

HOW CAN I RESIST EVIL?

INTRODUCTION.

Temptation to evil comes from the world, the flesh and the Devil.

In John.2v14-17., the apostle John writes, "I have written unto you, fathers, because ye know him who is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the Evil One. v15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. v16. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. v17. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

The world structure that John refers to here includes the religious system that crucified Jesus. Peter tells us that the precious blood of Jesus has redeemed us from all the false worldly and religious traditions by which Satan binds mankind. We read, in 1Pet.1v18,19., "For you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from the fruitless and futile way of living inherited by tradition from your fathers, ("patroparadotos"), v19. But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

In Gal.5v24., Paul writes, "Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

In James 1v12-17., James writes, "Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. v13. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. v14. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lusts and enticed. v15. Then, when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. v16. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. v17. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." "Lust" is "epithumia," which means, desire, lust, or craving, and is derived from "epithumeo," to have a desire for, and it is used for both good desire, Phil.1v23., or evil desire, as here in James.1v14. and Rom.7v7.. "Enticed," is "deleazomenos," the present passive participle of "deleazo," which is derived from "delear," bait; and so the thought is of being enticed to sin like a fish drawn out from his retreat by bait, or an animal caught by a snare. James is speaking of any desire or pleasure that entices the soul. "Deleazo," only occurs here in James.1v14., and in 2Pet.2v14,18.

When James the son of Mary (Mk.6v3.), writes in James.3v2., "For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body," he is obviously awed by the memory of the sinless life of Jesus, and His perfect control of His temper and speech, that he saw in their home at Nazareth, and compares it with his own sinful life and unbelief. James and Jude lived with Jesus for over 20 years, and revered the glory of His perfect life, they called Him, "The Lord Jesus Christ," they did not feel worthy to call Him brother. James.1v1. Jude.v1.

The Devil. Unbelievers and modern theologians may say that there is no Devil, but his existence is personally witnessed to by our Lord Jesus Christ, and many Scriptures. Any person who walks with God will soon find that Satan exists.

WHO IS THE DEVIL?

a. In Is.14v12., the Devil is called Lucifer.

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!" "Lucifer" is "heylel," 1966, and means, "brightness, light-bringer," the KJV and NKJ translate it "Lucifer," others think that it means "bright-star, like the NAS and NIV, which translate it as, "star of the morning," and the ASV as "day-star." This passage in Is.14v12-20., tells how a great angel, who was once the "Light-bearer" of truth to the world, became the great dark corrupting force behind the rulers of the nations. Here the fallen angel Lucifer is looked upon as the evil power behind the throne of Babylon. We see the unrepentant pride and corrupt ambition of Satan, when he five times states, "I will," and finishes in Is.14v14., with the ultimate in arrogant ambition, "I will be like the Most High. This passage reveals how this once great angel, was cast out of Heaven for bringing sin, distress, disunity and conflict into Heaven. Lk.10v18. Like many politicians, Satan fell through pride, ambition, and love of position, praise, power and authority.

b. In Ezek.28v14., the Devil is called "the anointed cherub who covers." See Ezek.28v12-19.

Ezek.28v14., states, "You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones." Satan was the evil power behind the king of Tyre mentioned in 28v12.

These two passages reveal that the rulers of Tyre, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Egypt, Syria, are under the invisible personal domination of Satan, the head of this present evil world-system. These two passages start long before human history, and reveal the fall of Satan and the corruption of his character, power and glory,

and the beginning of sin in the creation. They also reveal how Satan brings his plans to fruition through earthly kings and rulers. Many worldly rulers have taken upon themselves divine titles and honours, and even though they have not realised it, have brought to pass the plans and aims of Satan. We see in Dan.10. and Eph.6v12-22., the contest between the invisible good and evil angelic powers, the superhuman agencies in world governments in the satanic world system.)

c. In Rev.12v9., Satan is called by several names, which reveal his evil disposition.

The Great Red Dragon."

Satan is pictured as, "the great ("megas") red dragon," in Rev.12v9., this indicates Satan's malevolent and ferocious disposition, and his desire to cause suffering, death and destruction. The seven heads are seven kingdoms under his control, he has used six of them in the past to oppress, persecute and dominate the Israelites. These were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Egypt, Syria, and the sixth, Rome, oppressed Israel in John's time. The seventh head, the kingdom of Antichrist, is still to come, and the ten horns are ten kings under Antichrist. The tail of the dragon casts a third of the stars of heaven to the earth, these are without doubt the angels that fell with Satan.

The Ancient Serpent.

He is an ancient opponent of mankind. We read in Rev.12v9-12. and 20v2., that the Evil One is called, "the great ("megas") dragon," "that original ancient serpent," "archaios," from "arche," beginning, the original great deceiver of mankind. see Gen.3v1ff.. In Mt.24v24., Jesus said, that some of the false prophets of the closing years of this age, will do such great signs and wonders, that they will almost "deceive and lead astray" the very elect of God. The Evil One also tries to get us to deceive ourselves. 1Jn.1v8. He is also called the Devil, "diabolos," the "slanderer," and Satan," "Satanas," our adversary, and "the accuser of the brethren." See Rev.20v2. Jesus said Satan was a liar and murderer from the beginning. Jn.8v44. His wickedness goes back to the angelic ages; He has always been the enemy of man, and as in Eden, he still tries to corrupt and destroy mankind.

The Devil, the Slanderer.

The Devil, "ho Diabolos," means "the Slanderer." "Diabolos," 1228, is derived from, "diaballo," 1225, to accuse, to malign, to vilify, and is derived from the primary verb, "ballo," 906, which means, to throw. So a slanderer is a person who throws words, with various levels of violence and intensity. ("Daimon," is often wrongly translated as "devil," it should be translated as "demon.") Paul uses "diabolos," when he warns women that they must not slander anyone, or indulge in gossip. 1Tim.3v11. Tit.2v3. Satan's slander and accusations are thrown at multitudes of people, in all situations, and with maximum intensity and malignity, he vilifies God to men, and men to God. Gen.3v1-5. Job.1v6-11. 2v1-5. Rev.12v9-12. The Devil's efforts to seduce mankind to evil have been successful with all but Jesus. Jesus came to destroy the evil works of the Devil. 1Jn.3v8. Acts.10v38. See Eph.2v1-3. 4v27.6v11. 1Tim.3v6,7. 1Pet.5v7,8.Jude.v9. Satan lays snares for people. 2Tim.2v26. However, If we arm ourselves with God's power and gifts we can resist Satan, and he will flee from us. James.4v5-7.

God prepared the lake of fire for the Devil and his angels, and this is where they will go, because of their evil lives and impenitence. Mt.25v41. Rev.20v10. The Devil's children manifest their father's love of false accusation and slander, and will share his fate. 2Tim.3v3. Jesus said that Judas had turned against Him in his heart, and was slandering Him; "devil" in Jn.6v70., is "diabolos," "a slanderer." We read in Jn.6v66., From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed Jesus. Jesus had refused to be made King, and spoke of a spiritual kingdom, and a vital living relationship with Himself, and this was the final straw that destroyed the faith of Judas and these other former disciples. Jn.6v15,28-71.

Satan is called, "the accuser of the brethren,"

In Rev.12v10., "accuser," in the Majority Text, is, "kategoros," "one who brings a legal charge against another," it also occurs in Jn.8v10. Acts.23v30,35. 25v16,18. In Rev.12v10., "accuses," is "kategoron," the present active participle of "kategoroeo," to bring a legal charge and accusation. The present participle again shows the evil persistence, continual action, and habitual character of Satan's accusations. This is the devil's constant malicious occupation. We read here that he accuses believers in Jesus continually before God their heavenly Father, both by day and night, "hemeras kai nuktos." Job.1v6,7. 2v1,2. We see Satan's appalling malice and hatred, and the amazing patience of God. Satan is the slanderer who tries to take away a persons reputation and character, he goes into the presence of God to slander Christians on the basis that he is there to expose those who have broken God's Law. The Devil, the greatest lawbreaker of all, claims the right to appear before God in Heaven, on the grounds of the Law of God, to make a legal accusation against the children of God. Envy will see a spot in a bright sky and dwell on it, failing to see the beauty and brightness in a life that love delights to dwell on. When a disciple gives the Devil grounds for accusation, the whole of Heaven knows about it, and when he sees, or thinks he sees, a weakness in one of Christ's brethren, he demands an opportunity to sift them, just as he did in the case of Peter. Lk.22v31,32. 1Pet 5v8,9.

Satan.

"Satanas," means adversary, opponent and enemy, from the verb "Satan," "to lie in wait as an enemy or adversary." When Jesus called Peter Satan, He was either informing Peter, that he was acting as an adversary, and not as a friend who wanted to save Him from death, or that the inspiration for Peter's words came from the Evil One, who was again trying to turn Jesus from His attempt to redeem mankind. Mt.16v21-23. Mk.8v33.

Another word for adversary is "antidokos," 476, which is used to speak of an opponent in legal matters in Mt.5v25. Lk.12v58. and 18v3., in 1Pet.5v8, "antidokos describes Satan's adversarial attack as a roaring lion, which could end in martyrdom.

The Great Deceiver.

He "deceiveth the whole world." He is the Father of lies and falsehood. The word that is used for "deceiveth," is "planon," the present active participle of "planao," to lead astray, to deceive; the present participle shows the evil persistence, continual action and habitual character of Satan's attempts to deceive. Jn.8v44. It is a terrible tragedy that this once beautiful, wise and great angel has had his character and disposition destroyed by sin until he can only find pleasure in deceiving people and causing suffering. Sin is no respecter of persons, it destroys the personalities of angels as well as the souls of men. Is.14v12-19. Ezek.28v11-19. Lk.10v17-19. Lk.11v17-26. Jn.12v31-33. 16v8-11. Rev.20v1-3,10. Heaven is sick at heart over the misery that Satan and his angels inflict on God's Creation.

In Lk.10v18., we read that the Evil One was cast out of Heaven before the creation of man. In Jn.12v31., Jesus said that at His death, the prince of this world "shall be cast out," "ekblethesetai exo," the future passive of "ekballo;" and "exo," shows that he is thrown, "clean out." Satan is called "the prince of this world," in Jn.12v31. 14v30. and 16v11.. In Rev.12v9., we read that Satan is cast down, ("eblethe," the aorist passive indicative of "ballo"), out of the heavenly places at the start of the Great Tribulation. God warns us that Satan's great anger and activities will bring woe to the earth, Satan is the cause of the Great Tribulation. Truth will protect us from Satan's attempts to deceive.

The good angels are continually having painful conflicts with the powers of darkness when they come to minister to the children of God on earth. Heb.1v13,14. Dan.10v12,13,19-21. The whole of Heaven will rejoice with great joy when Michael and his angels cast Satan and his angels out of the heavenly places. Rev.12v12. The cleansing of the heavenlies will be followed 3½ years later by the cleansing of the earth. Rev.11v15-19. Michael means, "Who is like God," and shows his deep love for God and his real humility of mind, there is a complete absence of the self-exaltation and pride that brought about the fall of Satan, who said "I will be like the Most High." Is.14v13-15.

There is a vast difference between the union that Michael has with his angels, and that which Satan has with his angels. Michael and his angels are banded together by the sweetest and most tender love for one another and God, whereas Satan and his angels are banded together only by a common hatred of good and God. There exists in Satan's ranks the most dreadful hatred, variance and strife, and one angel rules another only by means of a greater ferocity and power; it is a kingdom of darkness. Thanks be to God who has delivered us from the power and end of these evil angels, and translated us into His kingdom of love and light. Col.1v12,13.

The forbidden occult. Lev.19v1,20-31. 20v6,27. Deut.18v10-22. Is.8v18-20. Rev.21v8. 22v15. However, there is forgiveness for those who repent.

3. HOW DOES SATAN ATTACK US?

People's minds are deceived and blinded by Satan, and are kept captive by his lies. 2Cor.4v4. 10v1-5. 1Tim.11v3. Paul states that we can be deceived by Satan, he writes in 2Cor.11v3., "But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, so your minds may be seduced and corrupted from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ." See Gen.3v4. Here Paul's concern was over false teachers in the Church, the Judaizers, who were trying to bring the Church back under the Law.

In 2Cor.2v11., Paul warns us that Satan can get an advantage over us if we don't forgive people who have repented, he states, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." "Devices," is "noema," 3540, which means the thoughts, plans, and purposes, here with a sinister evil intent. Satan gives considerable thought to how he can trap us, but God is our defence.-

In Eph.6v11., Paul says, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." "Wiles," is "methodia," 3180, and denotes- "methodical scheming, craftiness and deceit," it is from "meta," "after," and "hodos," "a way." In Eph.4v14., Paul uses it to warn of the methodical deceit of some false teachers, who threaten the Church. Truth will protect us from Satan's attempts to deceive; "It is written," gave Jesus victory over the deceiver, and it will give us victory too, if we love God's Word like our Saviour.. Mt.4v1-11. Eph.6v14,17.

A. Satan's method of attack on Adam and Eve.

a. Satan questions God's restriction. "Hath God said?" Gen.2v16,17. 1Tim.6v17.

Satan states that something valuable is being kept from them. God gives us all things richly to enjoy.

b. Satan arrogantly affirms that there is no penalty for sin. "You will not surely die." Gen.3v4.

Satan persuades them that there is no shame or guilt connected with sin, and that fellowship with God will not be broken.

c. Satan states that there is hidden wisdom to be obtained.

Satan uses this theme to deceive the occultist, and it was common in Paul's day in the mystery religions. Paul

preaches against this in Col.2, and John in 1Jn.4v1-6.. These Docetic and Cerinthian Gnostics, said "We know," and prided themselves on special knowledge.

d. The result of listening to Satan. Shame, guilt, broken fellowship with God, and separation from Eden and God's promises.

B. Satan's attack on Peter.

a. Satan's attack on Peter's standing in God, and Christ's call to him. Luke.5v1-11.

Satan had so accused Peter over his past failures and sin, that Peter felt worthless in the eyes of God, when Peter saw the miracle of the fish, he fell on his knees before Jesus, and brokenly cried, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Satan had rattled all the skeletons in Peter's cupboard and had persuaded him that he was no good, and of no use in God's work. Jesus felt and was moved with compassion over Peter's fears and self condemnation, and was determined to remove them, He warmly and gently assures Peter, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men." Lk.5v10. Divine grace will always reassure us when Satan attacks us.

b. Peter's rebuke of Jesus.

In Mt.16v16-23., we read, "Peter took Jesus by the arm, and took him to one side to speak to Him privately, and started to rebuke Him saying; "May mercy be shown to you Lord. This shall positively never happen to you." But He turned around and said to Peter, Get behind me, out of my sight, and keep on going, Satan. You are a stumbling block and hindrance to me, because these thoughts of yours are man's, not God's." Satan attacked Jesus through the false traditions that Peter had learned from men's theology. The Scriptures reveal that God's dearest children have, like Peter, given way to these attacks from evil spirits; but there is no thought, or record, that they were demon possessed. Peter was corrupted by the theology, traditions and beliefs of his time, and he refused to reject them when Jesus told him they were wrong. Peter felt that our Lord needed a lesson in theology and rebuked Him for having such wrong ideas about the promised Messiah. The strength of Peter's rebuke of our Lord can be seen from the use of the word "epitimao" in Mk.8v32..

Through the centuries the Church has been corrupted by false tradition, and as a result is greatly hindered from doing God's will. Jesus warned that Satan would plant his children, the tares, in the Church, and that false doctrinal leaven would permeate the Church structure. Mt.13v24-43. 2Pet.2v1-22. Jude.v3-25. Paul warned us of Satan's attack on the Church through false teaching in 1Tim.4v1-4., and said that in the last days perilous times would come as a result of doctrines of demons. The further the river of truth has flowed from its pure source in the early Church, the more polluted it has become with false traditions and human ideas. The prophecies of Christ and Paul have been fulfilled, and they warn us that even worse is to follow. Unscriptural structures and traditions are one of the biggest hindrances to the Holy Spirit's ministries. 1Cor.12v11-31. Eph.4v9-15.

Peter tells us that redemption through the blood of Jesus sets us free from the vain way of life and traditions that have been handed down to us from our fathers. 1Pet.1v18,19. "Handed down from your fathers," is "patroparadotos," and it speaks of a parent-child learning relationship; we can be led astray, as well as led into truth by our spiritual fathers. Respect for spiritual leaders does not mean that we have to accept all they teach without question. We must test and prove all that is taught us. 1Thes.5v19,20. Acts.17v11,12.

c. Peter's denial of Jesus in the courtyard of the High Priest.

We read in Mt.26v69-73., that when Peter was challenged by a serving maid in the courtyard of the High Priest, Peter first denied that he knew Jesus, then professed ignorance of what they were talking about. Later, when another maid accused him of being a companion of Jesus, Peter denied it with an oath, "mete horkou." ("Horkos" occurs ten times in the New Testament; in Lk.1v73. Acts.2v30. and Heb.6v16,17. of God's oath of confirmation. See Mt.5v33. 14v7,9. 26v72. Mk.6v26. James.5v12.)

After a little while a group of bystanders accused Peter of being a disciple of Jesus, saying his accent and dialect betrayed him. At this Peter began to invoke curses upon himself, asking God to curse him if he lied when he said that he was not a follower of Jesus: he also began to swear with sacred oaths that he did not know Jesus. "Then he began to curse and swear," is "tote erxato katathematizein kai omnuein." "Katathematizein," means, "to wish oneself accursed if he lies," (it only occurs here in Mt.26v74.,) it shows that Peter put the most terrible imprecations and curses upon himself in his denial of Jesus, and followed this with the most sacred oaths, that he did not know Jesus. The word "omnuein," is the present active infinitive of "omnuo;" which is used of God swearing by an oath in Lk.1v73. 2v30. 7v17. Heb.3v11,18. 4v3. 6v13,16. and 7v21., and of an angel swearing by God in Rev.10v6,7.. Our Lord and James warn against the easy use of oaths in Mt.5v34. and James.5v12. The present tense shows that Peter made the most vehement denials with the strongest oaths that he did not know Jesus. Our Lord said that Peter needed to repent and turn from this failure. Lk.22v31-34. There was no suggestion of Peter being demon possessed, or of him needing exorcism. The Scriptures teach that bad failure in Christians is not due to demon possession; it is due rather to unbelief, the filthiness of the works of the flesh, and sins of the spirit such as pride. 2Cor.7v1. Heb.3v12-4v2.

God never allowed the curses that Peter put upon himself to come to pass. This shows how completely wrong the current doctrine is, that we can, by careless talk, put curses upon ourselves, or others, even without realising it. Balaam was one of the world's leading occultists, and he said that children of God could not be cursed, "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according

to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!" Num.23v23. "Enchantment" is "naw-khash," to whisper a magic spell, to practice sorcery or enchantment. "Divination," is "keh-sem," another kind of sorcery. No one can curse, or work enchantment against a child of God, the blood of Jesus has broken Satan's power over us, and has redeemed us from the curse of the Law and every curse. Gal.3v13,14.

N.B. Our Lord's wonderful look of grace and love, and Peter's restoration. Lk.22v60. Jesus gave Peter a special look of love immediately after Peter had denied him with oaths and curses, and after the second cockcrow.

1. Jesus turned and specially looked at Peter. John was there, openly declaring that he was a disciple of Jesus, but it is not recorded that Jesus turned to look at John. The pull of Peter's need turned Jesus round, He specially looked to meet Peter's need. He is still the same, He comes to lift us out of our failures.

2. Jesus only looked at Peter. Jesus did not tell Peter off, He would not expose Peter before these unbelievers. Peter, though fallen, was still beloved, and the deep spiritual wounds in Peter needed, Christ's love, not a shouting at. "He makes the wounded spirit whole, He calms the troubled breast."

3. Jesus tenderly looked upon Peter. Jesus had looked in anger upon the hypocritical Pharisees, but this was a forgiving look, a welcoming look, a gentle look, and a restoring look, in one look of Divine compassion. Christ's eyes, and every feature, proclaimed to Peter, "I love you, I want you, you are my beloved Peter."

4. Jesus looked at Peter through His sufferings for Peter. The face of Jesus was already bruised, and His eyes blackened by the heavy punches in the face that He had received, when the soldiers blindfolded Him and mockingly asked him to prophesy who had hit Him. He suffered this cruelty for Peter, and ourselves, He came to suffer and die for us, to save that which was lost. There was no way in which He was going to reprove Peter, He was bursting with love for Peter, and you and me. Betrayed and arrested, insulted and vilified, beaten and bruised, He conveys in one wonderful look of divine love, to Peter, and ourselves, "This is for you, for your salvation, this is how much I love you." No wonder Paul rejoices and says that the only one worthy to condemn us is praying for us, before, in, and after our failures, just as He did for Peter. Lk.22v31-34. Rom.8v31-39. Nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. When Jesus told Peter of his failure, he also told him that he was going to get into the kingdom, and told all the apostle not to be troubled; His mighty intercessions bring us through. Jn.13v38 to 14v3.

5.Christ's healing spiritual ministries were communicated to Peter in His look of Divine love. A floodtide of Divine power and love, accompanied that look, and delivered Peter from the fear and lies that the Devil had bound him with, and blew away the smirk of success on Satan's face and sent him packing, and set Peter free from Satan's power and deception.

7. Christ's look immediately awakened a flood of memories in Peter's mind. In spite of Christ's specific warning only a few hours earlier, Peter had failed badly. Satan's fiery darts had sent Peter's spiritual life up in flames. In Lk.22v31,32., we read, "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: v32. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." There was healing love in Christ's look, and Peter's memory was stirred from satanic slumber, and he remembered the word of the Lord, and went out and wept bitterly. Lk.22v60-62. But Christ's grace restored and encouraged Peter, and he will do the same for us.

6. Jesus looked at Peter through His eternal purposes for Peter. He saw Peter baptised in the Spirit, and Peter's great victories of faith and ministry for Him. Peter's victorious martyr's death. Peter's abundant entrance into the kingdom, and Peter's conformity to His own image. Rom.8v28,29. Jesus knew that Peter's "phileo" love was going to be transformed into "agape" love. Jesus will not be content until we are all safely home in Heaven. Heb.10v13.

4. SATAN'S TEST OF OUR CHARACTER AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS. Mt.4v1-11.

Manifesting powerful spiritual gifts and great authority does not remove us from spiritual conflict.

When Jesus received the authority to manifest the gifts of power, Satan made a violent attack upon Him. Mt.4v1-11. While the power gifts operate, we can be full of faith through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, but as soon as this anointing has gone we can have great spiritual conflict. The supernatural extension of faith that comes with the power gifts is usually of a temporary nature, and Christians are not immune from fear, failure or doubt, after even the greatest manifestations of God's power, as the stories of Elijah and Peter demonstrate. 1Kings.18v37-46. 19v1-18. We always need God's grace, and the fellowship of other Christians. Acts.28v14,15. 1Cor.12v12-25.

Like our Lord we will find that temptation and spiritual conflict are inevitable after the baptism in the Spirit and the reception of spiritual gifts. God will allow Satan to test and try our experience, character and use of spiritual gifts. Lk.4v1. Heb.2v14-18. 4v14-5v2. 2Cor.1v3-7. 1Pet.1v6,7. James.1v12. Let us consider how Jesus defeated Satan, and how we can defeat him too.

1. SATAN TRIED TO ROB JESUS OF THE POWER OF GOD BY AN ATTACK ON HIS FAITH.

a. Satan will try to cast doubt upon our most holy and blessed experiences.

When John saw the Holy Spirit as a dove rest upon Jesus in unlimited power, he testified that Jesus was God's Lamb, and only begotten Son, and Israel's promised Messiah. Jn.1v15-19,29-36. 3v27-36. The Father's voice confirmed John's witness, for all to hear, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Mt.3v11-17. Yet Satan challenged the witness of the Father and Spirit, and cast doubt on Christ's blessed and holy experiences. What evil affrontery! Satan will try to challenge and cast doubt on our lovely God-given experiences and gifts, we must resist him and rejoice in what God has given to us, for God's word and promises to us are always true and reliable.

b. Satan will try to cast doubt upon God's Word.

Satan will try to destroy our faith in the promises, power and love of God. "Has God said," still comes from Satan's lips. Gen.3v6. with Rev.12v9. Satan still denies the reliability of God's Word and the reality of His promises to us, including the promise of the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures, which confirm that Christ's experience was from God, confirm that ours is too, and that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are for today, and the heritage of the children of God. Acts.2v38,39.

c. Satan will try to cast doubt on our love and devotion to God.

Christ had lived a life of perfect holiness and purity for 30 years, and Satan knew it; yet he dismisses and casts doubt on Christ's beautiful life of perfect love and devotion to His Father, with his lying and sarcastic, "If." Satan tried to bring Jesus to a place of dejection and despair by his evil insinuations, and he will try to give us feelings of guilt and despair by casting aspersions on our character and work for God. Satan will try to dismiss all our acts of love and devotion to God by his evil insinuations; however, the Scriptures assure us that "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love." Heb.6v10. Nagging, condemning, destructive attacks upon our minds, come from Satan, "The Accuser," not from God. Rev.12v9-12. Don't accept Satan's lies about yourself; only recognise and confess what the Scriptures say you are in Christ. Mt.7v7-11. Lk.11v9-13. Jn.3v16. 15v9. 17v23. Eph.1v3. Jesus understands and cares, and even His disciplines spring out of His great love for us. Heb.4v14-16. Christ is made unto us all we need, His strengthening grace is more than sufficient for us. 1Cor.1v30,31. Phil.4v13,19. Let praise and worship take the place of your heaviness and despair, draw near to God in praise and prayer, resist Satan and he will flee from you. James.4v7-9. God is love, He appreciates all our love and work for Him.

d. Satan will try to attack our adoption and position as children of God. N.B.Rom.8v14-17. 1Jn.3v1,2.

Jesus created Satan, and Satan knew it, yet he tried, by lies and insinuations, to attack Christ's Deity and Sonship, he will certainly attack our sonship. Resist Satan's attack on your position in Christ. James.4v5-7. Don't give place to him for an instant, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." 1Jn.3v1,2., we are joint heirs with Jesus, God's own beloved children. Rom.8v17.

e. Satan will try to attack our faith in God's provision for us.

Satan was in effect saying to Christ, "You say that you acted on the revealed will of God, and look where it got you, into a wilderness with no provision, what a good God you serve." Satan loves to imply that God has failed us, or does not love us, because God has not miraculously intervened in our circumstances; but it is a lie, we are always on our Father's heart. God may allow our faith to be tried by difficult circumstances, temptation, and trials; but He will never leave us or forsake us. Heb.13v5,6,8. 1Pet.1v3-9. How much more reliable than the closest of earthly ties is the abundant affection, unceasing care, and unfailing love of our heavenly Father. Luke.11v13.

f. Satan will try to cast doubts on the reality of our spiritual gifts.

Satan taunted Christ, "You have not had one miracle. What, you God's Son? What an imagination you have. If you are God's Son, and have been filled with the Spirit, where are the miracles? If you have received the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts, why are you having such a bad time?" Jesus knew that God's power and gifts are manifested under the guidance of God's wisdom and in God's time and will. We cannot demand great manifestations of God's power at our will, it is "severally as He will." 1Cor.12v11. The lack of great spiritual gifts after our baptism in the Spirit can be a major temptation, however, great gifts of revelation and demonstration, are given to mature Christians, and in particular to the leading ministries of Christ's Church. Jn.5v19,30. Satan will try us as he tried our Lord, and we must answer him as Jesus did. **Jesus quoted from Deut.8v3., which states that God allows His children to be tried and qualified by adversity, and He is always with us in our trials.** Jesus knew that the God who looked after the Israelites in the wilderness for forty years would look after Him, and God will look after us. Let us answer Satan with, "It is written," God's truth stands forever sure, our God will never fail us.

2. SATAN TRIED TO GET JESUS TO USE HIS GIFTS IN THE WRONG WAY. Mt.4v5-7.

Satan again attacked the faith of Christ and His sonship, but we will not dwell on this, as we have already covered this point.

a. The temptation to self-will, presumption and fanaticism.

When Satan quoted Ps.91v11,12., he omitted some important words, as can be seen by a comparison with Lk.4v10,11. and Mt.4v6.. Satan omits the words "in all thy ways," that is, the ways of Christ directed by God. Doubtless Ps.91. was one of Christ's favourite Scriptures, Satan misquotes it., and suggests that He had a Scriptural authority for a daring act of faith.

Satan was in effect saying, "This is one of the Scriptures that you particularly love and rest your faith on; this is one of the words out of the mouth of God, why not put it to the test? If you are God's Son and He has given you authority and power, then, prove it to me and everybody." Christ completely rejected the temptation to misinterpret the Scripture, and to put His Father to the test by going ahead on His own, He knew the promises of God must be used in the context in which they are quoted, and in conjunction with the whole tenor of Christian truth. Great manifestations of spiritual gifts can only be expected in the will and purpose of God. Jn.5v19,30. Jesus quoted from Deut.6v16., "Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted Him in Massah," from the incident in Exod.17v1-7., where Israel put God to the Test. Our Lord inferred that those who embark upon presumptuous enterprises without the guidance of God, put God to the test; to doubt the guiding and providing hand of God is to repeat the sin of the children of Israel at Massah and Meribah. Those who usurp the Holy Spirit's position in the Church, and run it as they feel, have committed this sin of pride, self-will, and presumption.

Satan will try to incite us to start us upon presumptuous and fanatical enterprises, and try to get us to misuse spiritual gifts, he still comes to us "with a Bible under his arm, and a text in his mouth." Satan attacks every revival with misinterpretations and perversions of the Scriptures, we have to make sure that our manifestations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are according to the Scriptural pattern. If we want to pervert or dodge the truth, Satan will certainly find us a Scripture to back us up, but this will involve wresting a text out of its context, and wilfully ignoring other Scriptures upon the subject. The perils of pride, self-will, presumption and fanaticism are very great and lead to "great transgression." Let us follow the example of Jesus and resist Satan's attacks upon us and dependence upon God. Ps.19v13.

b. The temptation to love the spectacular, and the praise of people.

Satan will tempt us to use spiritual gifts in a spectacular way to win the support, praise and admiration of the people. Satan fell through the sins of pride, covetousness and love of praise and position; he tries to make His creator fall into the same sins that had caused his own downfall and doom. Ezek.28v17. Is.14v12-14. Satan challenged Christ to do an outstanding sign before the people. Jesus resisted this appeal to pride and love of praise, He had come to die, not to lead Israel to victory over Rome, He had come to save people from their sins, not to receive empty adulation. If Christ had followed Satan's suggestion it would have been a complete denial of His mission, and would have been a rejection of His Father's Word, love, provision and guidance. Satan will tempt us to use the power of God and His spiritual gifts in a proud and spectacular manner. There can be a desire to show people that God has called us and used us, and this is wrong. We can tell people what God has accomplished through us, if we do it in humility to God's glory, and in order to help people's faith, as Paul and Barnabus did in Acts.14v27.. Satan's servants, like Simon the sorcerer, may boast that they are a great one, but servants of the meek and lowly Christ must be genuinely humble. "Let another man praise thee and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips." Prov.27v2. Satan puffs up his servants; God humbles His, and measures their greatness by their humility. Mt.18v1-5.

c. The temptation to seek position and prestige in men's religious power structures.

Satan will tempt us to use spiritual gifts in a spectacular way to win position and prestige. God has not given us His spiritual gifts to increase our prestige and position, He has given them to us to glorify His Name and meet people's needs. Jesus entirely resisted the temptation to use the power of God in a way that would win over the influential over to His side, and win a position amongst them. Satan was in effect saying to Christ, "Cast yourself down at the Temple before the elders of Israel. Seek the help and patronage of the influential. To do the work that you want to do, you need the people with money, power and authority behind you." Many have compromised both truth and experience by throwing themselves down at the Temple of worldly and religious prestige, and through seeking the praise of men, or by fighting for position in their church, have offended God, and lost His power. Those who seek the praise of men, inevitably find that they compromise the truth because of the fear of man. Jn.12v42,43. Christ fearlessly preached against traditions that made void the Word of God, and exposed hypocrisy and sham. It cost Him His life, but He pleased the Father. These religious leaders opposed Christ, and in the end murdered Him. He threatened their power structure and they could not tolerate this. The test of the spiritual greatness of any Christian leader, is their willingness to step down from position and humbly serve others. Jn.13v1-17. Mt.20v20-28. Phil.2v1-11. Christ humbled the religious leaders of His day by choosing the prayerful, spiritual, consecrated, and sincere ordinary working men, as leaders in His work; He can and does do the same today, when religious leaders lack spirituality and sincerity.

3. SATAN TEMPTED JESUS TO EXCHANGE GOD'S BLESSING FOR EARTHLY GLORY.

a. Satan will tempt us to seek worldly wealth, prestige, and glory.

Satan tried to get Jesus to exchange His Father's blessing and His cross, for the defiled glory and power of the world. Satan showed Jesus all the glory of the world's kingdoms, and in effect said, "Why fight me? Why have a battle? You can have all these without a fight if you will go my way, accept my standards and worship me. Don't take up your cross, exchange your life of dedication to God, for the worlds pleasures, power and wealth." The temptation to fill our lives with worldly things, and to judge our lives by worldly standards will come to every Christian. We need to realise, like our Lord Jesus did, that God owns all things, and that our allegiance should be His alone. Deut.6v13-15. A curse, not glory, comes upon all those who forsake God for the broad and easy way. Mt.7v13,14. with Deut.28v15-68. Satan's offer of his filthy and corrupt kingdoms was certainly no bargain, they will all be destroyed at Christ's return, the world belongs to Jesus and the Father, not Satan, he is a usurper.

There was a strong implication from Satan, that if Christ did not follow his advice, He would experience the most sustained and vicious opposition from these kingdoms, for they were under Satan's control. Indeed, Jesus did have to face the most vicious and ruthless slander, hatred, envy, malice and persecution from the children of Satan, and we will experience the same if we are going to do God's will and glorify God through the manifestation of His spiritual gifts. When we think that materialism, worldly standards and compromise have more to offer us than serving God, we are getting very close to bowing down, serving and worshipping Satan. Let us follow the example of Jesus, He refused to sell His heavenly anointing and call for the things of the world, or compromise truth because of the fear of man, and the hatred and opposition of the kingdoms of the world. Nothing deterred Him from the mission that the Father had sent Him to do.

b. Satan will tempt us to supplement the power of God with the glory of the world.

Christ refused to use the glory of the world to supplement or replace the power of God; He chose people who had no worldly power or influence to be the leaders of His Church. 1Cor.1v26-31. The further we get away from God, the more we rely upon human resources. However, universities, culture, music, art and literature, good as these can be, cannot replace dependence upon God and His power. We are in real spiritual danger when we rely upon what we can do, and feel that we can manage on our own. We praise God for Christian scholars, and we would be lost without them, but our first need is for men with truly apostolic ministry. Mt.9v35-38. Paul was an outstanding scholar, but he gloried in his limitations, not his abilities, so that the power of Christ would rest upon him. In 2Cor.12v9., "rest," is "episkenose," the aorist subjunctive of "episkenoo," "to dwell, to abide, to take up residence, to pitch upon him like a tent," like the Shechinah over the Tabernacle. 1Cor.2v1-8. 2Cor.12v9-12. Acts17v15-34. 18v1-18. N.B. v10.

Evangelism can be based on human oratory, and this can be looked upon as a substitute for the power and miracles of the early Church. Churches that allow worldly glory and human ability to replace God's power, become empty husks that disillusion those who are broken in heart, weary, sick and sinful, who are seeking and longing for a loving fellowship, where they can find God and His healing, peace and blessing. Jesus knew that only God could meet the needs of the world, and that human endeavour and worldly glory would always fail.

c. Satan will tempt us to build a worldly or religious empire around ourselves.

Christ refused to build an earthly empire around His ministry, His kingdom was not of this world, He lived just to glorify the Father and perform His will. Jn.4v34. 5v30. 6v38,39. 12v28. 17v1,4,5,10. 18v33-37. 21v19. Heb.10v5-7. Someone has said, "How often has ambition conquered those who have conquered nearly all else." If our only motive for desiring the gifts of the Holy Spirit is to build our personal or denominational kingdom, then we are desiring them for the very worst of reasons. We are not here to build our kingdoms, or our bank balance, by exalting Christ and His gifts; we are to follow the example of the Holy Spirit, and use His gifts for the sole purpose of exalting Jesus and glorifying God. Jn.16v12-15. 14v12-14. Our emphasis should be "Our Christ," not ourselves, or our church, God is the only one to be served and worshipped.

Jesus has left us the perfect example of financial integrity and sincerity, His attitude to money was beyond reproach. His enemies mocked His preaching against love of money and worldly-mindedness, and His total lack of any desire for money. Lk.16v10-15. Jesus was called many things by His enemies, but He was never called a "money-grabber." Christ's simple needs were met by grateful people, mainly women, who had been greatly helped through His ministry; and others gave food and shelter for Himself and His disciples. Lk.8v1-3. 19v5. etc. However, Jesus often had no shelter and had to "sleep rough," out in the open air; He knows what it is to be homeless. Mt.8v19,20. Lk.9v57,58. Christ never tried to squeeze finances out of the people that He was preaching to; no one was to be charged for Divine healing, "Freely ye have received, freely give." Mt.10v7,8. There were to be no demands for money, indeed, as they were able, the apostolic band gave money to the poor and needy. Jn.12v5-8. Jesus did not financially put upon those who sympathised with Him and helped Him in His work, He did not sleep at the best hotels, He had nowhere to lay His head on many occasions. Lk.9v57-62.

Jesus did what the Father told Him to do, not what He felt was good or necessary. It is a striking fact that the Father never told Jesus to do things that are looked upon as essential today by most Christians. Christ built no buildings, He had no means of transport other than His own feet, He did not even get Scribes to write down and distribute His sermons. Jesus just made Himself a channel of His Father's will, love and power. Jn.5v18,19,30. It is not just enough to see a need and try to meet it, we have to make quite sure that we meet the priorities that the Father lays down. Jesus kept His financial needs down to a minimum, His base was a simple home in Capernaum, and we will do well to follow His example. Mt.4v13. Mk.2v1. 9v33. Christ's one aim was to glorify His Father and do His will, and if we want to defeat the attacks of Satan, our aims and purposes in ministry will have to be the same.

In Revelation Jesus reveals the people and means by which Satan attacks the churches.

A. False Religion. This, rather than atheism, is Satan's objective, For false religion is able to deceive more than atheism, and usually ends in demon and Satan worship. False religion is seen in the following ways in some of these churches.

Synagogue. Rev.2v9. Even the order laid down by God can become the instrument of Satan, if only the

outward form is carried out, and truth and Christ are rejected in favour of man-made tradition. The Temple of God at Jerusalem became a den of thieves instead of the house of prayer for all nations, and Israel's religious leaders rejected and crucified their Christ.

Paganism. Rev.2v20. The gods of the heathen are really demons, or Satan, who desires to be like God and be worshipped, he is the god of this degenerate world. 1Cor.10v19-21. 2Tim.3v7,8. 2Cor.4v4. 2Thes.2v7,8. Rev.13.

False Doctrine. Jn.8v44. Satan had infiltrated several of the seven churches with deadly false doctrines that included immorality and idolatry. Immoral teaching like this was part of the teaching of the Nicolaitanes, Baalamites, and the followers of Jezebel, and this kind of lawless Antinomianism has been a bane of the Church throughout its history. The voice of God repeats again and again, "Be ye holy, as I am holy." 1Pet1v15,16. Rev.3v7. 4v8. 15v4. 6v10. 22v11.

B. Persecution and Martyrdom. Rev.2v10. What Satan cannot win by seduction he tries to destroy by persecution and murder, he has often used those who have unscriptural traditions and practice false religion, or have political power, to persecute and murder God's dear children. Untold tens of millions of Christians have been murdered by evil, godless and fanatical governments throughout Church history, and in recent years, solely because of their faith in the Lord Jesus.

C. Worldly Attitudes and Interests. Satan once offered Christ the world in exchange for His cross and he still comes with the same offer to the brethren of Jesus. The church at Laodicea had succumbed to this temptation, and many others who resist Satan in other ways often fall prey to prosperity. The church at Smyrna was penniless but rich in God. We are urged to keep ourselves from the idols of the world and all worldliness. 1Tim.6v17-19. 1Jn.2v15-17. 4v4,5. 5v4. A struggle for power in the church is one of the most dangerous and sinful of the worldly attitudes that can attack the church, this sin cost Satan his place in Heaven, this struggle for power is sometimes disguised by a false claim to divine illumination and prophetic authority, we judge all such claims in the light of the Scriptures. God reveals the truth about the activities of seducing spirits to spiritually minded Christians. 1Cor.14v29. 1Thes.5v19-21. Godly spiritual elders can guide the flock of God out of spiritual danger and deliver the flock from ambitious persons. Heb.13v7,8,17. 1Tim.3v1-13. Tit.1v5-16.

D. An attack on their personal communion with God and their love for God. Jesus told the Church at Ephesus that it had lost its first love, this can only be kept alive through communion with God. If a church is lacking in prayer and communion with God, it is totally defeated. If Satan can defeat us here, he has defeated us everywhere. A church can have a reputation for evangelism and spirituality, that is quite false, its inner communion with God can be almost non-existent, like Sardis it can be said of it, "thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead." We need to earnestly seek God to preserve our spiritual glow.

E. Satan's Throne. Satan follows God's pattern and puts angels in charge of the nations. Dan.10v13,20,21. It could be that Satan made himself personally responsible for Pergamos, but it could be referring to the fact that Caesar worship was practised at Pergamos, certainly Satan was the power behind Caesar's throne. Rev.12v3,9. and 17v10.

5. There is a precious promise to those who are overcomers.

In Rev.2v7,11,17,26. 3v5,12,21. and 21v7., Jesus uses the present active participle of "nikao," to be a victor, to be victorious, to gain a victory, to speak of the overcomers. The present tense indicates continuous victory. This verb occurs 16 times in Revelation, see Rev.5v5. 6v2. 11v7. 12v11. 13v7. 15v2. and 17v14. as well. Jesus gives these precious incentives to us, to inspire us to live victoriously, and He tells us to repent if we are living in defeat, or we will not experience a full reward. 1Cor.9v27. 2Tim.4v7,8. 2Jn.v8. "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Rev.3v11. The grace of God can enable us to overcome. Rev.12v10,11. Jn.16v33. Rom.8v28-39. Phil.4v19. 2Cor.12v9. 1Jn.5v4,5. We have to fight to keep our garments clean, from defilement by the world, the flesh and the Devil, the believer who is living in sin has dirty garments. Zech.3v1-7. 2Cor.5v3. 7v1. 1Jn.2v14-17. Rev.3v4,5,17,18. 19v8. Some have said that the overcomers are a select group among Christians, others, like myself, believe that it includes all Christians, who keep their faith, and get the victory over the trials and temptations of life, and endure to the end. Those who do not overcome are those who apostatise from the faith.

To Ephesus. "To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Rev.2v7. All who are saved will eat the fruit of the tree of life, so overcomers cannot be a select group of Christians.

To Smyrna. "He that overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death." Rev.2v11. It is unbelievers who are cast into the lake of fire, not Christians. This again goes against the view that overcomers are a select group of Christians.

To Pergamos. "To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows except he who receives it." Rev.2v17. God gives soul satisfying manna, and public acclaim, which is signified by a white stone, and a secret name of

precious significance, to every Christian overcomer.

To Thyatira. "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works to the end, to him I will give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I have received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. Rev.2v26-28. Power over the nations in the Millennium is promised to overcomers, a similar promise is given in Rev.3v21..

To Sardis. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and the Holy angels." Rev.3v5. Overcomers do not have their names blotted out of the book of life, but apostates, who lose their faith, do have their names blotted out of the book of life.

To Philadelphia. "He that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down from Heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." Rev.3v12. All believers in Jesus have this heavenly calling, and are "fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Heb.3v1. Eph.1v18. 2v19-22. 1Cor.12v12,13.

To Laodicea. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Rev.3v21. A similar promise to that given to the church at Thyatira in Rev.2v26-28.; If we suffer for Christ's sake, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us. 2Tim.2v12.

To All. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Rev.21v7. All genuine Christians are heirs of God and joints heirs with Christ, if we suffer with Him. Rom.8v17. In Gal.3v1-5. and 4v4-7., God makes us sons and heirs by redemption grace, and not by attainment through works of the Law. Our inheritance is received entirely by grace, through faith in Jesus. 1Pet.1v3-7,17-19. Col.1v12. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things." Rom.8v32. All things are freely given to us in Jesus. Overcomers receive their inheritance purely through the blood of Christ.

In 1Cor.3v21-23., Paul said to the wayward Corinthians, "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." However, in 1Cor.3v10-17., Paul warns both them and ourselves, that the fire will try our works to test its quality, and that if our works are not acceptable, they will be burnt up, but we shall be saved, "yet so as by fire." In this same passage, Paul, also states the destruction of those who defile the temple of their bodies and souls with evil. 1Cor.3v17. Persevering faith and love is the mark of the overcomer.

The saints are exhorted to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

In spite of importance of the Messenger and His message, Christians can, and often do, refuse to hear "Him that speaketh from Heaven." Heb.12v25. God is looking for people who will tremble at His Word and obey it, whether it comes through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, or His written Word, but, alas, this is rare. Ps.2v11. Ezra.10v3. 9v4. Is.66v2,5. Phil.2v12. There is a trembling of fear at the Word of God by people who know that it is true, but will not accept it, apply it to themselves, and obey it.. Joshua.2v9-11. 5v1. 9v9,24. 1Kings.22v14-35. Acts.24v24-27. Here are some examples of those who heard God's Word and obeyed. Noah. Heb.11v7. Abraham. Heb.11v17-19. Rehoboam. 2Chron.11v4. Howbeit. see 12v14. Pekah. 2Chron.28v9. Ahab. 1Kings.21v7. Even Ahab gained a respite by trembling at God's Word. Amaziah. 2Chron.25v7. What a good man Josiah was! 2Chron.34v18-33. Paul. Acts.16v19.

Here are some examples of people who heard God's Word and rebelled. Noah's contemporaries.1Pet.3v20. 2Pet.3v5. Lot's son in law. Gen.19v1,12-15,24,28. The generation, which had not seen the mighty acts of God's power in action in Canaan. Judges.2v1,2,10-19. This is a solemn warning to any movement that is brought into being by the power and grace of God, but which later loses that power. Balaam and Balak. Numb.22v1-12. 24v1-9. 31v8-16. Rev.2v14. Saul. 1Sam.18v12-29. 13v8-14. 15v3,9,15,26. 1Chron.10v13,14. What a warning! We need to give heed to prophecies. Asa, a godly man rebels at God's Word through a prophet. 2Chron.16v7-10. Jeroboam. 1Kings.13v33. Israel. 2Kings.17v13,14,18. Neh.9v26,27. Judah. 2Chron.24v19-22. 36v15,16. The religious leaders of Israel in Christ's day. Mt.21v32. Lk.7v29,30. Mt.23v1-39. etc. God's people often rejected the Word of God, and the leaders that God appointed. Moses. Acts.7v25,35-39. Samuel. 1Sam.8v1-8. Jeremiah. Jer.42v1-6. 43v1-4. Paul. 2Cor.10v10. 11v4,12,13,20,-22. Gal.1v6-9.

Christians, who had once loved Paul, turned away from him in favour of false prophets. 2Tim.1v15. The motives of such false prophets are usually quite clear, they seek popularity, finances, position, prestige, or a following of worshippers or disciples. Jer.5v31. 2Chron.18v12. 1Kings.18v19. Neh.6v12-14. Lk.6v24-26. 3Jn.v9-11. False prophets condone the practice of the sins that people love. 2Pet.2v1-22. Acts.20v29,30. Jude.v3,4. The Scripture warns us that there will be a great deal of false prophecy in the last days by the Devil's disciples. 1Tim.4v1-3. Mt.24v24. Rev.13. all. 1Jn.4v1-3. False prophecy comes out of a bad heart, but if the people of God are walking with God, they will recognise the true prophet of God even when they are surrounded by many false prophets who are all saying the same thing. Mt.7v15-23. 2Chron.18v4-27. Jer.20v1-

18. 37v19. There is a difference, however, between false prophecy arising from a bad heart and wrong prophecy arising from ignorance and stupidity, for example, when Christians are told to prophecy in faith when they have nothing from God. You only have the authority to prophesy when the Spirit of God has come upon you and given you a message to speak. The honest heart that fears the Lord never need fear, but the Lord will severely punish the wilful false prophet. Jer.28v17. 29v21-32. Acts.13v11. Rev.2v20-23. 19v20. It is very wrong to make a false claim to speak for God.

The Holy Spirit is Lord, He has come to do His will, not ours, and we should obey Him. We should not make our plans and then ask His blessing, we should seek His plans and then His blessing will automatically follow. This shows the importance of genuine prophecy, for prophets are the mouthpieces of God to the churches. Ez.3v1-11. Jer.1v9. Prophets, however, differ a great deal in the importance of the things that they say, and the people to whom they speak. One may speak only words of comfort to the local church, another may speak words of wisdom and knowledge to the church universal. There are many that prophesy, but there are few set in the Church universal as prophets. Compare the importance of Isaiah's prophecies with those of the old prophet of 1Kings13v20-22.. 1Cor.12v28. Eph.4v11.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit were operating in all of these seven churches, for they had been led into these experiences by the apostles, and about a hundred years later they were still in operation as far afield as Lyons in France in the church of Irenaeus, and continued throughout Church history. It could be that no one was willing to give the messages of rebuke that were necessary for some of the churches, or that the prophecies that were given were ignored and rejected. It is necessary to not only admire, but obey the voice of God through the gifts. We must also take care that we are not stumbled by the kind of person that God uses to speak through, for God has chosen some strange people, at least by the worlds standards, to speak for Him. 2Kings.1v8. Amos.1v1. Mt.3v4. Is.28v11-13.

N.B. The gift of faith operates God's unlimited power against the powers of darkness.

We read in 2Kings.13v14-19., that Elisha, while on his death bed, subdued the powers of darkness that aided the Syrians for several years, by a remarkable single operation of the gift of faith, when king Joash shot, at Elisha's command, "The arrow of the Lord's deliverance." Just as Elisha, with God, took hold of the bow of Joash, so the Holy Spirit takes hold with us against, not only our limitations, but also against the powers of darkness, and as we humble ourselves under God, and take His armoury, and resist the Devil with God's power and gifts, Satan flees from us. Rom.8v26,27. James.4v5-7. The faith and power gifts of Moses took away the evil spiritual defences of the Canaanites, as faithful Caleb said, "they are bread for us, their defence is departed from them." Numb.14v9. This is why the unseen prayer warrior is usually the real cause of revival. The major attack of the powers of darkness is upon the minds of Christians, but all these attacks can all be dealt with by the fruit and gift of faith, and the Word of God. Christians who have the gift of faith can fight for others, who are too weak to fight for themselves against Satan's lies and power. 2Cor.10v1-5. Let us all earnestly desire this greatest of the gifts of power.

THE CHRISTIANS WARFARE AND ARMOUR. Eph.6v10-20. 1Pet.5v6,7. James.4v5-7.

The Christians enemy is not fleshly only but spiritual. The world is under the dominion of Satan and his angels, who are put in charge of nations etc. e.g. Lk.4v5-9. Dan.10v13,20,21. Their aim is to keep man in a state of ignorance and unbelief about God. These evil angels oppose us because we bring light to disperse the darkness. The essence of Satan's attacks is that they are wily, 2Cor.11v3. and to defeat them we require the wisdom and power of God. This comes through putting on the whole armour of God, which is seven fold.

1. A true understanding of the Word of God. The girdle, or belt of truth.

2. A life of practical holiness. The breastplate of righteousness.

3. An evangelical zeal and readiness to preach the Gospel. Feet shod with the Gospel of peace.

4. An unwavering faith. The shield of faith.

5. Assurance of deliverance at all times, and hope of a glorious future. The helmet of salvation. 1Thes.5v8.

6. Ability to use God's Word against opponents, seen and unseen. The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

7. Intelligent, vigilant, persevering prayer, for all saints and ministers of God's Word.

Paul states his obligation to preach the Gospel, and the difficulty of doing this now he is a chained prisoner. He asks the Ephesians to pray that God may enable him to freely and fearlessly preach the Gospel as he should.

8. Be strong in the Lord and the power of His might. Eph.6v10.

a. The intercession of Jesus, our Great High Priest. Heb.2v17,18. 4v14-16. 7v25.

b. The intercession and aid of the Holy Spirit. Rom.8v26. Blown along by the gale of the Spirit to maturity. Heb.6v1. "Phero."

c. Calling on and invoking the name of the Lord. Prov.18v10. Numb.6v22-27. Jn.17v6,12,26. Acts.2v21. 9v14. 1Cor.1v2. Rom.10v12-14.

d. Abide in the love of Jesus and God our Father. Let love constrain and guide you in your relationships with other Christians. Jn.15v9-17. 1Jn.4v1-21. N. B. v8,16. "The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. v16. We have come to know and have believed the love, which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." (NAU) We read in Gal.5v6. For when we are in union with Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor the lack of it makes any difference at all; what matters is faith that works (is energised) through ("dia") love." (TEV)

9. Fellowship with the body of Christ, under the headship and guidance of Christ. Eccles.4v9-12. We are told in Heb.10v24-26., that the antidote to backsliding and apostasy in the last days is drawing near to God in fellowship with other Christians. God commands us in Heb.3v13., "But **encourage one another (not disappoint and discourage one another)** day after day, as long as it is {still} called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." (NAS) Churches that fail to encourage and up build Christians are a disaster and disgrace, and they will have to answer to God for it.

NOTE:

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