 *Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child...*

A woman in scripture represents a church, either the true Church of God, or the false church of Satan the devil. This reference is to the true Church of God.

(vs 14) *But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, times, and half a time, from the presence of the serpent...* [time, times and half a time = three and a half years] (vs 15) *So the serpent...* [This the same serpent from the Garden of Eden, the same serpent who has deceived the whole world, actively going after protected Philadelphian Christians. Notice again how Satan works] *spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.* (vs 16) *But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.* [The flood refers to a military army] (vs 17) *And the dragon was enraged with the woman* [The true Church of God] *and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

These people are Laodicean Christians, who are having to go through the Great Tribulation because of their failure to hold fast to God's truth. After three years of tribulation these Christians are going to have to prove their commitment to God's truth. To do this God will allow Satan to come after them directly. These Christians do not have the same protection as the group of Christians in verse 14. Why? Because they have allowed themselves to become spiritually lukewarm; not held fast to God's truth and not resisting Satan. They have allowed Satan to infiltrate the truth causing them to compromise the truth and becoming deceived. Remember, Christ's words to Laodiceans.

Rev. 3:17 *Because you say I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing, and do not know...* [God's own Church is deceived about itself. These people don't recognize what is happening in their spiritual lives] *that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*

This is the spiritual condition of God's Church today. However, these people do not have to remain wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. God wants them to be alive, alert and awake to what is going on. That is why Christ says in verse 19 for Laodiceans to "*be[come] zealous and repent*."

God wants His Church to keep His word and not deny His name. He wants His Church to please Him and make Him happy with their obedience. Even though God's people are going to fall, stumble, and make mistakes along the way, God expects them to get up and keep going forward all the while being pressed by Satan the devil. Those who practice God's truth will defeat Satan.

Notice Christ's words to Philadelphian Christians who are holding fast to God's truth.

*Rev. 3:9 Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not...[False Christians] but lie...[Here is a direct connection to Satan the devil] indeed, I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.*

Understand that Satan is a vicious, lying adversary that must constantly be resisted and fought against on a daily basis. He can and will be defeated as Revelation 3:9 says, but not without a hard-fought fight. This realization has to be part of the focus of God's people who must grow in grace and knowledge and overcome the obstacles seeking to prevent them from becoming ruling members in God's family.

In the final part of this Bible Study, attention must be given to how deception works. as it relates to the Catholic Church and how many in God's Church were deceived by the same false doctrines after the death of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

In looking through the catechism of the Catholic Church, the Catholic Church has some correct understanding about Satan the devil. Catholics understand he is a created being. They understand. he sinned against God. It is very difficult to find where Catholics err in understanding about Satan because much of what they believe is correct. Section 407 of the catechism illustrates a valid point about Satan and about how man is held captive by him. However, Catholics are unable to see how Satan's deception applies to their understanding about the existence and purpose of the Catholic Church.

Notice how the Catholic Church believes in Satan and how mankind is held captive by him.

Section 407: The doctrine of original sin, closely connected with that of redemption by Christ, provides lucid discernment of man's situation and activity in the world. By our parents' sin, the devil has acquired a certain domination over man even though man remains free. Original sin entails captivity under the power of him who thenceforth has the power of death that is the devil. Ignorance of the fact that man has a wounded nature inclined to evil gives rise to serious errors in the areas of education, politics, social action, and morals.

Basically, what the Catholic Church is saying is that in the areas of education, politics, social action and morals there are problems. Those problems come because mankind is basically under the power of Satan the devil. This is true but notice how these errors are manifested within the Catholic Church itself.

Section 830, 831, 844, and 845: The word catholic means universal in the sense of according to the totality or in keeping with the whole. The church is catholic in a double sense. First, the church is catholic because Christ is present in her. Where there is Christ Jesus, there is the Catholic Church. In her subsists the fullness of Christ's body united with its head. This implies that she receives from him the fullness of the means of salvation, which he has willed, correct and complete confession of faith, full sacramental life and ordained ministry in apostolic succession. The church was, in this fundamental sense, catholic on the day of Pentecost and will always be so until the day of the Parousia or the return of Jesus Christ.

Secondly: The church is catholic because she has been sent out by Christ on a mission to the whole of the human race. All men are called to belong to the new people of God. This people, therefore, while remaining one and only one, is to be spread throughout the whole world in all ages in order that the design of God's will may be fulfilled. He made human nature one in the beginning and has decreed that all his

children who were scattered should be finally gathered together as one. The character of universality, which adorns the people of God, is a gift from the Lord himself whereby the Catholic Church ceaselessly and efficaciously seeks for the return of all humanity and all its goods under Christ the head in the unity of his spirit.

The Catholic belief that God is trying to save all people now shows the lack of understanding the Catholic Church has about the plan of God at this time.

This next section talks about people who are not yet part of the Catholic faith.

In their religious behavior, however, men also display the limits and errors that disfigure the image of God in them. Very often, deceived by the evil one, men have become vain in their reasonings and exchanged the truth of God for a lie and served the creature rather than the Creator; or else, living and dying in this world without God, they are exposed to ultimate despair. To reunite all his children, scattered and led astray by sin, the Father willed to call the whole of humanity into his Son's church. The church is the place where humanity must rediscover its unity and salvation. The church is the world reconciled. She is that bark, which in full sail in the Lord's cross, by the breath of the Holy Spirit, navigates safely in this world. According to another image dear to the church fathers, she is prefigured as Noah's ark, which alone saves from the flood.

This section shows that the Catholic Church doesn't realize it is being used by Satan as a counterfeit for deceiving the world. Now is not the time for God to reconcile the world to Himself. This will happen after Jesus Christ returns.

Satan was very successful in infiltrating God's Church after the death of Herbert W. Armstrong. The following quote comes from a WCG conference held in Tulsa, OK, in November 1993. The following statement was made in regard to Satan. Notice how contrary this statement is to the Bible.

Satan never failed. (That means he was never cast out of heaven.) He was Satan from the instant he was created and Isaiah 14:12 is a metaphor.

Now notice the WCG's lack of understanding in regard to the meaning of the two goats of Leviticus 16. This comes from a booklet produced by the WCG entitled *God's Festivals and Holy Days*, pages 29 and 30. It reveals how quickly understanding about the two goats disappeared after Mr. Armstrong's death.

Some have seen this goat as a symbol of Christ. Another explanation focuses on the scapegoat as a symbol of Satan. These Day of Atonement rituals are explained in the book of Hebrews; but there is not much there about Satan's removal. Hebrews focuses on the priesthood of Christ.

Then from a section out of the Pastor General's Report entitled *Reviews You Can Use*, September/October 1992, *The Azazel Controversy*, by Donald L. Jackson:

In contrast to the concept of Azazel as a name for Satan, some scholars feel the Azazel goat represents another aspect of Christ's ministry, the removal of sin. Equating Azazel with a demon is thought to be based on Jewish mythology like that found in Enoch and other apocalyptic works. Since the root meaning of Azazel is 'goat of departure' any consideration that the goat might represent Satan is considered speculation and is not considered provable from the Bible. The Azazel controversy has continued for millennia. Strong arguments have been made that the goat represents Satan. The Church today leans toward this view but does not take a dogmatic stand on the issue, and strong arguments have been made that the goat represents Christ. It is a discussion that will likely continue.

This discussion was settled by Mr. Armstrong a long time ago in the Church of God as God revealed the meaning of His holy days to Mr. Armstrong. Notice Mr. Armstrong's comments from his sermon entitled *Mission of the Philadelphia Church Era*, given on December 17, 1983.

And the fact is Satan the devil has deceived the whole world. Brethren, Satan is the one who is guilty. Those people in the Catholic Church and the Protestant churches have been deceived; and I think they really believe. God just hasn't opened any more truth to them. We don't sit in judgment of them. We are not judging them yet. We are going to do it, and when we judge them, then all the truth will be opened; and God will take away the blindness from their eyes so they can understand, if they are willing. Today they couldn't understand it even if they were willing. I don't think they are willing either as far as that goes.

Satan the devil is real, and God's people must always be cognizant of his presence in this world. He is someone that has to be resisted and overcome in order to become part of God's kingdom. Through submission to God and use of his Holy Spirit, God's people can confidently resist Satan's every move.

God's people need to keep in mind Christ's prayer given before He was arrested and crucified. This prayer is for future members of God's Church who weren't around when He gave it and should be of great encouragement in the fight against Satan the devil.

Christ says to God the Father:

*John 17:13 But now I come to you and these things I speak in the world that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. (vs 14) I gave them your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world just as I am not of the world. (vs 15) I do not pray that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one. (vs 16) They are not of the world just as I am not of the world. (vs 20) I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word. (21) that they all may be one, as You Father are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that you sent Me.*