

New Morning Magical

Who is the adversary? Part 1

We are following up yesterday's discussion that included mentioning the term Satan or adversary. You're about to discover a central teaching of the entire Christian church, no matter the branch or denomination, which is completely erroneous and, in my humble opinion, has severely limited its progress and done nothing to bring Christians closer to the Father or to Christ.

(unscripted discussion here)

It's going to take us 3 installments to explore this subject, including the open discussion with those who were on the live teleconference, which I felt could be especially helpful to you.

My prayer is that you will find all this to be worthwhile and even liberating. All I ask is that you consider carefully everything that we dive into together. Don't just cast it out offhandedly. We know that much of this exploration will disagree with everything you've been taught in church or heard most of your life, so please get out whatever Bible you have, or look at the Concordant Literal New Testament online and the PDF document of the Concordant Literal Version of the Old Testament: Just go to Concordant.org, and you'll find both of these resources.

Of course, you may decide that what I'm sharing in these recordings is sheer heresy and that you can no longer be part of this Morning Magical virtual fellowship. I understand how challenging this subject is, even more than the ideas that the Father will save all mankind and that no one will suffer eternal torment in a mythical hell. If you got past both of those challenges to traditional Christian doctrine, maybe you can stand one more, because at the end of all this, I pray that the Scriptures will make so much more sense and so will the Father and His purpose of the eons. Even more, I pray that as you peel away a huge veil of misunderstanding, you find so much greater freedom in your own life, in your mind, and in your heart when you discover who is the real adversary.

So, buckle up, get your Bibles out, and let's get started.

No one in this audience, to my knowledge, is Hebrew. I certainly am not Hebrew, and it's safe to say that having only my W.A.S.P. perspective, developed over centuries of enculturation – how's that for a cool word? "Enculturation" – could limit me from understanding a Hebrew – or Hebraic – perspective that is likewise enculturated over centuries – millennia, in fact.

I have long been bothered by blaming so much of our troubles, problems, and challenges on a figure named Satan, the Adversary, the enemy, or “the Devil.” How often have you heard something like this: “*The devil is trying to make me think...*”, or “*Satan is doing such and such in my life,*” or perhaps, “*This illness is an attack of the enemy*”?

We have referred to satan many times during our studies, and He or IT occupies a discussion in my book, ***Go GOD!*** (retitled and is now: ***Rescuing God From the Rubble of Religion***). As you know – you who are listening live tonight – I have been searching the recent articles by haRold Smith, who writes from Jerusalem, discussing the origin of our western understanding of satan compared to the Hebraic understanding, which birthed the scriptures in their entirety. Every writer of the scriptures was Hebrew. He or she spoke Hebrew, and even for the Apostolic writings, which were in Greek, the men were nonetheless Hebrews and therefore embodied a Hebrew frame of reference.

Here’s where I’m going with this cryptic introduction to our study: It is entirely possible that the entity I grew up knowing as Satan, or the enemy, is not an entity at all – unlike the messenger Gabriel, who announced himself to Zechariah, or the Michael, who appeared to Daniel, after having fought “the prince of Persia.”

Well, if satan is not an entity, what is He, or more appropriately, what is IT? Secondly, no matter what we discover here, what are the implications for you and me today?

First, you should know that I do NOT claim to have this all worked out in advance. Frankly, I have probably more questions than I have answers; however, I find that I have not been able to shrug off this assault on the fortress of my understanding. What once seemed certain, seems so no longer. I have a sneaking suspicion that the issue may be as critically important as knowing that God will save all mankind by the consummation, and that no one is burning in torment, in a mythical place called Hell, now or ever. More importantly, I sense that the Lord is requiring me to grasp and to communicate whatever we discover together, because its discovery – or what we uncover – may somehow help us all to know Him and walk IN and WITH Him more intimately...and that can only be a good thing.

So...I pray that you will embark on an exploration with me -- perhaps the first since these studies began – into completely unfamiliar territory. I pray that you will keep an open mind, being wary for the tendency to defend a position before knowing the facts. I also pray that you will help me do the same.

As we go through our study tonight, I invite you to consider this an open classroom in which your questions are not only invited, but encouraged, if by any means to add clarity and light along what is to me a wilderness in my understanding of Who God is, what He created, and how it all works together to fulfill His “purpose of the eons.”

It turns out that satan is a Hebrew word, certainly, but **not** a Hebrew name. It is not a proper noun, not a name of someONE, spirit being or otherwise. The word, satan, is actually a noun used to designate an opposing force. Here’s how haRold Smith describes the meaning of the word, satan: *“Adversarial opposition... opposing force, divide, set at odds with, accuse, slander, reject, deceive, oppose, be adversarial.”* Satan *“expresses the principle strategy of evil. A force of determinial opposition to the works of YHVH.”*

Go back to the first definition given: Adversarial opposition. Not **“The Adversary”** but an opposing force...and you and I have the capacity to embody the qualities of adversarial opposition at any given time. Indeed, we know people who are doing it now! We have had to break fellowship with some, or they have had to break fellowship with us because of this adversarial opposition. It is a state which is opposite to harmony, peace, contentment, joy, creativity, happiness, and even prosperity.

The Concordant body of literature is uniform in capitalizing the word, satan, as a name. Occasionally, even the word “Adversary” is used with capitalization. But the Hebrew language does not have capital letters. Isn’t that curious? Neither Greek nor Hebrew has punctuation marks either, which means that we have to determine punctuation by the form and flow of phrases within the text. Possibly for the first time in 40 years, I find that the Concordant Literal versions of both the Old and New Testaments to be limited to a western frame of reference, when a Semitic one would serve best.

Well, whatever your cultural, racial or ethnic background may be, let’s look together in the scriptures to see what the Lord might impart to us about this subject:

Genesis 3:1

Now the serpent, it became more crafty than any other animal of the field that Yahweh Elohim had made.

When I read this just now, it was as if I’d never seen it before. What’s the word that makes everything come to a halt, in the context of looking for who or what satan is? Read it again.

“more **crafty than any other animal of the field’**

An animal of the field cannot be a spirit, and I would propose that if an entity named Satan, or any demon for that matter, were to have inhabited the animal, the scripture would have said so. Instead, all we have here is an *“animal of the field that God had made,”* which had become *“more crafty than any other animal of the field that God had made.”*

Now jump over to **Isaiah 14:12**

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! (KJV)

It’s curious that the only Bible version where the name Lucifer appears is the KJV. There’s a problem, however: the word, rendered Lucifer, is a word that is used in many other places, but is never rendered as Lucifer again. Look at the CLV:

How have you fallen from the heavens! Howl, son of the dawn! You have been hacked down to the earth, Defeater over all nations!

Look at **John 14:30**

"No longer shall I be speaking much with you, for the Chief of the world is coming, and in Me **it** has not anything.

16:31

the Chief of this world has been judged.

16:31

Now shall the Chief of this world be cast out.

“Chief” in Greek is **Archon**: ruler, commander, or leader. Also notice, back in John 14:30, Jesus referred to “IT,” and not “He,” when He said, ***“for the Chief of the world is coming, and in Me **it** has not anything.”*** If that seems too picky, it’s been my go-to designation for the Holy Spirit, which is referred to as HE only once, and in studying that with you many months ago, I found that the personal pronoun – in this case, “he” – may be interchangeable with the impersonal pronoun, “it.”

Matthew 6:13 – the Lord’s prayer ends with this:

And mayest Thou not be bringing us into trial, but rescue us from **the wicked** one.

The word “one” was added, “for readability.” Jesus didn’t recommend that we pray for rescue from an entity, named Satan, or from anyone in particular, but from **“the wicked.”** That term

could apply to a large population of real, live people, don't you agree? You probably know someone – maybe lots of someones – who could be counted among ***“the wicked.”***

Here's Jesus addressing Peter in a major turnabout encounter:

Matthew 16

15 [Jesus] is saying to them, "Now you, who are you saying that I am?"

16 Now answering, Simon Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Now, answering, Jesus said to him, "Happy are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood does not reveal it to you, but My Father Who is in the heavens.

18 Now I, also, am saying to you that you are Peter, and on this rock will I be building My ecclesia, and the gates of the unseen shall not be prevailing against it.

19 I will be giving you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatsoever you should be binding on the earth shall be those things having been bound in the heavens, and whatsoever you should be loosing on the earth, shall be those having been loosed in the heavens."

20 Then He cautions the disciples that they may be saying to no one that He is the Christ.

21 Thenceforth begins Jesus to show His disciples that He must be coming away into Jerusalem and to be suffering much from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and the third day to be roused.

22 And, taking Him to him, Peter begins to rebuke Him, saying, "Propitious be it to Thee, Lord! By no means shall this be for Thee!"

23 Now, being turned, He said to Peter, "Go away behind Me, **satan**! A snare are you to Me, for you are not disposed to that which is of God, but that which is of men."

Jesus was addressing Peter, in verse 23. The CLV even acknowledged that when it refused to capitalize the term, explaining that Peter was acting like “a satan” – as in, an opposer – by his words. This is the whole point, and may be the most important take away for us practically from this study:

Any of us at any time could be satanic when we oppose – when we become adversarial to -- what God has said or done, and what He IS saying or doing, as He fulfills and accomplishes His purpose of the eons. We may become, albeit unwittingly, “satan” if and when at any time we are accusing, slandering, rejecting, or dividing. We are not victims of an entity – we ARE the entity which is at the time acting in adversarial opposition to word and works of God.

Serious, isn't it? No matter what our perspective, whether western or Hebrew, separating satan from an entity to an oppositional force that may be found within US, removes the opportunity to blame something – or someone outside of us—and puts the accountability ON us.

Suddenly, the demonstration of God's multifarious wisdom to the celestials becomes even more magnificent, not because we are triumphing over an adversarial entity, but because we are triumphing, IN CHRIST JESUS, over an adversarial force within our own nature as sons and daughters of Adam and Eve, who chose to gratify themselves over obeying God's direct instruction that was for their highest good.

Perhaps that's actually the best definition for us today: satan is the tendency within ourselves to gratify our fleshly mind and desires – even our human survival instincts, if you please – rather than obey God. I'm not purporting this definition to be the word of the Lord, but I ask you to check your spirit and see if you find agreement or not.

OK. Let's stop here for today and we'll pick this subject up again tomorrow, beginning with Yeshua's trial in the wilderness. If you want to look ahead, we'll start at the beginning of Luke 4.

So until then,

May Yahweh bless you and keep you;
May Yahweh light up His face toward you
and be gracious to you;
May Yahweh lift His face to you
and appoint peace for you.

AMEN