



September 8, 2023

## **Our Most Formidable Enemy**

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

As we once again near God's annual Feast of Tabernacles, and fall Holy Days, often some convey that it seems our adversary and his mignons ramp up their process of stirring up things to knock us, God's people, off from our focus on God and His plan for mankind. Many call it our "pre Feast trials or stressors".

This letter this week should connect to that as we continue our discussion.

Last time we began a discussion of a topic "Who's our enemy?" Let's continue with this thread by examining our most potent enemies.

One of the most dangerous is Satan the Devil. Most years I try to cover his past actions as a rebel who sought to take over God's throne in a sermon message just prior to Atonement.

Lets' examine a bit more closely his actions interacting with human beings. The first mention takes place in the Garden of Eden, sometime after the creation of Adam and Eve. He appeared to Eve in the form of a "serpent." The Hebrew word translated serpent is *nachash* and is from the almost identical Hebrew word identified with "to practice divination." (Online Bible Hebrew Lexicon)

Satan also works through practitioners of the occult to deceive others. Whether the form of the serpent that Satan used was a snake or a lizard with legs is hard to determine. When the LORD confronted Adam and Eve, He addressed the serpent that Satan used to speak and influence the woman. "*And the LORD God said to the serpent, Because you have done this you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every animal of the field. You shall go upon your belly, and you shall eat*

*dust all the days of your life.*" (Genesis 3:14) This implies that this creature may have walked upright when Satan worked through this creature to deceive Eve.

I have to wonder, why would Eve even talk to this serpent, perhaps she had before this event, who knows?

During his encounter with Eve, Satan tried to put doubts in her mind. Satan said, "*Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'*" This clearly seems to be an attempt to paint God as unfair and craftily trying to confuse her about what God had instructed her. He influenced and put questions in her mind to doubt what God had said. Satan still uses this approach ever so masterfully today as well. Doubt destroys faith.

Eve responded fairly accurately but added some words "*nor shall you touch it.*" Maybe God said this also, but this phrase was not recorded in chapter 2. Satan then directly contradicted God and told the woman, "*You will not surely die.*" A mixture of truth and error is quite obvious! He also told her that if she eats of the tree she will be like God! Eve entertained the appeal of eating the fruit of the tree. She succumbed to carnal, human desires. "*For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. . .*" (1 John 2:16)

We see at work one of the devices of Satan - *deception*. This influence of the Devil is powerful! The apostle Paul had some important observations about this formidable enemy. "*But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded. . .*" (2 Cor. 4:3-4)

The apostle labels him "*the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience . . .*" (Eph. 2:2) Those under his influence are described by Jesus, "*the tares are the sons of the wicked one.*" (Matt. 13:38)

When we stay connected with our Creator we are blessed to be the plants being matured for use in God's kingdom. That is encouraging. That being said, Satan works through humans to participate in acts of evil, even murder, with desires to destroy those connected with God. Satan does not want us to grow or mature. The apostle John revealed his influence of "*Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother.*" (1 John 3:12) Jesus addressed the Jewish leaders who

were plotting to kill Him referred to the murderous actions of the devil, "*You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning.*" (John 8:44) This seems to refer to the murder of Able by Cain who was used by "*the wicked one.*"

It's so very important that we consistently draw close to God, daily seek His will, and do so humbly with a contrite heart. On our own we can be destroyed.

And, we must be ever so vigilant to be aware of our enemies' devices which are many!

Thankfully, Satan has to accept the restraints that the true God imposes on him. The Biblical recorded interactions of Satan with Job demonstrate this. However, Satan remains eager to do his work of deception even today and in significant ways in the future. We will continue this exposition of the work of our formidable enemy Satan next time...

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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