

Lucifer's Army

The Power Behind Fortunetelling, Charms, and Demons



by B. R. Hicks

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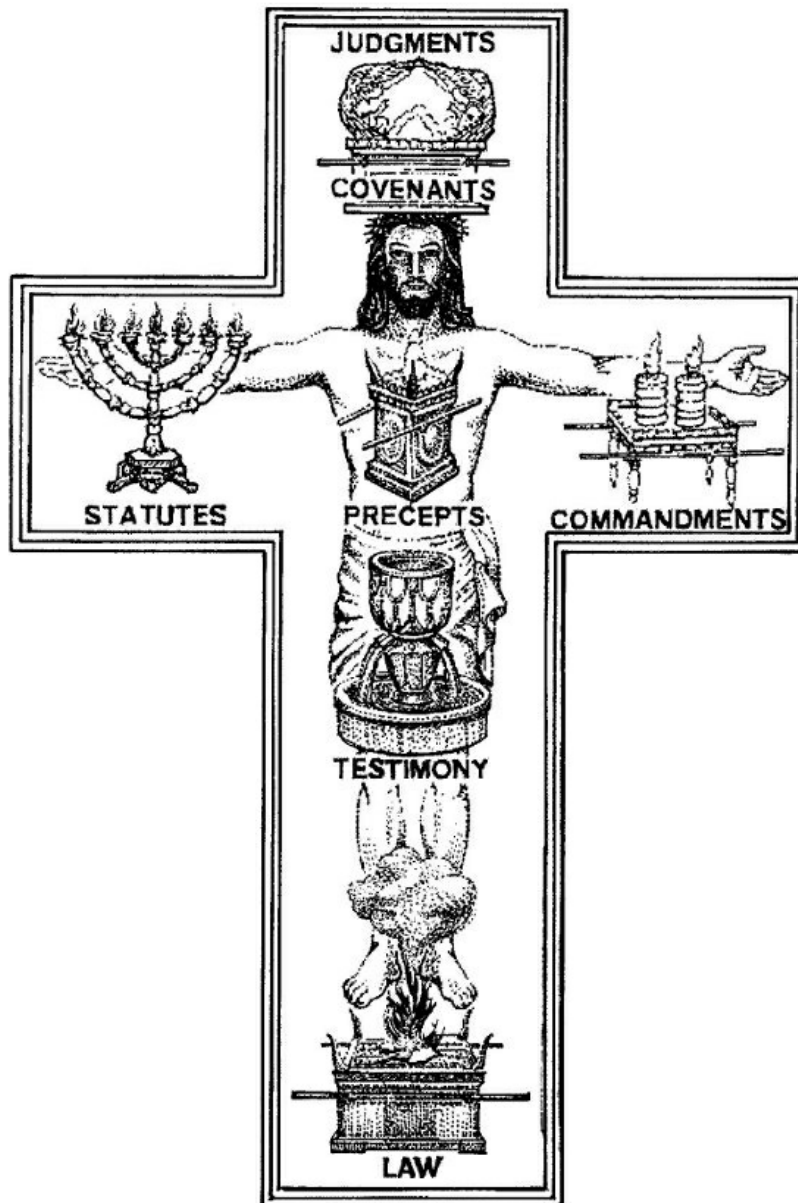
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INTRODUCTION

The stature of truth, portrayed by the four points of the cross, is frequently used because it pictures the full stature of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Mosaic Tabernacle. The stature (four points of the cross) depicts the spiritual experiences that we will know as we grow up into spiritual maturity in Jesus Christ. God is the Master Teacher, He uses figures, types, shadows, parables, metaphors and allegories throughout His Word in order to illustrate Divine Truth.

When the children of Israel in the wilderness, for example, needed a way of approach to and communion with a Holy God, He provided the Mosaic Tabernacle which was a picture, a shadow, a type of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience” (Hebrews 9:9).



The first tabernacle known as the Mosaic Tabernacle was only a shadow for that time of the stature and ministry of the second greater and more perfect Tabernacle, Jesus Christ, who with brightness and glory caused the shadows to flee and the truth to stand revealed as the illuminating splendor of the noon day sun. The Mosaic Tabernacle was a figure, that is an outlined shape of the stature of Jesus Christ, Thus, God instructed Moses four times to build the tabernacle after the pattern which was shown to him in the mount. The seven pieces of furniture in Moses' tabernacle were laid out in the form of a cross; each piece representing a portion of the stature of Jesus Christ. "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;" (Hebrews 9:11).

The body or tabernacle which the Holy Ghost conceived as it overshadowed the blessed Virgin, was a new fabric, a new order of building infinitely superior to the earthly structure. However, since the Mosaic Tabernacle was a divine blueprint or outline of the stature of the Son of God, it becomes a guiding light to reveal to our hearts how to grow up unto the measure of the fulness of Christ, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;" (Ephesians 4:13).

Because the Tabernacle is a picture of the Son of God in whom is hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,

we may expect the wisdom and knowledge of all other Scripture to fit together with it. The whole Bible is a beautiful revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of this truth, God is able to say that ALL Scripture is profitable. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16,17).

This book has been written in obedience to His command that we should share a few of the quickened truths He has so graciously placed in our hearts. He has promised that it will bless the hearts of those who are looking for His soon return from glory and who have a desire to be ready and to have on their wedding garments. The prayerful desire and motive of our hearts is that each reader will receive a new vision and greater love for the blessed LORD JESUS CHRIST'

-The Author

CHAPTER I

THE STATURE OF LUCIFER'S ARMY

There is nothing fake about the power behind fortune-telling, charms, and demons. The Devil is very real and has endowed his servants with real power. Worship of occult powers is more predominate in our society today than ever before in modern history. Just recently several hundred ministers were ordained into the Church of Satan.

At one time the Devil was the mighty angel, Lucifer, who is called the "son of the morning" in the book of Isaiah. Jesus, Himself, is called the "bright and morning star." The close relationship of the names indicates the exalted position which Lucifer held. He had great power and wisdom as an angel. God called Lucifer the "seal of the sum" in Ezekiel 28:12. He was a perfect creation with great beauty, gifts, and a unique ministry. After he sinned and was expelled from Heaven, Lucifer became known as Satan, the Devil, the Serpent, the Dragon; each name signifying a different aspect of his evil nature and power,

Lucifer was stripped of his exalted position, but he retained much of his power and wisdom. One third of the angelic stars in heaven followed Lucifer in his rebellion against God's will. It is this host, with fallen Lucifer as their captain, who empowers people, idols, charms, and such things with supernatural capabilities.

It is no small thing to keep ourselves free from the influence of these fallen creatures. Lucifer is our archenemy, plotting our destruction every step of the way. He does not want us to attain the place in God that he is forever barred from, since there is no redemption for him from his sin. What he lost can become ours as we lay hold of the things of God which have been provided for us through Christ Jesus. What the Devil offers us as desirable is only a tarnished, corruptible counterfeit of the true pleasures which are found in God's will.

This, then, is why a new Christian soon finds himself in collision with this present world system, for it is ANTI-GOD in every respect. As Jesus Christ was hated by the world, so are His followers, for Jesus is the light of the world, "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:5). "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (John 3:19,20).

It was for this reason that our Lord met opposition, and so do we. Even as He came to grips with the powers of darkness, so we must grapple with the adversary of our souls. How quickly we find ourselves thrust into the heat of battle. We are not wrestling with flesh and blood, but our warfare is against principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world; against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Good military strategy is to know the enemy. When in our ignorance we fail to discern our enemy's tactics, we often suffer defeat. Even as the Lord Jesus Christ is the Captain of the Army of the Lord, so Lucifer has an army under his command. Although he is no small enemy, the Lord has not left us ignorant concerning Lucifer's devices. Knowledge which is a key to power and victory over Lucifer, comes through the Word of God with the revelation of Lucifer's full stature.

As we study the Word of God, regardless of the subject, we find the Word is laid out in the form of the Cross. From Genesis to Revelation the Cross is a continual reminder of Jesus Christ. The burden of God's written Word is to reveal the Lord Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Even in the area of Satanic opposition, the revelation of truth is stretched out before us in the four points of the stature of the cross. This is not strange, for it is through the cross of Jesus Christ that Satan stands a defeated foe. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die" (John 12:32,33). "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). What a day of triumph that was when Jesus Christ was hung upon Calvary's Cross, "but for this cause came I unto this hour" (John 12:27).

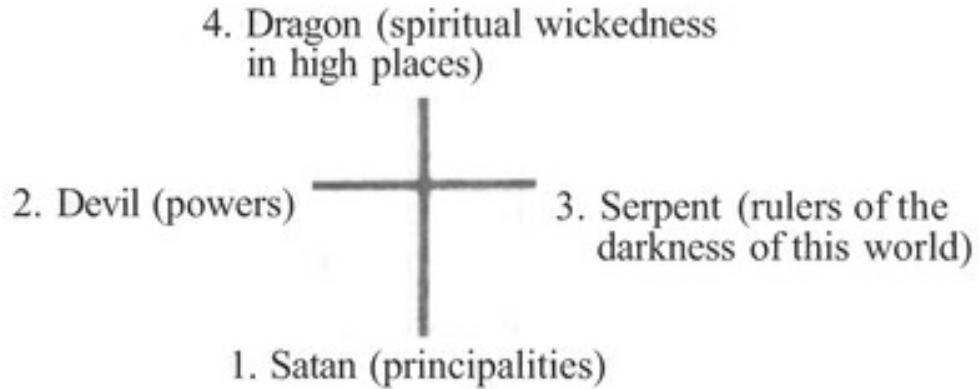
Names are significant in the Scriptures since they reveal the character and nature of the person or place. In Revelation 12:9 and 20:2 we have the full stature of Lucifer revealed:

And the great *dragon* was cast out, that old *serpent*, called the *Devil*, and *Satan*, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him (Revelation 12:9).

And he laid hold on the *dragon*, that old *serpent*, which is the *Devil*, and *Satan*, and bound him a thousand years (Revelation 20:2).

In Ephesians there is a correlating Scripture which increases our understanding of who our enemy really is:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against *principalities*, against *powers*, against the *rulers of the darkness* of this world, against *spiritual wickedness in high places* (Ephesians 6:12).



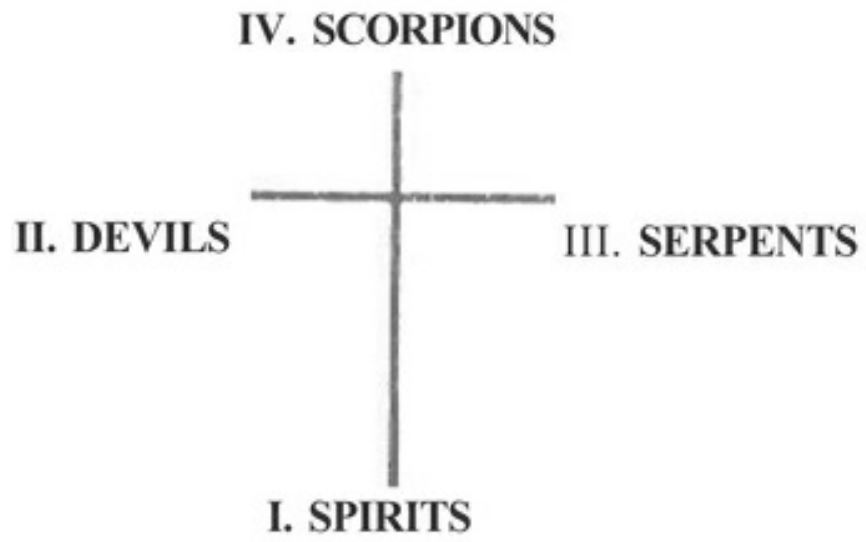
As we grow in spiritual stature, we enter into spiritual warfare in these different realms of the nature and power of our adversary. The most potent and ferocious warfare of Lucifer is found in the head realm and is characterized by the name *Dragon*. The Lord does not permit us to be tempted above that which we are able, nor to suffer the attack of the enemy in any greater realm than our own spiritual stature can withstand. Not until we have grown to the head realm of spiritual maturity will we war against the full *Dragon* power of the enemy. We may taste of this head realm warfare occasionally, being lifted up by gift for a special need, but this head realm warfare will not be characteristic of our spiritual battles until we are mature enough to handle it.

Let us take particular note, then, of the distinctions that are made in the Scriptures, for as each name is used for our adversary (whether it be Satan, Devil, Serpent, or Dragon), it has a special significance. It is a revelation of the particular degree of power or nature which is being manifested and employed against us.

We must keep in mind that Lucifer is not an omnipresent being. He is a created angel, fallen from his first estate, and can be in only one place at one time. Thus, only on occasions will Lucifer war personally. However, he employs and directs a great army in spiritual warfare with the saints of God. We need not fear, for our enemy is already a defeated foe. Jesus Christ conquered him at Calvary's Cross, providing the overcoming power that can make us "more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37).

The provision has been made: God's supply of victory is available to all saints. Our part is to stand, to resist, to rebuke, and to contend with the enemy. We are not mere spectators to an already won battle; each of us is called to active duty. We are, of necessity, in direct combat with the archenemy of the Lord. The Lord is seeking those who are mature enough in God not to run away from a battle-not to concede to the enemy, but to go up in the Name of the Lord Jesus and lay hold of victory. "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (II Timothy 2:3,4).

Let us therefore take a reconnaissance flight through the Word of God and *spy out* our enemy. The Lord has not left us to flounder in ignorance, for as the saying goes, "to be forewarned is to be forearmed."



CHAPTER II

SPIRITS

There are those who think it is superstitious and old-fashioned to recognize the existence of a spirit world. Efforts have been made to confine human behavior and all mystical phenomena to the material and rational realm, but these explanations have proven inadequate. There is an increasing awareness today in the medical and psychiatric fields of the existence of another dimension—that of the spirit. Although the subject of demon and satanic activity is one that is largely avoided or ignored, thinking men of today are beginning to acknowledge its presence and power. The Word of God is clear-cut and outspoken in the matter. Lucifer does exist, and he does have an army of spirits who are awaiting his every command!

The word *spirit* in the Hebrew and Greek means breath, wind, or vital principle of life. God clearly states in His Word that man is body, soul (mind) and spirit (I Thessalonians 5:23). The human spirit is confined to the physical body until death. The Christian, at death, experiences a separation of his soul and spirit from his physical body, but a sinner suffers a threefold separation: his body departs to the grave, his soul to hell, and his spirit returns to God. “All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?” (Ecclesiastes 3:20,21). This refers to man in general; man’s spirit, at death, returns to God who gave it, “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

Although the spirit of a departed sinner is loosed from his physical body, that wicked spirit is brought under the headship of God. What a punishment for a wicked spirit to suddenly be forced into obedience to a holy God. The truth of a departed wicked spirit performing the will of God is clearly established in I Kings 22.

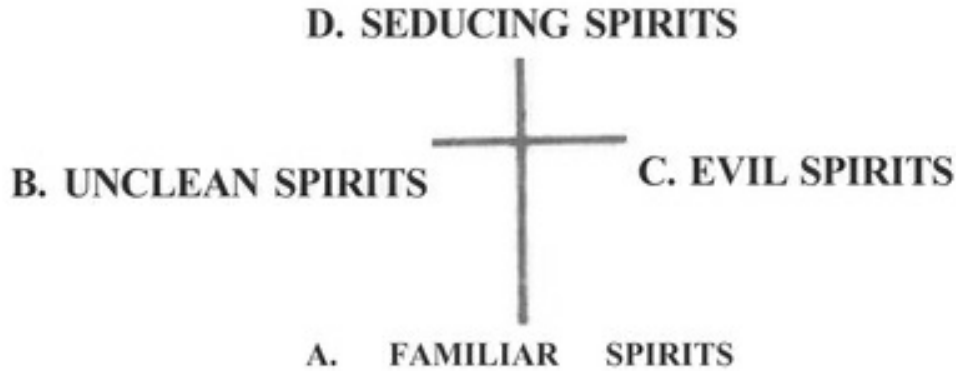
And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so (I Kings 22:20-22).

God inquired as to what procedure to follow to cause Ahab to fall at Ramoth-Gilead. A lying spirit stood before the LORD and offered his assistance, and God gave him permission to be a lying spirit in the mouth of those 400 prophets. This spirit, while journeying on earth in a physical body, had given himself to lying to such a degree that the Word actually calls him “a lying spirit”; or his nature was a lying nature. Some sinners give themselves completely to uncleanness or to murder, or some other sins. At death these departed spirits still operate in these particular capacities, but under the leadership of God. God accomplishes His will through these wicked spirits (of departed sinners) by using them to test His created beings. Spirits operate through a body; since they cannot find full satisfaction in their incomplete state (by being separated in a threefold manner at death), it is understandable that they seek to possess another body in order to manifest their evil tendencies, thus gaining personal gratification. Although knowing their origin is unnecessary, we must be aware of their existence and power.

Our subject is not a pleasant one; nevertheless, it is a most needful part of every Christian’s education. Christians often try to hide their heads in the sand, feeling that all they need to know is God, but this is a two-sided battle, and it is dangerous to be ignorant of our enemy.

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices (II Corinthians 2:11).

The Apostle Paul acknowledged his battles; his wrestlings against the spirits in Lucifer’s army: familiar spirits, unclean spirits, evil spirits and seducing spirits.



A. FAMILIAR SPIRITS

Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Molech, from among their people. And the soul that turneth after such as have FAMILIAR SPIRITS, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people. Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; for lam the LORD your God (Leviticus 20:5-7).

There are those with familiar spirits who call themselves fortune tellers, palm readers, spiritists, necromancers, and users of divination. The Hebrew word *familiar* means safe, happy, health, prosperity, and welfare. What a typical description this is of these people, since much of their foretelling is to the effect that everything is going to be lovely, well, and prosperous. Another Hebrew definition of the word *familiar* is prattling, a mumble, hence a necromancer, a worker of magic, a ventriloquist (as from a jar). While there are many impostors, prattling and mumbling like a ventriloquist to deceive, we must realize that there are those who do indeed have a familiar spirit of the Devil. Many are deceived by these users of divination when they seek to contact their loved ones who have died. They may be seeking evidence of their loved one's presence in another world, or be seeking consolation in knowing their destiny through the foretelling of a fortune-teller. This is sad, but how much more so when these familiar spirits begin to deceive even the children of God.

Even a minister can be afflicted by this familiar spirit. A faithful man of God will deliver the Word of Truth to his congregation regardless of what the truth may cost him personally. The truth cuts, divides, and even kills that which is contrary to the ways of God. But when this familiar spirit is operating through a servant of the Lord, he speaks words of flattery, words of compliment to salve the people, for he fears losing his congregation. A false prophet always speaks to exalt the people and to soothe them in every possible way. How different Jeremiah was. He was a true prophet of God, God said unto him, "I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant" (Jeremiah 1:10). It is this type of ministry that we need in our pulpits today. Before any real spiritual planting and building can be done, there must first be some rooting out and casting down. Truth divides flesh from Spirit. This is very painful, but necessary for true spiritual growth.

Many times as the truth has been presented to us, we have felt that it was the still, small voice of God's Spirit speaking to us saying, "Child, you know that is wrong for you to do." When quickly, another spirit is there whispering, "Oh, that is all right... you know God does not care if you do that. Imagine how lovely everything will be if you go this way instead." Beloved, these familiar spirits are about us, seeking to influence and direct even the child of God. Because their approach is so subtle, we often times fail to discern what spirit is speaking to us. Usually they begin with some trivial thing, but once we have yielded to this spirit, it becomes all the easier next time to move farther along in the same direction. These familiar spirits work almost imperceptibly, and soon they have enticed and ensnared the soul to the extent that we are walking away from God and going contrary to His will.

By his power of deception, the familiar spirit can cause anything to look prosperous, wonderful, and lovely, when actually it is an abomination in the sight of God. It is his glowing promise of prosperity and well being that confuses the mind and clouds the thinking. In this state even a child of God is set up to compromise his convictions and to sell out his soul for some paltry earthly gain. Yes, he may prosper in the world for a season, but end his life's journey spiritually bankrupt. God calls such a man a FOOL! "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags

which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Luke 12:33,34). Surely we need the dove's eyes (humility eyes) to see as the Bride saw in the Song of Solomon, for with these eyes we can see things as Jesus sees them. "God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15).

B. UNCLEAN SPIRITS

The word *unclean* means lewd, lust, impure. Out of these spirits come sex spirits, evil thoughts, and all manner of unclean things. Sexual looseness, immorality, and perversion characterize the last days prior to the rapture of the Wedding Party. Today we see a great increase of these things (like unto Sodom and Gomorrah), which is due to the increased activity of unclean spirits in the world. Current terminology for these abnormalities is far more palatable and pleasant than Jesus' labels for them. He plainly called their source "unclean spirits and devils."

And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease (Matthew 10:1).

At this point the disciples had not yet received the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, but Jesus Christ, the Living Word of God, gave them authority and power over unclean spirits. Jesus gave them the Word (He WAS the Word), and the authority of the Word gave them power. We stand more responsible than the disciples — those of us who have both the Word and the power of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us.

God wants us to mature. As long as we remain spiritual babes, someone else has to carry us, feed us, pray us through, and fight our battles. Christians, arise, and come up higher in God. Get in the battle and contend against the enemy in your own personal life. The Lord has provided us with all the necessary weapons for both offensive and defensive warfare, but they are of little value until we utilize them. Multitudes are oppressed, possessed, and driven to despair, but we cannot war in behalf of others until we have first won the victory in our own personal battles.

Generally speaking, we can all fight our own battles and bear our own burdens; but then again, there are times when we suffer special onslaughts of the enemy, and we feel as though he "throws the whole book" at us. At such times we need the concerted and concentrated prayer power of the members of the body of Christ. Victory comes only as there is a binding together of many believers. This unified prayer brings forth the needed deliverance. There is strength in unity, and when the battle is won all can acclaim the glory of God together.

C. EVIL SPIRITS

...and in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight (Luke 7:21).

The word *evil* in Hebrew means misery, affliction, wretchedness, adversity, torment, woe. There are evil spirits who bring affliction and torment into the lives of many. If we are living in the directive will of God, living in the Word of God, and keeping our minds stayed on Him, then evil spirits have no place in or on us. There is safety in abiding in Jesus; Lucifer has no claim upon us then, neither can he find an inroad into our lives. Jesus bore witness of this truth concerning Himself when He said, "for the prince of this world (Lucifer) cometh, and hath NOTHING IN ME" (John 14:30). Others, because they have disobeyed God, or because they have turned their backs on God's truth, or because they have grieved the Holy Ghost, find themselves in torment of mind and spirit.

The torment of mind and spirit that King Saul suffered is an example of this condition and is recorded in I Samuel 9. Saul had been chosen to be the first king of Israel, but his stubbornness, willfulness and disobedience to the Lord, turned God from him, and another king was chosen. The prophet Samuel was instructed by the Lord to anoint David to be king over Israel. Saul had made his choice. The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and when God's protective presence was withdrawn, an evil spirit moved in to torment his mind. When David, the simple shepherd boy, played upon his harp before the king, the evil spirit of torment was temporarily driven from Saul's mind, only to return again. Eventually the evil spirit drove Saul to the point of attempting to murder David. What a sad ending to a life called to such a glorious and high calling as Saul was privileged to have.

As Christians who also have a high and glorious calling, we, too, sometimes miss it. If we have drawn back from

the will of God. made some serious grievance against the Lord, or missed the way somehow, then it behooves us to go before the Lord and enquire of Him. We should check to see what has happened. We begin by confessing our fault, taking the low place of humility before Him, putting everything under the Blood of Jesus Christ, and submitting ourselves to God in a new way. Now we are on victory ground, and we can rightfully and fearlessly resist the Devil and he will flee from us. , “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith...” (I Peter 5:8,9). Upon such the Devil has no claim, no inroad, no real point of attack or entrance.

Mental health is a number one problem in our country today. There is an alarming increase of breakdowns, psychoses, neuroses-mental illness in its many and varied forms. When these serious mental problems occur, the world knows only to commit those so afflicted to institutions, or to impose shock treatments in order to paralyze the brain, through which evil spirits often work. We realize that there are mental problems which have a physical basis. But on the other hand, many mental oppressions and derangements are due to the activity of evil spirits. When people are emotionally disturbed and confused, their minds are driven hither and yon, and it is evident that there are evil spirits at work in one way or another. This mental chaos does not come from the Lord. God gives peace and guarantees soundness of mind. “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (II Timothy 1:7). God has given us a formula for good mental health: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Isaiah 26:3). If we will but live under the shadow of the Almighty, we can live securely, confidently, trustfully, and undisturbed by the evil spirits that permeate our world today.

D. SEDUCING SPIRITS

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron (1 Timothy 4:1,2).

The prevalence of seducing spirits and doctrines of devils is a sign of the last days, and points to the close of the Dispensation of Grace. Things are shaping up for judgment. Certainly we live in a day of confused ideas and opinions, unscriptural doctrines, and “isms” and “cisms” of every sort. Evidence on every hand substantiates the fact that we are living in the very time to which Timothy referred. A spirit of religious rebellion is everywhere. Some even go to the extent of teaching that God is dead.

The word *seducing* means to rove as a tramp, an impostor, or to mislead, or a deceiver. A seducing spirit will entice us from the paths of virtue and truth by flattery and deceit. This spirit works in a subtle way and generally seeks out the babes in Christ. It avoids the mature, those established in the Word of God, This spirit of flattery works to deceive some little one into thinking that he is really bigger in God than many others around him. This is evident when the individual begins to reject the truth from those who are older and more established in the Word of God. The next step is his neglect of the written Word of God, finally progressing to open rejection of the Word. From that point there is nothing to stop the seducing spirit. It has achieved its purpose, and has that individual under its control. This is not an uncommon thing today; we see it frequently in religious circles.

As Christians we need to stay under the Blood of Jesus Christ, to keep filled with God’s precious Holy Spirit, and to hide ourselves in the Word of God. In many places there is an over emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit and the spectacular and supernatural manifestations that accompany our faith, thus failing to give the Word of God its rightful place. We certainly do not belittle the gifts or the signs, for we need them. When God moves, the spectacular and supernatural are also present, but we need to keep everything in its rightful place. God’s Word is settled, and it is our protection and God-given guide in all spiritual matters. The Word keeps us centered upon Jesus Christ. The Crucified Way, the way of the Cross, deals with our pride, our love of exaltation, and our desire for preeminence. These are the desires of every human heart that must be crucified and yielded to the control of Jesus Christ if we are to grow up in Him. Otherwise, seducing spirits can easily lay hold of these desires and use them to deceive and lead God’s children into confusion, delusion, and error. Brethren, it is a serious matter to launch out into the spirit world apart from the guidance and check points of the written Word of God. Without the Word, without some spiritual stature and growth in God, we can never safely discern spirits.

CHAPTER III

DEVILS

The Greek word *devil* is defined as: a supernatural being, a demon, a god. The Scripture speaks of “gods” with a small letter “g” indicating that it does not relate to God Himself, but rather to idols (gods). The word *gods* means angels, a deity (referring to the angels that sinned), the angels of fallen Lucifer, also at times referred to as devils.

A. DEVILS

Devils are a class of spirits found in Lucifer’s army, and their main attack is in the physical realm, the body; and in the mental realm, the soul. The Word of God specifies seven classes of devils.

1. Dumb Devils

As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel (Matthew 9:32,33).

Here was a man possessed with a dumb devil that prevented him from speaking, but when the devil was cast out, the muteness was gone and the man spoke again. Some physical afflictions are the result of the direct attack of devils; however, this is not always so. For instance, in Matthew 9:28 Jesus healed some blind men, but He did not find it necessary to cast out a devil as He did in the case of the mute man. “And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened...”

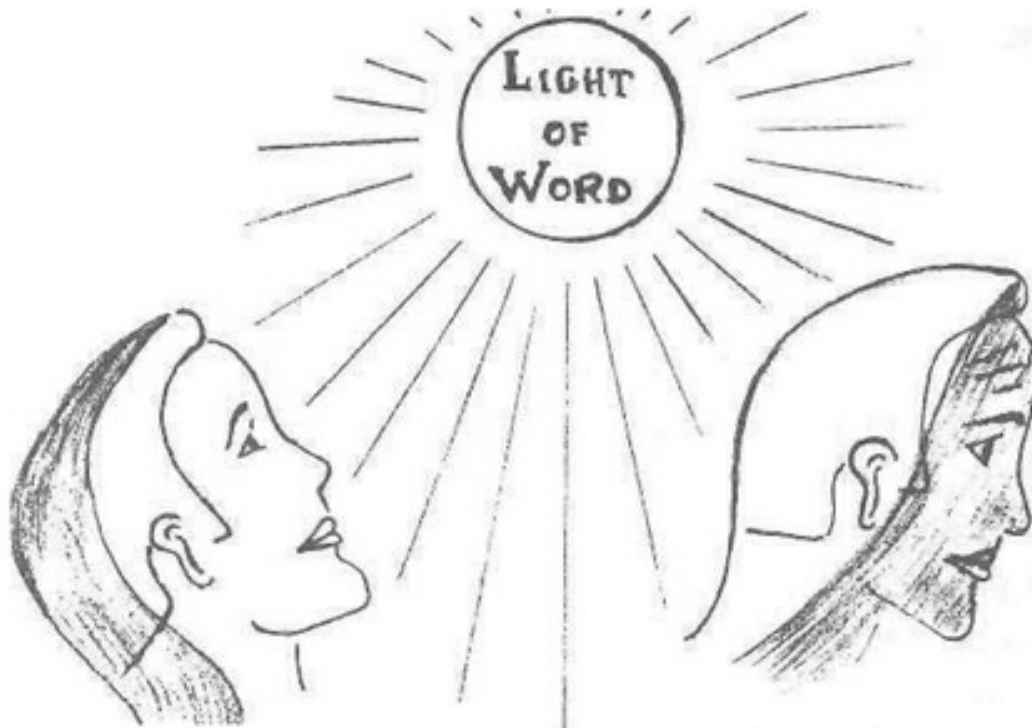
Spiritually speaking these dumb spirits can also bind the tongues and the speech of believers. Sometimes’ they bind our tongues to prevent our worship and praise of God, or our witnessing to others of His saving grace. Our carnal tongues are filled with bitterness, envy, malicious gossip, and many other words that are unlike Christ. How easy it is for the tongue to wag outside of the house of God; yet, when we get to church a bound tongue has no liberty to shout the praises of God. This, again, is nothing less than the work of these dumb devils of the adversary, seeking to rob God of His rightful glory from the tongues of the redeemed.

2. Blind Devils

Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw (Matthew 12:22).

Jesus healed and delivered this poor man who was afflicted with the spirits of both dumbness and blindness. Once we have opened the door to one spirit, there are usually other spirits that follow, as in this case. When Jesus cast out the dumb and the blind spirits, the man “both spake and saw.”

This blindness was manifested physically, but it can also be manifested in spiritual blindness. It is the spirit of blindness that causes us to turn from the light of God’s Word when it shines on some particular area of truth. When we have turned from the truth, we go into darkness. The Word of God begins to close to us, and then we cannot see spiritually. The end result of turning from light is the ushering in of darkness. The following sketch illustrates this principle.



Darkness behind us as long as we face the light (revealed Truth).

Eyes blinded with darkness when our back has been turned toward the light.

Our refusal of the truth puts our back between us and future light, so to speak, and the spirit of blindness comes to dwell in us. This spirit of blindness causes us not to see the things of God in others' lives. It is then that we pick up an accusing spirit against our brethren, which makes us see only their faults and failings, but none of their virtues.

3. Exceeding Fierce Devils

And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way...So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters (Matthew 8:28-32).

The exceeding fierce devils attack the mind, causing the victim to do all manner of fierce and unreasonable acts of violence. When the spirits mentioned in this passage of Scripture, entered into the herd of swine gazing nearby, the swine ran violently into the sea and drowned. The people watching the fantastic deliverance of the men who had been possessed of devils, rushed to the city to tell what they had seen. The whole city came out to see Jesus, but not to praise nor to laud Him for His mighty works in their midst. They pleaded with Him to depart out of their midst. In delivering the demon oppressed and devil possessed men, Jesus had touched the earthly possessions of the Gergesenes; therefore, they cast Him from their shores. So often this is true of us today. If Jesus touches our earthly possessions, we find those who will draw back and begin to shut Jesus out of their lives.

4. Vexing Devils

When one is vexed, one is aggravated, annoyed, nagged upon. There are devils who work particularly in this area of torment and affliction. With these devils at work, there is no peace of mind, no rest—just the insistent nagging of some distressing problem or thought to the point of unbearableness.

Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried

unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil... Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour (Matthew 15:21-28).

How graciously the Lord ministered to the many and varied needs of the people in the few short years of His earthly ministry. His disciples were irritated with this woman's much crying. For Jesus to rebuke her and send her away was their desire. Nevertheless, she was persistent, and finally, pressing her way through to Jesus, she began to worship at His feet. He said unto her, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs." Jesus had come to His own, the children of Israel, and His first obligation was to minister to them. Gentiles were called "dogs" by the Jews because of their uncleanness. Realizing the truth of what Jesus had just said, the woman agreed, but continued her petitioning, "...Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Moved by her faith, Jesus healed the daughter vexed grievously with a devil.

5. Lunatic Devils

And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour (Matthew 17:14-18).

Here was a young son with his mind completely gone—completely possessed by a lunatic devil. People lose their minds for various reasons, but in many cases it is a matter of their being possessed by lunatic devils. Once these devils are cast out, the person returns to his full sanity and resumes a normal life in society. Thank God that "greater is he that is in us" than he (the Devil) that is in this old world. The Devil is the perpetrator of many heartaches and tragedies. But there is a greater One; One great enough to take dominion over the devils and to cast them out of the lives they have once possessed,

6. Betrayal Devils

Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve (John 6:70,71).

Judas lived and walked with Jesus and observed Him throughout most of His earthly ministry; yet Judas Iscariot had at sometime rejected Jesus in his heart and had opened himself to the Devil. Recognizing the Devil's presence, Jesus exposed the betrayal devil that dwelt in His disciple. In due season the final disloyal act was committed—Judas betrayed his master. Overcome by remorse at his dastardly deed, Judas went out into the night and hung himself.

This is the spirit that gets on people, causing them to betray their companion in life, their best friend, their business loyalties. Many persons have been driven to a traitorous act because of the workings of these betraying devils upon their minds. The only true and lasting loyalty is that which finds its origin in God. Only as we lay hold of His nature can we truly be loyal to one another. This kind of loyalty can withstand any suggestion of the betraying devils that fill this old world.

7. Turning Devils (Devils that turn us from the Word of God)

And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith (Acts 13:6-8).

These devils, when they turn loose their power against an individual, are so strong that it almost seems as though they are physically turning or pushing a person away from the faith. They work especially through distraction, seeking to fill the eyes, the ears, and the mind of a person with anything and everything except the truth of God.

Paul was not ignorant of these devils and their devices. Being full of the Holy Ghost, he set his eyes fixedly upon Elymas the sorcerer and said, "...O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all

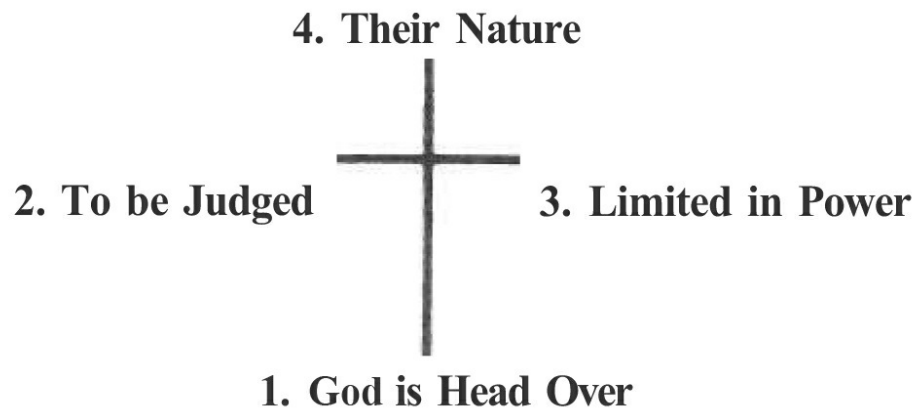
righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand” (Acts 13:10,11). After Paul had bound the servant of the Devil who had sought to turn the deputy away from the truth, the deputy was then open to see and to hear the truth that Paul declared unto him. “Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord” (Acts 13:12).

We need the operation of the gift of discerning of spirits in our church services, for oftentimes people cannot see or believe the truth, simply because of the work of the devils who possess turning power. Hence a church needs to resist these devils, casting them out by the power of God and the Name of Jesus Christ. Then it is easy for people to turn to God and receive the truth.

Beloved, we are not helpless pawns in the hands of our enemy. God has given us ample revelation that will well fortify us with the knowledge of our enemy, making his subtle methods easily recognizable, and enabling us to call the devils by name. Likewise, Jesus has provided us with the necessary weapons: the power of His shed Blood, the authority of His Name, and the right to cast out devils. We can stand on sure ground in this area of spiritual warfare.

May I add one further word pertaining especially to Christians. Christians are not possessed by devil—that is, owned, controlled, and completely ruled over, but they can suffer oppression which weighs them down physically, mentally or spiritually with burdens of distress or sadness. These devils can be cruelly overbearing and can weigh heavily on the mind, spirit, or senses, consequently causing physical and mental distress. A Christian cannot be indwelt nor possessed by the Devil. There is a big difference here. As Christians we live in a world filled with spirit activity, and we often find ourselves affected and influenced by the Army of Lucifer which surges about us. Oftentimes, a devil will sit upon a Christian’s shoulder and begin to trouble him with his whisperings, with his words of doubt, vexing him with troublesome thoughts. Or, perhaps it is a dumb spirit that binds him in order to hinder his witness for the Lord, or perhaps a blind devil darkens his vision to the light of God’s Word. We need to recognize what is happening, and then resist and rebuke the devil, and he will have to flee. This is a far cry from being possessed or indwelt by a devil. A possessed person is under the lull control of the devil that possesses him, and has no power of will or decision of his own. God’s Spirit and the spirit of the devil cannot dwell together in the same individual. As long as a Christian walks with God and abides under the Blood, he is safe. It is possible for a Christian to backslide into a place of deliberate disobedience and rebellion against God, thus removing the wall of protection and defense (as in Saul’s case). This allows the devil to have new access of entry into such a heart. On the other hand, the child of God is indwelt by the Spirit of Christ and is well fortified against such possession.

B. FALLEN ANGELS (Evil)



1. God is the Head over Fallen Angels

In Colossians we are told that the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Jesus Christ bodily, and that He is the head of all principality and power: “**And ye are complete in him**, which is the head of all principality and power:” (Colossians 2:10). This fact is substantiated again in Ephesians:

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church...(Ephesians 1:19-22).

Therefore, God is head over all principalities and powers; over all other might and dominions; over all other names that are names—HE IS ABOVE AND OVER ALL. This means that he is over and above the Devil and his angels. The truth is that they cannot do anything without God's permitting them to do it. This fact in no way implies that God is the originator or the instigator of sin, for this is surely not true. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:" (James 1:13). Even as Satan could not touch the Lord's servant, Job, without first obtaining permission from God to do so, so the Lord permits the adversary of our souls to come against us to test and try us. What would we be without the trying of our faith, or without the opportunities to contend for our faith? Why should the Christian soldier put on the whole armor of God if he is never permitted to enter into warfare with the archenemy of God? Many benefits are derived from spiritual warfare. This is why James wrote, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1;2-4). The Devil endeavors through sufferings and crosses to draw men to sin, and to deter them from duty, thus rendering them unfit for the service of God's kingdom. In reality our afflictions are in God's hands, and they are intended for growth in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. The more a Christian's graces are exercised, the stronger they become. Therefore we can count it all joy when trials and sufferings become our lot. When we humbly and obediently bear all that God appoints (as long as He appoints), then patience will have her perfect work, and we will lack nothing for our race and our warfare. What a comfort and encouragement we have in the knowledge that God is still sovereign and the head of all power, regardless of what power it might be.

How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan: And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink. He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them. He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust. He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost. He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts. He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them (Psalm 78:43-49).

According to the scriptural record above, God sent evil angels upon these nations to mete out His wrath and indignation upon them. These nations had bowed down to other gods. They had forsaken the true God for the worship of idols. Consequently, they suffered His judgment. By removing His restraint, we can say in this sense, that God sent the evil angels among them. These angels in their evil intent, served as a rod of God's wrath. They were angels of destruction and punishment.

2. Fallen Angels to be Judged

a. Fire

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: (Matthew 25:41).

God has prepared a judgment of everlasting fire for the Devil, all fallen angels, and all gods. This is not a gentle fire but a prepared fire; a fire made ready for a specific purpose, a suitable, fit punishment for the Devil and his angels. This fire was ordained of old. It is a destruction from the presence of the LORD and from the glory of His power. This jealous fire of God's wrath will not be of a short continuance, but it will be an everlasting fire, fastening itself upon immortal souls. It can never go out for lack of fuel, because it is kindled and kept burning by the jealous wrath of an immortal God. Those who insist upon traveling on the broad road that leads to destruction will receive and share the same place of judgment with the Devil.

b. Saints Judge

Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? (I Corinthians 6:3).

The Apostle Paul reminds the saints here that we shall judge the angels. The Lord promised that if we would suffer with Him, we should also reign with Him. Those who willingly suffer with Christ now, sharing the crucifixion of the self life with Him, will be joined to Him as His Bride, and will rule and reign with Christ Jesus throughout eternity. What a glorious privilege for the saints to be partners with the sovereign Judge at the last day and pass judgment upon the evil angels.

c. Chains of Darkness unto Judgment

For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah... making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly (II Peter 2:4-6).

God never spares anyone that has sinned. Sin is always judged. The judgment of some of these fallen angels is recorded in the Word of God for our admonition and warning. The excellent glorious stature and position of the angels did not exempt them from God's judgment of chains of darkness when they sinned. If the angels, who excel us in glory, knowledge and strength, were sentenced for violating God's law, likewise, we too will be sentenced unless we turn to Jesus Christ who can wash away all of our violations against God's law by His own precious Blood.

d. Chains Under Darkness Unto Judgment

And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day (Jude 1:6).

This Scripture refers to the sin of angels from the prehistoric heavens and earth. There were a number of angels who were not pleased with the posts and stations that the Supreme Ruler of the universe had assigned to them. They acquitted their posts and rebelled against God, their Creator and Sovereign Ruler, and went in their own perverted ways. But God did not spare them because of their highness and greatness; He cast them out as a wise and good prince would do. Though they were once angels of light and liberty, now they are under everlasting chains of darkness, reserved for the final decree of judgment which will place them in the lake of fire forever and ever. May the mortals of mankind take heed!

Let us beware of these fallen angels who are the angels of Satan. They are to be judged, and if we yield and follow them, we too shall share the same doom. In the beginning these angels wanted to be like God—not in nature, holiness, and righteousness, but in power alone. These angels, these devils, hate everything about God. They hate all that is holy and like Jesus. If we go on for God, we soon are aware of the resistance and hatred of these emissaries of Lucifer.

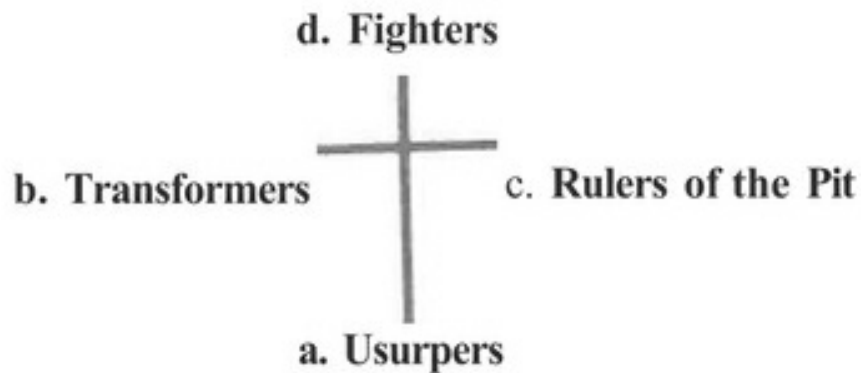
3. limited in Power

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels (Paul means evil angels here), nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38,39),

Although the child of God has enemies in the spirit world, it is comforting to realize that these enemies are limited in power. God only permits their advance against us in order to try and test us, to exercise and purify our faith, and to promote growth and spiritual development. Although the Devil means the attack for our destruction and spiritual catastrophe, God will turn it about and cause it to work for our good as we continue to be faithful to the Lord in the test. When we are sincere with God, all the powers of hell cannot stop us in our Christian walk. There is absolutely nothing that can separate us from His love!

4. Their Nature

As we study the nature of these fallen and evil angels, we will see that their nature is like that of the Devil. Keep in mind the interchange in the Scriptures of the word angels and devils, for even though there are good angels that serve God, there are fallen angels that are devilish in their nature and intent. We find a fourfold description of these fallen angels:



a. Usurpers

Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind (Colossians 2:18).

These evil angels usurp the worship of God. They are the spirits behind the many idols that men bow down to. Men worship images created by their own hands. Though innocent in appearance, these idols are more meaningful than most people realize. Behind all idols are evil spirits that utilize these man-made idols in order to usurp the worship that is due to God alone. People's hearts are devoted to so many things which actually are an intrusion and hindrance to their devotion and worship of God.

For example, there is a real spirit (an evil spirit) behind the so-called *spirit of materialism* as we know it today which usurps the time that should be devoted to prayer, God's Word, and Christian service.. The television screen has become an idol to many hearts. There are many testimonies of deliverance from its spirit. These usurping evil spirits accompany a myriad of things, tangible or intangible, seeking through their use to bind, entice, and ensnare a person's affections and interest to the extent that people will give themselves devotedly to them. In this sense, these *things* become a god in the lives of people.

This usurping nature is not present with the good angels of God. We recall the experience of the Apostle John, "And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God' (Revelation 22:8.9)

b. Transformers

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

These fallen angels can transform themselves, appearing to possess the direct opposite of their true nature. I would like to share a spiritual vision which the Lord gave me many years ago, one I have never forgotten; one that has been a great help to me. I was lifted up in the Spirit into the heavenlies, and there stood before me a very lovely and appealing heavenly creature. It was clothed with luminous light and glory which appeared like unto the Shekinah Glory of God. My first thought was that this must be the Lord Himself, or if not, one of the highest of heaven's angels. But as I stood and viewed this splendid being, a hand appeared and removed the thin layer of glory as though it were a thin layer of plastic. Horrified, I looked upon that beautiful creature as it was exposed. Standing before me was the ugliest and most hideous creature I had ever seen. And then the Lord spoke, warning me that I

was not to accept any visitor, heavenly or otherwise, simply by his appearance, for the Devil and his angels often come disguised as angels of light.’:

It was an experience of warning substantiated by the Word of God. Men’s eyes are easily attracted to that which glitters, but it is usually false gold. Men have ticklish ears that delight in hearing only the lovely, the pleasant, the enjoyable, and the entertaining. We must learn not to be deceived by all of this, but to flee the things that do not measure up to the Word of God, regardless of how sparkling and exciting and pleasurable they may seem to be.

c. Rulers of the Pit

And the fifth angel sounded. and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit (Revelation 9:1,2).

This is a prophetic revelation of what is yet to come upon the earth as God pours out His wrath in judgment during the great tribulation. This revelation is not to be spiritualized, for this is a literal picture of what will come upon the earth at that time. We have every reason to fear what men can do these days with their tremendous weapons of destruction, yet the potential of these lethal weapons is mild in comparison to the wrath of the Almighty God. Fearful as God’s wrath is, the child of God finds the Lord Jesus Christ a sure refuge. When fear comes upon the earth, the Lord tells us to look up and rejoice because our redemption draws nigh.

And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man (Revelation 9:3-5).

Spirits live in different forms and are often portrayed in various forms of animal life. Oftentimes the particular form they assume indicates something of their characteristics and natures. The locusts spoken of in Revelation nine are not ordinary locusts as we know them, for they are demon spirits that will be loosed out of the pit during the time of the tribulation period. Their torment is likened to that of the scorpion’s sting, but it will not be fatal. Men Will not be able to die to escape this judgment.

And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon (Revelation 9:6-11).

The crowns of gold signify ruling power, so these are ruling demons out of the pit who will be rulers on the earth for a season. The hair of women speaks of subjection -their subjection to their wicked leader. The teeth of lions refer to their devouring power. There will be no possible way to destroy these creatures from the pit, as they are protected by the breastplates of iron and are exceedingly swift.

What fearful things are to come upon this earth in the day of God’s wrath. The godly have always suffered the ridicule and scorn of the unbelievers in this world, but this is a small price indeed for the glorious destiny that awaits them. The ungodly, the sinner, and the rejecter shall find no escape; judgment is sure. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God,

d. Fighters

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, the old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him (Revelation 12:7-9)

This scene precedes the tribulation period. Michael and his angels are the faithful and good angels who serve

God. The Devil goes to and fro throughout the earth, and he is the prince of the power of the air, and he also has access to heaven. Up until this time his warfare has been divided between the earth and the heavenlies. The time shall come, however, when he shall be forever cast out of heaven. Michael and his angels war against the full stature of fallen Lucifer: Satan, the Devil, the Serpent, and the Dragon, but Lucifer is defeated “neither was their place found any more in heaven.” During the tribulation period the Devil’s warfare will be confined to the earth. It will be hell on earth, for where the Devil is there is always hell.

Beloved, we are in a spiritual warfare today. Whether we like it or not, none of us can be neutral. Each must choose which side he will join—God’s side or Lucifer’s. Those on God’s side will have testings and trials. There will be spiritual conflicts; yet, these are minor skirmishes compared to what lies ahead for the Christ rejecting world. The man, woman, or child who casts his lot against God leaves himself open to the direction and control of Lucifer’s cohorts, the demons, the evil angels..

C. THE GODS

How faithful the Word of God is to expose our enemy, Lucifer, and his army. The Scriptures specify seven particular devils: dumb, blind, exceeding fierce, vexing, lunatic, betrayal, and devils that turn us from the Word of God. Further, the Word of God exposes the fallen angels—those who are usurpers, transformers, rulers of the pit, and fighters. And then there are references in the Scriptures to an additional class of devils who are designated as *gods*. The word *devils* (plural) refers not only to devils, but also to demons. Sometimes they are called fallen angels and then again, they are called gods. These are the invisible servants of Lucifer, whom we cannot see, although their existence is very real in the spirit world. Our battle is not with flesh and blood, but with the spirits of the other world. Therefore, we need to glean all the possible information we can about our enemy. Our aim in the preceding chapters has been to acquaint us with the reality of Lucifer’s army. Now let us proceed to the study of the next class of his warriors, the gods.

Our first reference to gods is in the garden of Eden. The serpent tempts Adam female and promises, “...and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5). If she disobeyed God’s command not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, she would become as the gods, or the fallen angels, or the devils, knowing good and evil by experience. God knows evil and good through the fact that He is omniscient, but He does not know evil from experiencing it through disobedience, Adam male and female chose to disobey God’s command, thereafter suffering the loss of all that was good. We, too, are faced with a choice, since we were created with a will, as were Adam male and female. None of us can bypass this choice.

1. Images

Images are strange to God, and were never given to man by Him. It was Lucifer who inspired the making of images for the purpose of usurping God’s rightful worship.

And now, though thou wouldst needs be gone, because thou sere longedst after thy father’s house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods’?
(Genesis 31:30).

Jacob had met the Lord at Bethel. It was there he had seen a ladder stretched from heaven to earth with angels ascending and descending thereupon. God had talked with him then, and later while he was in Syria working for his Uncle Laban, God talked with him again. Eventually the time came for him to take his possessions and his family back to Canaan’s land. His wife, Rachel, took her father’s strange gods, his idols, with her. In spite of Jacob’s wonderful relationship with God, he had failed to properly discipline and instruct his own household. They had not been taught enough about God to really know Him, for had they been, they would have known the necessity of separation from the false gods of this world.

The same conditions prevail today. Strangely, the saints of God want to hold on to the things of God with one hand and the things of the world with the other. This is spiritual adultery, illegal joining. Many a Christian has joined his heart to his own particular *idol*, thereby committing spiritual adultery. God’s Word is not silent regarding the consequences of this great sin.

For he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves (II Chronicles 14:3).

This records the activity of one of the kings of Israel. This king was zealous for God, rising up and endeavoring to cleanse Israel of its idolatry. The groves of worship were to be cut down and the images (the strange gods) destroyed.

And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him (Exodus 32:1).

These were the very same people who had been miraculously delivered out of the land of Egypt. They had seen God bring judgment from heaven upon the gods of Egypt. They had danced in jubilation over their deliverance from the oppression of Pharaoh, giving all the glory to God. Now quickly the scene had changed. Moses had gone up the mount. The people, impatient and restless, filled with disrespect for God's servant and suspicious of his character, cry out in their carnal reasoning, "Make us gods!" It is not long before we see them leaping and dancing in sensual frenzy before their new god, the golden calf.

And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the LORD: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel (Judges 10:16).

Idol worship was a continual problem with Israel. They put away their strange gods for a season, but it was not long before they took them up again. It was only as God moved in chastisement and punishment upon them that they would rid themselves of their strange gods and serve the one true and living God.

Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel (Joshua 24:23).

Put away the strange gods! A god can be anything to which we bow down, which we serve, in which we delight. The spirit of devils light upon the gods and images of man, drawing their hearts and minds away from the true God. Our delight, our devotion, our homage, and our hearts belong to the Lord. He is to be our joy. In His presence there is pleasure and fulness of joy.

Beloved, is this true of your relationship with Him, or is your heart divided in its attachments, its affections, its devotions, its satisfactions? Have you given any part of yourself to strange gods?

And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines (1 Samuel 7:3),

Many years had passed, but the condition was still the same. The house of Israel was still guilty of having its strange gods. They offered their sacrifices and worshipped Jehovah. At the same time they indulged in the worship of false gods. These gods were put before the people in the visible form of images. They took physical substance which they shaped into an image to worship-strange doings by those who knew the true and living God. God's Word is explicit in noting what materials were used in making these images.

a. Metal

Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold (Exodus 20:23).

Man perverted the good things with which God blessed him. Metals, wood, and stone were all deposited in the earth for man's benefit and use, but man took these very materials and perverted them into images for idol worship-substitutes for the one true and living God.

b. Wood

They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone (Daniel 5:4).

And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell (Deuteronomy 4:28).

There is more to this type of idol worship than meets the casual eye. We are prone to ridicule the matter of images

and to brush it off lightly, blaming it all on superstitious ignorance, but there is more to it than that, for there is real power involved with idol worship. True, these images are inanimate objects that can neither see nor hear. In themselves they are nothing; nevertheless, we must not fail to recognize that there are real spirits of devils behind these things. There is power in idolatry. It takes more than a piece of wood to compel a woman to sacrifice her child by casting her newborn into the fire. It takes a driving power to make people dance in frenzied worship day and night for seventy-two hours without ceasing. Worshippers of images give evidence of satisfaction, of thrill, of devotion. These are no mere pieces of stone, wood, silver, brass, iron, or gold; these objects are the tools of demon power. These are gods that enslave, empower, and control their worshippers. There is reality in heathenish worship because there are real spirits working through the visible idol, using it to attract people's worship and veneration.

c. Stone

The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone (Deuteronomy 28:36).

The Lord gives us the choice as to whether or not we will serve Him. If we choose not to, He will turn us over to serve gods of wood and stone. Though mere images, these objects of wood and stone are empowered by the demon gods that dwell upon them. We have image worship in this country today. It is absolutely amazing to see our Americans take up the religions of the East with their various grotesque images, after having had the privilege of being reared with a rich Christian heritage. In spite of this rich background of Christian truth, Americans, generally speaking, have turned to worshipping other gods and are fertile soil for the Oriental mysticism that is flooding our land. Heathen temples are being erected in our so-called enlightened America. Many are bowing in worship to images of metal and stone. Also, there is a trend toward the worship of the human spirit and the human mind which are especially susceptible to the mental images that are put there by the workings of Lucifer. These forms of worship are serious because it is through both the man-made images and our mental images that the direct activity and influence of demon power is expressed. It is dangerous to open our minds and spirits to the spirit world without the faithful guidelines of the Word of God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit of God to direct us. We live in a day of prophetic fulfillment. These days men are rejecting the true God, and God is turning them over to serve gods of wood and stone, and the gods of mental imagery.

d. Creation

Lucifer has taken the very things that God created for His own glory, the created world about us, and uses this creation to usurp the worship that is due only the Creator. God gave us the outward light of His creation, and the inward moral light of conscience to direct our hearts toward Him in worship, but this, too, has been perverted by the work of demon spirits.

If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant, And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; (Deuteronomy 17:2,3).

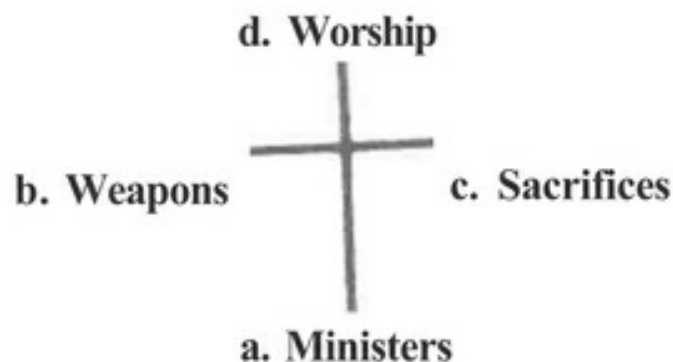
For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever...And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the sons of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards; he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. And he set a carved image, the idol he had made, in the house of God...So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to en, and to do worse than the heathen (II Chronicles 33:3-9).

Manasseh caused the children of Israel to do worse than the heathen nations round about them. The images he had made to the host of heaven (stars) and to creation were brought into the very house of God. How careful we must be lest we be guilty of the same sin. Some churches have literal images in them. Although not as easily detected, some have injected strange practices, strange ideas, and strange mental images of formality and deadness into their worship, which are the figment of their own carnal minds. Thus we permit satanic suggestion to prevent us from

worshipping God in *Spirit* and in *Truth*. Lucifer will do anything to clutter up our minds, divert our attention, and involve us, in order to prevent our walking wholly and clearly in the light of God's revealed Word. These strange mixtures that we find in the house of God are nothing but the work of Satan and his cohorts.

Let me share an example of how Christians can be led into worshipping the god of materialism. A pastor met a fellow minister one day and engaged him in friendly conversation. Knowing that the other man's congregation had just moved into a lovely new edifice, he asked, "How are you finding it in your new environment? I hear it is really something..." "Well, I'll tell you," responded the other minister wryly, "my congregation is still busily worshipping their new god." Our adversary is clever. His emissaries creep into the house of God in the most imperceptible ways. Today we are especially subject to these spirits of materialism. There is much around us that appeals to the eyes, so much that touches the aesthetic nature in man, so many cultural refinements, so many sensuous enticements. We need to take heed lest these spirits of materialism seduce us into bowing at their shrines, thus deflecting our vision from the Almighty God and Jesus Christ our Saviour.

2. The Power of gods



In connection with the power of the gods we will study this small stature of truth: The Ministers of the gods, The Weapons of the gods, The Sacrifices of the gods, and the Worship of the gods (keeping in mind that these gods, spelled with a small "g" are Lucifer's warriors).

We must never underestimate the power of the servants and ministers of Lucifer. They have power, and the more educated and cultured a nation becomes, the more subtle and clever the enemy becomes. People are deceived without realizing what is happening to them. We have countries near us where books on devil worship can easily be purchased which contain instructions on how a person can become a minister of the Devil. We have cults in our own land that blatantly practice devil worship. There are those who fast and pray and go through all manner of preparation to become possessed of the powers of the Devil. These are not fly-by-night tales, but these experiences can easily be verified by ministers and missionaries who have observed these practices firsthand. Demon power, devil power, and evil spirits are real. While some operate more subtly in some areas, their activities are more openly exposed in other parts of the world.

God would not have us ignorant of the wiles of the enemy. Light and knowledge offer us protection. The Word of God speaks of seven ministers of the Devil.

a. Ministers of the gods

There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD... (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

1) Observer of Times

There are religious sects who are overly concerned and occupied with the keeping of certain days. Our salvation is not based on observing days, but on the shed Blood of Jesus Christ wherein there is remission of sins. The Hebrew word *observer* means to convert, to cloud over. Converting men to the keeping of certain days covers over and

obscures the vital issues of life. Without a personal commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, days with all manner of religious implication can be observed, yet our souls will be lost and doomed for eternity without Christ and God.

2) Enchanter

There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

Pharaoh called forth his magicians, and by their enchantments they were able to do three works of magic. They changed their rods into serpents, they turned the water into blood, and they called up frogs. Lucifer's power enabled them to duplicate these three miracles that Aaron performed before the eyes of the king. But when the fourth miracle was done (turning the dust into lice), the enchanters of Egypt were confounded and exclaimed, "This is the finger of God" (Exodus 8:19).

3) Witch

And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many? (II Kings 9:22).

Jehu was a zealous fellow. God had anointed him king, and in order to be king, Jehu took away everybody else's gods, but he kept two golden calves of his own. To give the appearance of spirituality, the king forced others to put away their idols, yet he hid and secretly worshipped two golden calves. This is an easy fault for a minister to fall into as well. Naturally, there could be no peace when this situation existed, and the witchcraft of Jezebel was still in the land.

And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed and used enchantments, and used witchcraft (II Chronicles 33:6).

And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers; (Micah 5:12).

A witch is one who whispers a spell, or enchants. God looked upon them as an abomination, and He said He would cut them off. As God's children we surely do not have to turn to palm readers, fortune tellers, and things of that sort, when God has placed in our hands the precious Word of God, and placed within our hearts His Holy Spirit to lead and guide us into all truth.

Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts (Nahum 3:4).

God likens witchcraft to the spiritual adultery, fornication, and whoredom of which Israel was guilty. Adultery and fornication in the natural speak of illegal union and joinings, and since Israel had joined herself to other things rather than accept her union with the Lord, she was guilty of whoredom. This illicit relationship is seen in God's eyes as comparable to witchcraft.

And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee (I Samuel 28:8).

King Saul paid a visit to the witch of Endor, requesting that she bring up the Prophet Samuel, and she did just that.

Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice:..,(I Samuel 28:11,32).

There is no doubt about who it was that came up from the spirit world from among the dead. It was Samuel. Keep in mind that this occurred before the cross of Jesus Christ, and at this time Lucifer still had the keys of death and

hell. After Jesus died on the cross, He descended into the nether world and seized the keys of death and hell from the hands of Lucifer; they are in Jesus' possession now. But because they were still in the possession of Lucifer at that time, the witch of Endor had the power through the authority of Lucifer to command the spirit of Samuel to come forth from among the dead.

What a sad indictment upon the life of King Saul. Because the Lord answered him not, he deliberately walked contrary to the light of God and sought direction through the means of a familiar spirit. He transgressed his own law, for the woman reminded him, "Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land..." And when Samuel stood before him he said, "Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy." Because of his self-willed way, Saul found himself forsaken of God; his kingdom rent from him. In despair Saul cast himself upon the ground, for there was no strength in him.

A true witch has power, but it is the power of Lucifer working through her, certainly not the power of God. God hates witchcraft, and it has been, and still is, a forbidden thing for God's people to open themselves to those with familiar spirits.

4) Charmers

In the Hebrew, the word *charmer* means to mumble, to whisper, and to use flattery. Our enemy is subtle in his tactics, succeeding in smiting even the servants of God with this spirit. Many a man's kingdom has been built upon flattery and his ability to charm and to soothe people. This is revolting when it is employed in building the work of God, and yet there are those who operate on this principle under the guise of doing the work of God.

5) Consulter with Familiar Spirits

The word *consult* means to enquire, to request, to demand, to ask counsel, desire, salute. If we have need of knowing anything as God's children, we have the privilege of going directly to the throne of grace and asking boldly of Him. "If any of you lack wisdom, let us ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). And again the Word of God says, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom..." (I Corinthians 1:30). Jesus Christ is our wisdom, He is our advocate, our lawyer in heaven. What a resource and supply we have in Him. How could we, then, turn to consult with those with familiar spirits?

There is deliverance through the power of Jesus Christ for those possessed by demon power, but sometimes they do not get delivered because they actually desire, salute, and consult with these evil spirits. As long as they desire this, there is no possibility of casting out the demons. In other words, there is never any deliverance for a person until he sincerely wants to be delivered and cooperates in the matter himself.

6) Wizard

A *wizard* is a male witch. The word in the Hebrew means a ghost, a knowing one, to conjure, to know by seeing, observation, recognition, and instruction.

7) Necromancer

This is one who calls up the dead. *Necromancer* also means to worship, to tread, to frequent, to seek, and to search. Isaiah made reference to them:

A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick; Which remain among the graves (these were the necromancers functioning in the calling up of the dead), and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; (Isaiah 65:3,4).

These then are the seven classes of the ministers of the Devil particularly mentioned in the Word of God. They are people who give themselves over to the power of the Devil, delving into the forbidden spirit world. Though strictly forbidden by God, there are human beings who persist in seeking out these workers of darkness, opening themselves to spells, enchantments, flattery, and mumblings, choosing darkness instead of light.

b. Weapons of the gods

Not only do the gods have their ministers, but they also have specific weapons of warfare that they employ in their works of darkness. We shall study three classes of weapons: Enchantments, Divination, and Charms.

1) Enchantments

The first weapon of the gods is the power of enchantment. The use of enchantment was forbidden by God in His commandments given to His chosen people, Israel: “Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times” (Leviticus 19:26). In other words God was saying, “You do not have to have the fire of Lucifer to find out anything about me. That is not the right way to learn of me.” The word *enchantment* means to blaze, to fire, also it means serpents, dragons. If there were not something to this matter of enchantments, God would never have bothered to warn the people, or prohibit their making use of this power.

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! (Numbers 23:23).

This passage was Baalim’s prophecy concerning Israel, As long as Israel was walking on with God, there was not such a thing as enchantments and divination found among them. Afterwards, when they settled down in Canaan’s land, we know that they fell into this sin and began to worship idols.

There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

Enchantments, divination, and the use of Lucifer’s power in any way, was absolutely forbidden and was not to be found among God’s people in any degree or form.

And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger (II Kings 17:17).

This is the very thing that God had told them not to do; nevertheless, after settling in Canaan’s land, they sold themselves to practices of enchantment, and resorted to the use of the power of Lucifer. They chose to do this instead of paying the price to meet the condition to have the power of God in their midst. This is exactly what some churches are doing today. It is far easier to sell out to the Devil’s way than it is to meet the conditions and pay the price to receive God’s power and blessings. By *easier* we mean easier on the flesh. Although it may seem easier at the time, in the final analysis God’s way is still the best way, and it actually is the easiest also.

In Exodus seven we see our first example of enchantment in practice, and we see that it definitely was a power. Let us not minimize the power of Lucifer. “For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods” (vs. 12). The Devil may practice his power, but our God can swallow up the Devil’s power.

The second definition of the word *enchantment* in the Hebrew is to wrap up, to go softly. You will notice how softly the ministers of Lucifer will work when they are trying to court the favor of Lucifer’s power. The Devil is nothing except an imitator. We also know that if we are going to court the power of our God, we must walk softly before Him too.

And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said (Exodus 7:22).

Here the magicians practiced their enchantments again, and in this case they were able to turn the water into blood just as God’s servants had done. Lucifer is a deceiver because he has a stolen portion of God’s power, but that portion is limited. Later, the servants of God went on to do other miracles while the magicians were unable to duplicate these further works, because they had come to the end of their power.

And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt (Exodus 8:6,7).

They actually did the same miracle as Aaron. How they did it is a mystery, and we should not be too anxious to delve into the deep things of Lucifer to find out how they accomplished this.

There is another word used to define *enchantment* which means to join by spells. This word is used in Isaiah 47:9-12).

But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments,,Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail (Isaiah 47:9-12).

Again God faithfully warned His people of their dire loss because of their great abundance of enchantments. The fourth definition for enchantment in the Hebrew means to cover like a cloud. This particular usage is found in Jeremiah 27:9).

Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: (Jeremiah 27:9).

False gods use their powers of enchantment to cloud or cover men's minds with lies so they cannot see or understand the truth.

2) Divination

The word *divination* means to prophesy by lot, a magical scroll, a fee. This is a very real power of the Devil. There are many ways in which to divine.

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king (1 Samuel 15:23).

Here the Lord compares rebellion and stubbornness to iniquity, idolatry, and witchcraft. These are placed in the same category, because they represent man's rejection of God's way in preference to his own will and way. What is witchcraft? It is rebellion. This whole thing goes back to man's will being perverted in the garden. Instead of seeking God according to the written Word, God's provided way, man persists in seeking God in his own way. Men want to worship God in their own way—do anything just so they can do it their own way. Be sure the Devil is there to help them.

God's true prophets had told Israel that they would be taken captive. On the other hand false prophets, enchanters, diviners, dreamers, and sorcerers said, "Oh no, you will not be taken captive." The enemy likes to prophesy peace and prosperity to try to deceive us, causing us to think that we are in the right way. There are those who do not believe that God speaks warnings of judgment so that the fear of God might be brought, but beloved, it is God who puts the fear of God upon us. If it were not for the fear of God upon us, we would fail to do many of the right things that we do. How much we need the fear of God upon us these days to keep us going on for Him. A lot of Christians have lost their fear of an Almighty God. Sometimes we are more afraid of the Devil than we are of God. It is not the Devil that we need to fear but it is God, for it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Find your place in the will of God. This is where joy and ecstasy are found, not in trying to outdo everyone else, or in coveting everyone else's ministry. Get in the will of God for yourself, and then crucify that thing within you that wants to boss and rule over the lives of everyone else. You will learn as you go on that if you help others find their way into the will of God, that they will not be a Jonah to you. If they are not in the will of God, they will be a Jonah to you. Your boat will rock and the waves will roll.

Now let us look at the different methods used in divining:

a) Cast Lots

God never did intend for His church to be run by the ballot system. Did He mean for us to come in and discuss among ourselves: "Who do you think will make a good Sunday school superintendent? Who do you suppose we ought to choose for a new deacon...?" Then, after passing out the ballot slips, have each man cast his vote (many times for the most popular, well-to-do, friendly, or impressive type of person in the church)? Is this the way to

determine the will of God for our spiritual leadership in the church?

The principle of casting lots, choosing by vote, started back under this practice of divination. It goes right back to the stubbornness of our human will. We will run things the way we want to. We are not willing to fast, pray, earnestly wait upon, and seek the mind and will of God in these vital matters of church life. We are not willing to wait until the Holy Ghost speaks and says, “Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. When they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost...” (Acts 13:2,4). This was how the early church functioned under the guidance and direction of the Holy Ghost.

When we do it this way, we have no problem with the usual jealousies, resentments, and striving for positions in the church. It is no longer a matter of personality or politics; it is God’s will and God’s choice. Thank God we can walk by the witness of the Holy Ghost in all matters concerning the government of His church. It is the choosing of the Holy Ghost; it is the speaking forth of the Holy Ghost; it is the setting apart for ministry *by the Holy Ghost*—not the will of man.

How powerful this thing of divination is. Even though the disciples had sat at the feet of Jesus Christ a long while, and though He had bidden them to go and tarry in Jerusalem until they be endued with power from on high; yet, we see what they did while they were waiting for the Holy Ghost to come. They cast lots! They were going to appoint an apostle to take the place of Judas. They never chose Judas in the first place. That was done by Jesus, Himself. The fact that Jesus Christ had gone to heaven in no way limited or weakened Him to the point of being unable to choose an apostle Himself. It was after His ascension that He met Saul on the road to Damascus. After this encounter Saul was never the same. Saul became Paul, the one God chose to replace fallen Judas. Look what heathenish practices the early disciples were about to carry over into the apostolic church. However, when the Holy Ghost came, He set things in order. He voiced His directions in these matters. It is impossible to walk by the casting of lots, and walk by the Holy Ghost witness at the same time. We must choose one way or the other. Only one of the ways is God’s way—the leading of the Holy Ghost.

And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak (Numbers 22:7).

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! (Numbers 23:23).

At that time there was no casting of lots in Israel. Israel was led by the supernatural cloud and fire of God. The Spirit of God went before them. When He moved out, they moved out, and when He stayed, they stayed. The Shekinah glory of God was within that cloud by day and in the fire by night.

And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger (II Kings 17:17).

Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart (Jeremiah 14:14).

These false prophets prophesied by divination. They used the method of casting lots, or used scrolls, by writing names and casting them forth for divination.

They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The LORD saith: and the LORD hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word.... And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD...Therefore ye shall see no more vanity, nor divine divinations: for I will deliver my people out of your hand: and ye shall know that I am the LORD (Ezekiel 13:6,9,23).

God prophesies here against those who cast lots and practice various methods of divination. We still have a hangover from this matter. How many times have we seen people flip a coin when they are trying to make a decision: “Heads or tails?” they ask. This comes from divination which is a heathenish practice from the past. If we are Christians, we need not have any part in these things.

b) Looked in the Liver

For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he made his arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver (Ezekiel 21:21).

This is another means of divination—looking into the liver. In trying to find the mind of God, they chose anything rather than to go to Jerusalem to receive the Word of God for direction. They could easily have presented their needs before the Urim and Thummin in the Temple, but in their sight anything was better than God's provided way. They came before their image, slew their sacrificial animal, worshipped and bowed down before this demon-empowered image, and then made use of the entrails of the animal for divination purposes. Demons would get on the entrails causing them to move about, and as they looked in the liver, they divined what they thought was the mind of God, Here they were, trying to join the mind of God to such a lewd practice.

And it shall be unto them as a false divination in their sight, to them that have sworn oaths: but he will call to remembrance the iniquity, that they may be taken...Whiles they see vanity unto thee, whiles they divine a lie unto thee, to bring thee upon the necks of them that are slain, of the wicked, whose day is come, when their iniquity shall have an end (Ezekiel 21:23-29).

False divination, iniquity, vanity, all are destined to end. How ridiculous such practices seem to us today; yet, we are far more guilty in practicing the same thing. Not all of the Israelites had access to the written Word of God, for it was mostly confined to the scribes and priests. They had only the blood of bulls and bullocks. They did not have a personal Holy Ghost to dwell within them, to lead and guide them. Compare what we have today to what they had then. We have the Word of God, the Blood of Jesus Christ, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Still we cast lots and look into someone's liver, so to speak. When we look to things and people to guide us instead of looking to God's Word and Spirit, we are not looking for answers God's way.

c) Arrows

For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he made his arrows bright. ..(Ezekiel 21:21).

Sometimes arrows were used to divine God's will. The names in question (individuals, places, or cities) were placed upon the shaft of arrows. The arrows were put into a quiver and shaken vigorously to mix them. One arrow was drawn out of the quiver. King David used a much surer method; he enquired of the LORD. God always revealed the winning strategy to David when he sought the mind of the Lord as he prepared to go to battle. Instead of the hit or miss answers that relying on chance would have brought to him, David simply went to Shiloh (and later Jerusalem) to enquire of the Lord. David walked by the witness of the Urim and Thummim. It was nothing but rebellion that made the others not use David's way. They had the same privilege, but preferred their own ways. We see this same error in Nadab and Abihu's lives when they came in with their strange fire before the Lord. They were going to do it their way-not according to the Word of God.

d) Staff

My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God (Hosea 4:12).

Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them...The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us (Micah 3:6-11).

Is this not like some Christians today? Here were people who were using all sorts of divining methods, yet they claimed that God was among them. The staff was used in divination in much the same fashion as their arrows. Names were written upon them and the staves were cast forth in some manner. Whatever name came uppermost in any particular instance was taken as an indication of direction. While they were using these methods of divining, demons were right there to turn the arrows or the staves according to their will. Certainly the will of God had

nothing to do with this business. The people said that they were following the Lord when they were actually following the Devil.

The same situation exists in the religious world today. How do we find Jesus Christ pictured in the Scriptures during the Laodicean church age (the present day church age in prophecy)? We find Him outside the door, knocking, trying to get into His own church, so that He can lead, guide, and direct it. What shut Him out in the first place? It was man's attempt to control his own destiny. We can boss if we want to, but one thing is sure, Jesus Christ will not be guiding while we are. If we want to boss, then He will let us. He will lift His power and presence from us and go to a place where He can be the guiding shaft in the operation. We can boss our churches, and we can boss our lives if we want to, but rest assured that when we do, He will not stay inside, but He will depart and go elsewhere. If we desire to abide under the cloud and fire of God's glory and presence, we have to receive direction one way, and that is GOD's way.

e) Dreams

If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him (Deuteronomy 13:1-4),

God warned the people here that should the prophets and dreamers' prophecies come true, the people were not to follow false prophets who would lead them into the worship of other gods, A false prophet will lead us away from God. The Devil's ministers may have enough prophecies which come to pass, and they may mix enough truth with their error that they succeed in deceiving people, but they show their true colors when they introduce gods to worship other than the one true God. If none of their prophecies were fulfilled, and if they had no truth mixed in with their doctrines, then people could not be led into deception. The most dangerous person in the world is someone who has perverted the truth and joined it to the wanton practices of the Devil, Some fortune-tellers have real power because the Devil is working through them. They may be able to tell where someone's lost purse is, but it would be far safer never to know what happened to the purse than to stray from the will of God by having to resort to the powers of the Devil to find it. There are false prophets today who, with their power of enchantments, can cause things to appear out of the air.

There are prophets who prophesy lies. They prophesy things that God has not said. Their motive is exaltation of self. The type of prophecy that the flesh brings forth compliments people, exalts people, pats people on the back and so forth. This kind of prophecy is palatable to people and it in turn exalts the prophet.

f) Teraphim

And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images (teraphim) that were her father's (Genesis 31:19).

And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest (Judges 17:5).

See Judges 18:14-20 and Hosea 3:4 for other references to the teraphim.

The teraphim was a counterfeit for the Urim and Thummim which the High Priest carried in his breastplate. The breastplate was a part of the High Priest's garments which he wore when he ministered in the Holy Place before the Ark of the Covenant.

And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually. And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually (Exodus 28:29,30).

The Ark rested in the Holy of Holies, and was screened from the Holy Place by a hanging curtain. In the breastplate, which was a square piece of linen of double thickness, were set twelve stones each representing one of the tribes of Israel. Inside the folded square breastplate were two mysterious stones called the Urim and Thummim.

These stones were carried on the heart of the Priest. The words *Urim* and *Thummim* actually mean lights and perfections, and it was these two stones which lit up the stones on the face of the breastplate when God's Word came forth from the Ark in the Holy of Holies. It was this phenomenal occurrence which confirmed God's mind to the people as the High Priest sought direction from the Lord.

To minister God's judgments to the people, the High Priest donned his priestly garments with the attached breastplate. He entered the Holy Place, stood by the Altar of Incense, and faced the curtain which hung between the Ark of the Covenant and the Altar of Incense. Then he enquired of the Lord in behalf of the people. For example, King David might have had the Priest ask, "Shall I go to battle against our enemies?" If this was God's will, God's voice came forth from the Ark, and when it reached the breastplate, the Urim and Thummim shone forth through the stones on the front confirming that it was God's voice that the High Priest was hearing. In this way the Priest could not be deceived by Satan's voice, for his voice would not cause the Urim and Thummim to light and flash. We can see, then, why the Devil's ministers had to counterfeit the Urim and Thummim. They used the teraphim to light up, or in some way imitate the flashing forth of the stones of the Urim and Thummim which they had set in their imitation breastplate worn by their priests.

3) Charms

The gods have power, power which they manifest through their ministers and through their weapons. We have been studying several of their weapons of enchantment and divination. Now we come to The study of another type of weapon—charms. Demons employ charms to deceive, and consequently dominate men's hearts. Charms consist of amulets, meaning little pillows. They were worn around the arm or carried superstitiously in the bosom to bring good luck, avert illness, or ward off evil influence, and even to forgive sins! Precious stones were credited with possessing tremendous power and influence upon people's lives during ancient times. The *Puranas* states, "the wearing of gemmed ornaments brings respect, fame, longevity, wealth, happiness, strength and fruition" and "over and above this, it wards off evil astral influence and makes the body healthy, removes misery and ill fortune, and washes away sin" (P. 601). It is almost too ridiculous to imagine that anyone, anytime in history could have such a perverted image of God that he would believe such nonsense. God is in all of His creation, but His power to forgive sins is not contained in a piece of stone. From the beginning God's provision for man's sin has been through blood—first through animal blood in the Old Testament which was the type and shadow of the shed Blood of Jesus Christ, and now through the fulfillment of those types by the experience of Calvary. Jesus' Blood atones for all sin, past, present, and future. Why could a stone not contain this power? It is because life is in the Blood, and death is in sin, and it takes life to overrule death. Leviticus 17:11 says, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." Death entered by sin (Romans 5:12). Sin and death are overcome by the Blood of Jesus Christ.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (I Corinthians 15:22).

Owning gems could be an easy way for some to find redemption, but for others it would mean no hope of obtaining forgiveness. Jesus told us to ask and believe and we would receive. He sets no price on His mercy. He gives it freely. We all have the same chance to have our sins forgiven.

What promises the Devil has made to people to deceive them! Another place in *the Puranas* states that, "he who worships Krishna with emeralds, attains wisdom" (P. 633). Satan knows that he does not have the power to impart divine wisdom. Fallen Lucifer's wisdom is a corrupt, perverted wisdom which only hinders us from receiving true wisdom. Paul said this in I Corinthians 3:19: "For the wisdom of this world (Lucifer's wisdom) is foolishness with God..." It is just that he wants to put himself in God's place, God seeks to fellowship man and lift him to such levels of wisdom and knowledge that communion between God and man will be possible. But the Devil desires men's hearts and souls simply to divert them from God. We are nothing to Satan. We cannot build up a lasting kingdom for him. Lucifer will be stripped of his glory one day. He is guilty and already sentenced. When the day of stripping comes, men will see the one (Lucifer) to whom they have given their praise for the small being that he truly is.

If we seek wisdom, we need to go to its source as James says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). God's wisdom cannot be gained from, nor contained in an emerald.

Down through the ages, as we can see from the *Puranas*, Lucifer has sought to deceive us and fill us with lies. Emeralds were supposed to be infallible cures for poison and snake bites. If a gem was mistreated, the user of the

gem was threatened with the wrath of the gods. For example, the *Puranas* also states, “whoever, O Earth, should foolishly place on thee the...emerald...shall verily live for ten thousand years in the hell called Kalsutra” (P. 599).

Earrings were also worn as charms. There is an incident related in the Old Testament which took place during Jacob’s lifetime that mentions earrings in connection with strange gods. Jacob was at Bethel for the second time. This was the place where he had spent the night as he was fleeing from Esau. He was apparently instructing his household concerning the worship of his God, since all of his servants who were returning with him were from Padan-aram and were idolaters. And now as he returned to the place where God had spoken to him face to face, he asked his household to bring him their false gods and their earrings. These earrings were charms or else Jacob would not have classed them with their gods. There are religious groups today who wear different emblems or medallions around their necks which they hope will bring them protection.

The word *charm* also means orator or prayer. It is amazing how our lives have been touched by superstitions that have been handed down to us by word of mouth. Fears of these charms have been put within us, into our minds. Fear accompanies charms. For example, there is the superstition that bad luck will strike if a black cat runs across our path. One person walks around a ladder, whereas another will be bold enough to walk right under it, disregarding the superstition that it will bring bad luck. These charms have come to us through oratory, having been handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. The spirit of fear opens the first door to demons and their influence over man’s mind and body.

Some charms represent prayer. Prayer chains (letters which come through the mail with promises of blessings or threats of a curse to the one who breaks the chain) are forms of charms. These charms are still very much a part of modern living, perhaps more than we realize. Christians should cast them aside, reject them, resist them by pleading the Blood of Jesus against them so that it can cleanse their minds of these things.

The Bride in the Song of Solomon says, “A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me; he shall he all night betwixt my breasts” (Song of Solomon 1:13). The Bride has given up the charms of the Devil and has received a fresh bundle from her beloved Bridegroom to place within her bosom. This bundle of humility (symbolized by the myrrh) of her Beloved filled the breast of her affections so that she no longer had to resort to the proud charms of the Devil.

For, behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, saith the LORD (Jeremiah 8:17).

We have all heard of snake charmers. In this passage of Scripture, Jeremiah gives the snake charmers a warning from the Lord. This was a message of God’s judgment, for He promised to send into their midst these creatures that could not be charmed.

Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely (Psalm 58:5).

And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards (Isaiah 19:3).

Demon possessed people use all kinds of charms. The following three are some of the main weapons that these ministers of the gods use: enchantments, divinations, and charms. We have mentioned just a few that the Word of God mentions. God would have had to have written a whole book were He to expose in detail all the various means and ways in which these demons work. This is sufficient for us to understand in part the ways in which the Devil works, and it makes us realize that his ministers do have power to work in strange and remarkable ways.

c. Sacrifices

Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them. And tookest thy brodered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them. My meat also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey, wherewith I fed thee, thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savour: and thus it was, saith the Lord GOD (Ezekiel 16:17-19).

Israel played the part of the harlot. She was guilty of literal fornications, making herself images, committing whoredoms with them. Notice the sacrifices Israel made to the gods. The oil that God had given them to burn in the Golden Candlestick in the Holy Place was set before their images. And the incense which God had provided for

them to use in the Holy Place was poured out on an idol in harlot worship, or sexual worship. And they sacrificed the meat offering and the bread offering with its oil and honey.

Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, That thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire for them? And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare, and wast polluted in thy blood (Ezekiel 16:20-22).

God said, “You have completely blotted me out of your mind as a nation.” They failed to remember the time that God brought them up out of Egypt. They forgot how God poured out His judgment upon the Egyptian gods, proving Himself to be God of gods and King of kings. God lifted Israel up to be a light and a blessing to all the nations of the world, but instead she fell into the same pit with them, practicing their idolatrous worship and licentious practices. Even “the daughters of the Philistines were ashamed of thy (Israel’s) lewd ways” (Ezekiel 16:27).

Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith. How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord GOD, seeing thou doest all these things, the work of an imperious whorish woman (Ezekiel 16:29,30).

Israel was insatiable in her lusts, as it is with an alcoholic, or with those given to other lusts of the flesh. They are insatiable in their desires because demons are on them, trying to use the bodies they possess to find satisfaction. Once these demons occupy a human life, there is no way to satisfy them, regardless of how they may indulge their appetites. Demons cannot be satisfied. This entire chapter in Ezekiel shows the extreme degree that these things reached. Israel heaped up her fornications, adulteries, and whoredoms, yet there was no satisfaction for her. This is a dreadful chapter of incrimination against God’s chosen people. God was justified in His anger when He said, “I will judge thee as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy” (Ezekiel 16:38).

Keep in mind, particularly in this chapter, how Israel took the very things that God provided for her to bring unto Him as offerings and sacrifices, and poured them out before her images. She took the oil, the meat, the flour, the honey, and desecrated them in this way. Demons (gods) have power to captivate the heart of men, and to bring men to the place of worshipping and sacrificing to them.

But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel (II Kings 16:3).

Here was the king of Judah making his own son pass through the fire. Demons controlled him so completely that he was willing to offer his own flesh and blood to pass through the fire in sacrificial offering.

And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim (II Kings 17:17 and 31).

And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger (II Kings 21:6).

This is speaking of King Manasseh, and notice again he offered the most precious thing he had to the gods, passing his son through the fire as a sacrifice to the gods. Normally, a parent would die for his child, but here demon power was so strong that these people sacrificed their children to their idols. Surely the Devil is a hard taskmaster, God never asks us to sacrifice our children in this fashion, but He desires us to present our children in dedication to Him so that they might grow up knowing and serving Him.

And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech. And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire (II Kings 23:10,11).

Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel (II Chronicles 28:3).

Ahaz also burnt his children in the fire. Think how completely possessed, and how powerfully controlled by the Devil a mind has to be to cause a human being to stand and watch his own child burn to death, not to speak of enjoying it and receiving a sense of satisfying worship from it.

And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger (II Chronicles 33:6).

That they have committed adultery, and blood is in their hands, and with their idols have they committed adultery, and have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass for them through the fire; to devour them. Moreover this they have done unto me: they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbaths. For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it; and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of mine house (Ezekiel 23:37-39).

After they had done horrible things, such as offering their sons to the gods by fire, they came into the house of God to worship and magnify Him. Beloved, can we say we are not guilty of somewhat the same thing today? Not that we offer human sacrifice unto idols, but we give ourselves to heathenish practices, fleshly indulgences, and worldly interests, and then come into the presence of God, into His house of worship, defiled and polluted. What an offense we are unto our holy and righteous God. There is little wonder that so much death rules and reigns in many church services today. Rather, we ought to conduct ourselves in such a manner every day that we will be sanctified and fit to enter into His presence with our praise and thanksgiving, coming as cleansed vessels before a Holy God.

Thus far in our study of the stature of truth pertaining to the power of the gods, we have seen their ministers, their weapons, and their sacrifices. Now we come to our fourth point, their worship.

d. Worship

Fallen Lucifer, God's arch-enemy and ours as well, has in his army spirits and devils, which are names used interchangeably in the Scriptures with the terms demons, fallen angels, and gods. These devils have power which is manifested through their ministers. Also we have studied their weapons and sacrifices. Now we shall see how this devilish power is manifested through the area of worship as well. Fallen Lucifer has power to make people worship him. Every human being, whether he is aware of it or not, is worshipping something. We either choose to be on God's side or on the Devil's side. We worship one or the other.

Let us digress for a moment and consider man and how he is made. God, being a threefold being, created man after His likeness and image; therefore, man is a threefold being in his nature (possessing a body, soul and spirit). In the third chapter of James, man's nature is likened unto a wheel. Passing through the body area, into the soul, and on into the spirit of man, are five channels of sense which proceed into the very heart of man. The heart is symbolized by the hub of a wheel, the channels of sense are pictured as the spokes of the wheel, and the will of man can be compared to the axel of the wheel that governs and directs the whole operation.

Man's sense of touch is symbolized by the hand, although we recognize the fact that the sense of touch is experienced over our entire body. When the sense of touch operates in the soul area, it is called affection. Through affection we touch one another; we touch our children; we touch those we love. When this channel of touch progresses into the spirit realm, it is called worship. God created the spirit of man for Himself. It was His intention to live within the heart and spirit of man, flowing out through the channels of the spirit, into the channels of the soul (the mind), and then into the channels of the body, thereby possessing and blessing the entire man. So God has given every man a sense of touch in his spirit, the ability to worship. This capacity for worship is not going to lie there inactive; it is inherent in our natures to worship something. If we fail to worship God, then we will fill that area with worship of other things or other persons. We see much of this misdirected worship today, for people are worshipping anything and everything but God Almighty. Communism, which flagrantly flaunts its atheism in the face of God, worships the god of materialism. Whatever we bow down to is what we worship, and what we worship has power to enslave us. If we worship God in heaven, He has power to make us his bond slave as well as the Devil who can make us his bond slave if we worship him, but God's is a servitude that blesses and exalts. We fulfill God's purpose in creating us when we worship Him.

Let us consider first what the word *worship* means. First of all, in Hebrew it means to show off. God gave us a

spirit equipped with a sense of worship that we might show off for Him—show forth His praises His glory, His magnification. Are we not commanded in the Word of God to lift up our hands; to come before the Lord with praise and thanksgiving; to make a joyful noise unto the Lord? We ought to count it a privilege to show off for Jesus with all the breath and strength that is in us. Surely there is enough showing off for the Devil these days. People show no reluctance in displaying which side they are on. But the Devil has bound God's people to the place that they are not even free enough in their spirits to worship God according to the commandments set down in His Word. The book of Psalms is particularly written for instruction in how to worship God. It is full of the demonstrations of the Spirit of God. Throughout the Psalms God manifests Himself through the worship channel of man, as man expresses his gratitude and praise in worshipful demonstrations before God. Showing off for Jesus is giving vent to the worship and adoration that fills the human heart of a redeemed child of God.

The word *worship* is also defined to depress, to prostrate, to bow yourself down, to fall flat, obeisance, reverence, stoop, humble, beseech. What a tremendous word is this.

Worship is both inward and outward. What a blessed position of worship it is to prostrate yourself physically before the Lord. How we need to bow down before Him, getting down on our knees in a position of humility and worship, outwardly demonstrating our inward posture before Him.

Certainly it is not for any of us to criticize another person when he assumes a lowly posture of worship before the Lord. Yet, there are those who are quick to ridicule the saints of God when they, in obedience to the Spirit of God, bow in humility before God, perhaps even prostrating themselves before Him. Surely we have all sensed the overwhelming presence of God so vividly that it made us stand still in awe and wonder, and in contrast to His goodness our unworthiness made us feel the need to prostrate ourselves in utter nothingness before God. True worship is found among the humble, not the proud and exalted. Worship implies obeisance, an act of humbling oneself to a higher authority, of submitting to one in a position of rulership. Worship is reverence toward God. Reverence is not necessarily silence, although one may be silently reverent. We can also reverence God by vocally praising Him. However, shouting the praises of God is meaningless if our hearts do not accompany the praises. There are those who make a religious fetish out of their loud hallelujahs, but such praise can have the sound of brass and the tinkling of cymbals if true worship is not in it. On the other hand, there are those who make silence a religious fetish, mistaking it for reverence when there is no true worship in it at all except cold, dead formalism. Whatever form our reverential worship may take, true worship requires that we bring our heart and our mind with it, or it is meaningless to God. It takes discipline to worship. Our minds are unruly and given to wandering thoughts, but as we apply ourselves to worship, we will learn how to reverence God.

True worship is humbling ourselves before God. Worship also means to beseech, which indicates an imploring type of prayer before His omnipotent presence. How amazing to think that our creatural worship is acceptable and pleasing to Almighty God! It is amazing but true, for St. John said, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:23).

It does not require very much spiritual discernment to sense that there are two forces at work in the world: the power of God and the power of the Devil. Christians use the channel of worship down in their spirit to worship the one true and living God, whereas the ungodly who use this same channel of worship to worship other gods, demons, or devils. Let us turn to some examples of both types of worship found in the Word of God.

They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt (Exodus 32:8).

While Moses tarried in the presence of God on Mount Sinai receiving the ten commandments written by God on the tables of stone, the people turned their hearts to mischief. Even though they had tasted of God's miraculous delivering power in the land of Egypt, and had watched God make a remarkable pathway of escape through the Red Sea, they returned in their hearts to the place of bondage from which the LORD had freed them and resumed their idol worship. This is not so difficult to believe, if we realize that there are demons and devils constantly watching to catch us off guard so that they can provoke us into thinking that God has deserted us. They are thieves trying to steal the worship that belongs to God. Soon we find the children of Israel stripped and naked, dancing in a frenzy before their golden calf. How typical of the Devil. Once he gets people to worship according to his will, they end up making fools of themselves. People will go to any extreme; nothing is too foolish for them to do while they are enslaved by the Devil and his idols.

Today our youth in particular seem to think that nothing is too extreme or ridiculous to wear. A few years ago a

young man would not have been caught dead in long curls, effeminate apparel, and all the other trappings that go along with the strange confusion of the sexes that we have today. Dirty, ragged, barefooted, immoral—anything goes. On the contrary, let a child of God be modestly dressed as becometh holiness, and he is open to all manner of mocking and scorning, often from the so-called Christian world.

We have seen so much of the mob frenzy, the near hysteria, the hero worship of our teen-agers in connection with the various rock groups and singers, that we barely are impressed with it anymore. It seems to be the norm rather than the extravagant emotionalism of hero worshippers. We have adjusted to the first shock of it all, and we more or less accept it now. But if God's people give vent to their joy in Him by dancing in the Spirit for instance, Christians look askance. All this is a clear indication of what we stated before that there are two forces at work in this old world of ours. Yesterday's standards were built on obedience to God's laws. Today's standards are built on rebellion against all laws.

And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent door (Exodus 33:10).

Here is an example of a time when the children of Israel were worshipping aright, worshipping the living God. Just how this worship was manifested we do not know. Whether their hands were upraised, whether they were shouting their praises, whether they were prostrated before the presence of God, we do not know, but we know that they were worshipping God.

And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; (Deuteronomy 17:3),

Again we find the children of Israel worshipping in the WRONG way. We find them worshipping the celestial bodies in heaven—the sun, moon and stars. They made gods of them, thus they worshipped created things instead of the Creator. This is another trick of the enemy. He causes man's mind to conceive all manner of things to worship, whether it is something ridiculous or not. Man seems to capitulate so easily, setting aside His worship of the true God. Minds are subject to the same satanic suggestions today, and we find people worshipping many strange things.

For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them: (Deuteronomy 29:26).

We make excuses for the heathen by reasoning that they know no better, but this passage in Deuteronomy records the unfaithfulness of God's CHOSEN people. These people knew God and His supernatural power; yet, we find that they worshipped strange gods, prostrating themselves and giving obeisance to other gods whom they did not know.

And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon Other gods, and have worshipped them and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil (I Kings 9:9).

Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father (I Kings 11:33).

And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him (I Kings 16:31).

For he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the LORD God of Israel, according to all that his father had done (I Kings 22:53).

The story is the same. From one generation to the other we find the children of Israel going awhoring, seeking strange gods, worshipping the gods of the heathen nations round about them. It is almost unbelievable that the eyes that had beheld the visible cloud and fire, and the glory cloud of God's presence among them, could turn away and choose to gaze with worshipful adoration upon images and idols created by the hands of mortal man.

It is equally incredible that our own nation is turning its back so readily upon its Christian heritage—turning from

the virtues and principles of the Christian faith that has built our nation into a great nation, choosing rather to worship at the shrines of Eastern mysticism and idols from the lands that we have sought to evangelize in the past. We are living in the last days when men have itching ears, loving not the truth, choosing to believe a delusion and a lie rather than the truth. This is a day that is rampant with seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.

And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger (II Kings 17:16,17).

For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them,,And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them: (II Kings 21:3-21).

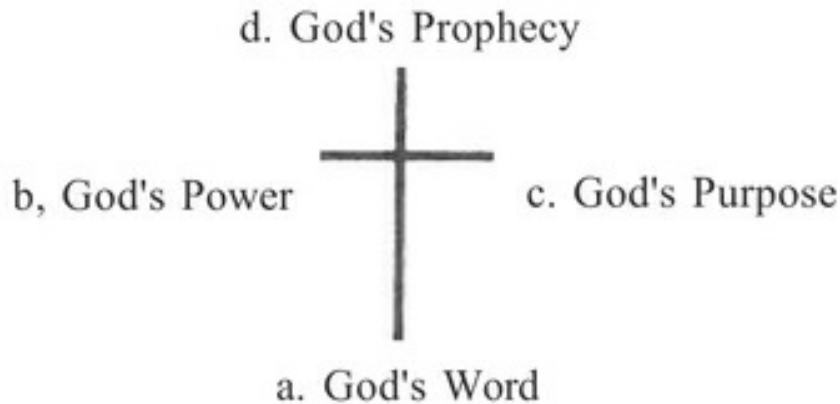
Such is the continual history of man. Though the reality of an infinite God is all around us, men choose to worship the works of their own hands. What we must keep in mind is that these idols which we set before ourselves carry power with them because they are the instruments used by demons, devils, and gods, to enslave the hearts and minds of men. In this way they rob God of his rightful worship from His own creation, “and channel man’s worship to fallen Lucifer instead.

We have studied the power of these gods, taking particular note of their ministers, their weapons, their sacrifices, and their worship. Let us now see what God’s attitude is toward all of this.

3. God’s Attitude Toward gods

Much space has been devoted to this subject in the Word of God that we might know just how much God hates for us to go after the things of the Devil, after other gods, demons, and evil spirits. Foreknowledge is an effective weapon against the works of the enemy both for offensive and defensive warfare. In II Timothy 3:16 we read that “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:” This assures us that all truth is profitable and is recorded for our benefit and use.

These, then, are the four ways in which God expresses His attitude toward strange gods:



1) Word of Judgment

There are four ways in which God said that He would judge the gods of the satanic realm of evil, but before we note these, let us see a few scriptures dealing in general with God’s Word of judgment.

Fori will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD (Exodus 12:12).

Here the Word of God was spoken forth in judgment against all the gods of Egypt. In particular, He was speaking judgment upon the demons that were upon the ministers and their weapons which were instrumental in turning the

rods of the magicians into serpents, the water into blood, and in the calling up of the frogs upon the land. We must realize that the satanic world possesses power, and it is not for us as Christian believers to discredit or belittle it,-We have a formidable foe who is able to strike at us in many ways, yet he is limited in his power, and he is already a defeated enemy. Jesus' triumph over death, hell and the grave purchased a one-way ticket to the lake of fire for Lucifer.

Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods (Exodus 7:11,12).

And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments:...(Exodus 7:20-22).

And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt (Exodus 8:6,7).

The magicians were able to produce blood and frogs, but there the power of their enchantments ceased. Moses continued in the presence of Pharaoh to work all manner of miraculous judgments upon the Egyptians according to the Word of the LORD. The next judgment was the turning of the dust into lice.

...for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not; so there were lice upon man, and upon beast. Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said (Exodus 8:17-19).

Then followed the flies, the murrain which smote all the beasts of the land, the boils, the hail, the locusts, the thick darkness, and finally the plague that brought death to all the firstborn of Egypt.

For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments (Numbers 33:4).

Notice the exactness of the Word of God, for there were judgments (plural) executed against the gods of Egypt. Ten times God's Word was loosed in judgment upon the gods of Egypt. It took all these plagues before Pharaoh surrendered to the LORD and permitted God's people to make their exodus from Egypt.

But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce upon you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it (Deuteronomy 30; 17,18).

When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you (Joshua 23:16).

Again and again God's Word came forth bearing the message of judgment against the gods of Egypt. With the Word of judgment came warnings to the children of Israel, lest they should forget their God and begin to serve the heathen gods around them. The LORD clearly stated that worshipping other gods would bring His denouncement; terminate His covenant with them; give them a bill of divorce; shorten their days in the land; the anger of the LORD would be upon them; and they would perish. Did He not reveal Himself to Moses as a jealous God, and rightly so? "For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:" (Exodus 34:14). He is not about to share His worship with the demon cohorts of fallen Lucifer.

If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good (Joshua 24:20).

God made His warning clear to Israel. Whereas it was His intended purpose to bless and enrich His people as they

walked in obedience before Him. If they turned away from Him to worship and serve other gods, then the God who intended good would reverse the order and work judgments of evil upon them. This explains why some of God's people languish under all manner of afflictions and problems. This same thought is projected in I Corinthians 11 in connection with the partaking of communion when one eats the bread and drinks the cup unworthily: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." In other words, we must precede our eating of His body and our drinking of His Blood with a time of self judgment lest we drink and eat unworthily: "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation (judgment) to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (I Corinthians 11:28-30). God is a jealous God, and we cannot cheat on Him and get away with it. How definitely He has spoken His Word of judgment against serving and worshipping other gods.

Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you (Judges 2:3).

If the children of Israel refused to obey God, then He would withdraw His protection from them, and the heathen tribes that were on every hand would administer God's judgment upon them; they would be as thorns in their side. When we refuse to walk in God's way, He withdraws His protecting care and love from us, and permits us to go in our own self-willed way. His judgment, then, is fulfilled, for the way of our choice becomes our rod of punishment, our whip of chastisement, our implement of judgment.

But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people:...And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them this evil (I Kings 9:6-9).

King Solomon had finished building the house of the LORD when the LORD appeared to him at Gibeon to make a covenant with him. God was pleased with Solomon's work and stated, "mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually." He continued His promise to establish the throne of Solomon upon Israel for ever, but with the promises came warnings. If Israel turned to worshipping other gods, He would cut them off out of the land He had given them.

Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched (II Chronicles 34:25).

God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods (Psalm 82:1).

They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, that Ye are our gods (Isaiah 42:17).

And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands (Jeremiah 1:16).

God stands in the congregation of the mighty and judges among all the gods. When His wrath is poured out it will not be quenched. God's just judgment is sure; there is no escaping it. Israel did not escape it in her time, nor shall we. When we worship our gods (gods of materialism, gods of lust, gods of ambition, gods of success, gods of pleasure, gods of human affections) we, too, shall know God's judgment. He has spoken His Word of judgment, and His Word is forever fixed and settled.

Because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incense, and to serve other gods, whom they knew not, neither they, ye, nor your fathers, Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh do not this abominable thing that I hate. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto other gods. Wherefore my fury and mine anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted and desolate, as at this day (Jeremiah 44:3-6).

The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saith; Behold, I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods, and their kings; even Pharaoh, and all them that trust in him: And I will deliver them into the hand of those that seek their lives, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of his servants: and afterward it shall be inhabited, as in the days of old, saith the LORD (Jeremiah 46:25,26).

Moreover I will cause to cease in Moab, saith the LORD, him that offereth in the high places, and him that burneth incense to his gods.,,Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the LORD. Thus far is the judgment of Moab (Jeremiah 48:35,47).

The LORD will be terrible unto them: for he will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen (Zephaniah 2:11).

God will be terrible. His anger rages hot and furiously against the worship of other gods. It is the mouth of the LORD that pleads, “Oh do not this abominable thing that I hate” (Jeremiah 44:4). God is a God of love, seeking to bless all men. This is His directive will and primary purpose, but man’s deliberate choice against Him leaves Him no choice but to judge and to punish. The God of love can be terrible in His anger. We read in Hebrews concerning Him, “For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, the Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:30,31).

There is a small stature of truth on how God punished His people when they turned from Him to worship and serve idols.

d) God Punished by a Curse

b) God Punished by the Sword

c) God Punished by Stoning

a) God Punished by Fire

a) God Punished by Fire

And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses’ anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it (Exodus 32:19,20).

This Scripture takes us to the time when Moses met the LORD on Mount Sinai to receive the law for the nation of Israel. There was a preparation before this great event. Let us just refresh our memories with a few Scriptures: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee...” (Exodus 19:9). “And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai” (Exodus 19:11). “And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God...” (Exodus 19:16,17).

All this preceded Moses’ stay on the mount; then as Moses tarried in the mount, the people turned from the living God to worship the golden calf which was the work of their own hands. As a result God’s righteous anger was kindled against them, and Moses was commanded to burn the idol, grind it up, and compel the people to drink their god that it might pass out into the draught. This was God’s judgment-FIRE!

The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger. Do they provoke me to anger? saith the LORD: do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces? Therefore thus saith the LORD God; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched (Jeremiah 7:18-20).

God's anger is a fiery anger which will burn, and it will not be quenched. When we understand this, we can better understand why God is going to be so angry during the tribulation period when the anti-Christ enthrones himself as God in the temple in Jerusalem and the Jews worship him. This is why, in that day of God's great wrath and judgment, He will send fire from heaven to consume and to destroy.

And the Chaldeans, that fight against this city, shall come and set fire on this city, and burn it with the houses, upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal, and poured out drink-offerings unto other gods, to provoke me to anger (Jeremiah 32:29).

And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt; and he shall burn them, and carry them away captives: and he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd putteth on his garment; and he shall go forth from thence in peace. He shall break also the images of Bethshemesh, that is in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire (Jeremiah 43:12,13).

Here are two more examples of how God metes out His judgment upon idol worship by means of fire. Their very altars and their gods were to be burned with fire. We know, also, that in the end at the consummation of all things, God is going to cast the Devil and all of his army into the lake of fire, which will burn with fire and brimstone for all eternity,

b) God Punished by the Sword

...Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men (Exodus 32:25-28).

Again we are back to the sin of Israel in forming and worshipping the golden calf. Once more Israel is given a choice: "who is on the LORD's side?" All the sons of the tribe of Levi quickly stepped over by Moses, indicating that their choice was the living God. The Levites' choice in this instance caused God to choose the tribe of Levi for the priesthood. Their first duty was to administer God's judgment against the idol worshippers in the camp. Death came by the sword. Throughout the camp they went, sparing none of the guilty whether they were kinsfolk, friend, or neighbor. The guilty must die by the sword.

Our circumstances may not be as dramatic as theirs, but we still must make the same choice that was given to Israel that day. We, too, must decide who is on the LORD's side. If we make God and God's will our choice, we must suffer the sword of God's judgment in our personal *camp*, for the Sword of the Word will be unsheathed to smite the idols and the gods of our flesh.

And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel (Numbers 25:7,8).

On this occasion Israel lived in Shittim, and they had compromised God's law by joining themselves to the daughters of Moab and entering into the worship of their gods; "And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel." Along with their idol worship came adultery and fornication, and soon God's anger began to burn among them, and God sent a plague which took the lives of 24,000 people before it was stayed. However, Phinehas was zealous for God, and when he saw an Israelite lay with a Midianitish woman in the very sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle, he took the javelin (a little longer than a sword) and executed judgment immediately. He thrust the javelin through them both and the plague was stayed.

How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses...And it shall come to pass, when ye shall say, Wherefore doeth the LORD our God all these things unto us? then shalt thou answer them, Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not yours (Jeremiah 5:7-19).

After God had graciously fed them to the full and supplied all their needs, they expressed their gratitude to Him by going to harlots' houses and committing adultery. This was no occasional sin, for it says that they "assembled themselves by troops" in the whorehouses. God had brought them through the wilderness into Canaan's land, the land flowing with milk and honey, Beulah land, marriage land. If they were not going to stay in union with Him and walk under His headship and serve Him, then God was not going to allow them to stay in the bountiful land of promise. If they chose strange gods in preference to the LORD their God, then He would thrust them forth out of Canaan's land, and send them out as captives to serve others in a strange land.

Just as surely, we will not be allowed to live in God's land of promised blessings and abundant supply, while we give ourselves in spiritual adultery, and join ourselves to other gods. In judgment, He will also thrust us forth from that blessed relationship with Him and we will be taken captive and forced into servitude-not literally, but spiritually speaking. We see those who once really knew the joy of the presence and blessing of the Lord in their lives, walking in bondage and darkness, enslaved to the masters of their own choice, void and empty, bound and desolate, bewildered and confused.

Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents;.. And the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah, shall be defiled as the place of Tophet, because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burned incense unto all the host of heaven, and have poured out drink offerings unto other gods (Jeremiah 19:4-13).

God said, because you have poured out drink offerings and defiled your houses, I will let the enemy come in and defile your houses by way of judgment. This same principle applies spiritually to us today. If we insistently walk in continual disobedience and sin, defiling our temple (our body), then the Lord will withdraw His hand from us, and the devils will move in and take over. One cause of severe mental problems suffered by some of God's people is that they have defiled their temples and opened themselves to the evil, wicked spirits and demons that inhabit this world.

Tophet was judged by fire, so the judgment spoken of in this Scripture was a similar judgment to that of Tophet. Tophet was a place in the valley of Hinnom where the Israelites had passed their children through the fire while worshipping the god Molech. It was here that all their filth and refuse was cast out and burned. This made a perpetual fire, therefore, it depicted the fires of hell.

Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them (Jeremiah 22:9).

And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no hurt. Yet ye have not hearkened unto me saith the LORD; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt. Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words, Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations (Jeremiah 25:6-9).

Because Israel had broken her covenant with God and given herself to strange worship, God was going to use Nebuchadrezzar, a heathen king, as His servant to execute His judgment upon them. They were to be stripped to the ground, leveled and made desolate by fire, and were to be made the laughing stock of other nations. Perpetual desolation! That is precisely what happened. Jerusalem was destroyed; Israel was dispersed and carried away into captivity. As God had said, "You do all this to your own hurt."

c) God Punished by Stoning

We saw earlier in our study that the gods have weapons of warfare, but thank God, so does our God, and His are mighty; "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds" (II Corinthians 10:4). We have seen His weapons of fire and of the sword. God's judgment is meted out by

burning and cutting down. He also uses the weapon of stoning. During the tribulation God will move in judgment, unleashing the hail stones of His punishment upon the peoples of the earth. He will also employ the fire and the sword. First, let us retrace Israel's history in connection with stoning.

And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel (Numbers 25:14).

Although it is not specifically stated in this portion of Scripture, we know that the Hebrews practiced stoning as a public demonstration of God's righteous anger against them for their sin of worshipping other gods.

Israel's sin becomes even more despicable when we realize how carefully and thoroughly they were warned against this very sin by the LORD Himself. Again and again God spoke warnings to them, yet they fell into the Devil's baited trap, and God had no recourse but to move in anger and judgment against His chosen people.

And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish (Deuteronomy 8:19).

When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land; Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it (Deuteronomy 12:29-32).

Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God any bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, or any evil-favouredness: for that is an abomination unto the LORD thy God. If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant, And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel: Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die. At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you (Deuteronomy 17:1 -7).

Clearly, death by stoning was the Hebrew law for the crime of going after other gods and worshipping them. Adultery was also punishable by stoning. Worshipping false gods was the sin of spiritual adultery and fornication, and because of the adulterous spirits that rested upon these images, natural adultery and fornication accompanied spiritual adultery.

d) God Punished by a Curse

Both natural and spiritual adultery were punishable by a curse as well. If a husband had cause to accuse his wife of adultery, then he was to bring her before the priest where she was required to drink of the "bitter water." If she were guilty, the curse came upon her, because the water carried a curse or a blessing. If the woman drank a curse, her belly began to swell and her thigh rot. She was guilty. If she were not guilty, the water carried a blessing, and she conceived and brought forth a child. The sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel likens Israel's whoredom, idolatry, and adultery to a woman that has broken wedlock (vs. 38). We see, then, that the sin of worshipping other gods was judged by God with the same judgment as a woman who had broken wedlock-the judgment of the curse.

And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known (Deuteronomy 11:28);

For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them: And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book (Deuteronomy 29:26,27).

Desiring to bless and enrich His people, the LORD spoke numerous times of the multitudes of blessings He would give to them if they walked obediently and kept His commandments. However, God's blessings were contingent upon Israel's obedience. Disobedience brought curses instead of blessings.

Then shalt thou say unto them, Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith the LORD, and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my law; And ye have done worse then your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me, Therefore will I cast you out of this land into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night; where I will not shew you favour (Jeremiah 16:11-13).

I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me. Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them; but this people hath not hearkened unto me: Therefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them: because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered. And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you: Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever (Jeremiah 35:15-19).

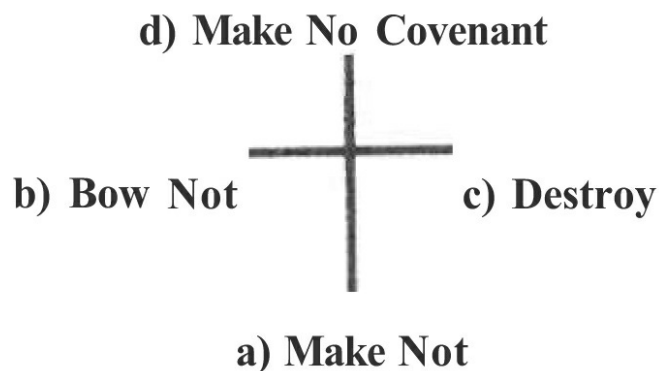
Thus God pronounced a curse on those who went after other gods, or a blessing for those who went after the Lord. Those who were faithful like the Rechabites were blessed.

This concludes the study of the stature on God's punishment in relationship to the sin of worshipping other gods. God spoke His judgment on spiritual and natural unfaithfulness. His Word said to punish the guilty by fire, by the sword, by stoning, and by a curse.

Under the point of God's Word on the stature of God's Attitude in regard to the sin of worshipping other gods, we will now consider the second point which is God's Command.

2) Command

God gave ample warning of His judgment in the matter of idol worship, and He also gave specific command. Certainly God has not left us ignorant concerning His feelings in these things. There is a small stature of truth about His command.



a) Make Not

Four specific things were commanded by God regarding the worshipping and serving of false gods. First, He commanded that they MAKE NOT! Had Israel listened to what God said in the first place, they would never have fallen into the trouble that they did.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above,

or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: (Exodus 20:3,4).

We should not yield to the suggestions of the Devil when he comes to provoke our imaginations in order to bring about the fashioning of an idolatrous image. Why does the Devil want images made in the first place? It is because once an image is made, a spirit inhabits it and begins to attract the veneration of a human heart. Knowing this, God stated clearly and concisely-DO NOT MAKE IMAGES!

b) Bow Not

Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me (Deuteronomy 5:9).

Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them (Deuteronomy 11:16).

If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth...Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known (Deuteronomy 13:6-13).

The Devil seeks to entice us away from the path of TRUE worship of the TRUE GOD, using even those nearest and dearest to us. Yet, the Lord said pay no heed to them, resist them, lest you fall into a trap and come under my judgment. We are not to bow down in worship to any idol, nor to anything apart from the one true and living God.

And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them (Deuteronomy 28:14).

Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood (Deuteronomy 29:18).

God says, if you go after other gods, you will bear their gall and wormwood-their bitterness. God not only said to not make gods, nor to bow down to them, He said to destroy them!

c) Destroy

Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images (Exodus 23:24),

God commanded Israel to destroy the images and the gods of the Canaanites when she came into Canaan's land. By failing to do so, Israel left the door open to trouble and sin, and brought God's righteous judgment and wrath upon herself. God knew that Israel could not dwell as co-habitants in the land with idols, without the demons who empowered the idols alluring the children of Israel into idolatry. Failure to hear and obey God's Word always leads us into trouble, and so it did Israel.

Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place (Deuteronomy 12:2,3).

But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee: That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God (Deuteronomy 20:17,18).

Israel was commanded to destroy these heathen nations, to break down their images, and to destroy their places of worship, but she failed to obey the Lord, This was a spiritual warfare with eternal stakes. Naturally, when we touch other people's idols, we incur their wrath, so we had better gird up our loins and expect to fight. The reward for

obedience is worth fighting for. Either we do it God's way and win, or we choose our own way and lose. Israel did things her own way and lost,

d) Make No Covenant

Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee (Exodus 23:32,33).

Make no covenant with them—no compact, no confederacy, no league. At first glance this may seem harsh, but these heathen tribes were so thoroughly polluted and defiled that there was no choice except to remove them from the land, or their pollution would soon contaminate everyone else. Remove the one rotten apple from the barrel or lose all the apples. Sever the corrupt and decayed member or poison the body and lose the whole being. Discard the reject or weaken and lose the whole structure. This is true with tangible things in this life, and with the intangible things of the spirit. We must separate ourselves from the things that the Devil has touched, for he does not easily let go of that which he has once possessed. Had Israel obeyed the commandments of the Lord, she would have been the implement of God's judgment upon the people who justly deserved it. Concerning this the Word says:

Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land i' self vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;) That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you (Leviticus 18:24-28).

How sad that in spite of all the instruction that Israel received, she still did not obey the commandment of the Lord. She was in the land only a short time when she, too, began to make herself idols, to bow down in worship, and to form alliances with the heathen tribes in the land.

Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous god. Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go awhoring after their gods. Thou shalt make thee no molten gods (Exodus 34:12-17).

How insidiously the enemy works. Before Israel knew it, there were intermarriages, then they began to eat together at then-sacrifices, and little by little, they became ensnared. Would to God that we all would take heed to the Word of God. The Word will keep us out of trouble, and it will keep us from straying very far away from the pathway of truth.

God definitely states His mind on this matter of idols and images. These gods (devils) are empowered and possessed by wicked and evil spirits of devils.

We have studied God's Word of judgment upon idol worshippers: by fire, by sword, by stoning, and by cursing. We have also listed His Word of commandment to Israel concerning worshipping false gods which was: make no images, bow not to them, destroy them, and to make no covenant with heathen people. In addition to God's Word of commandment, He has also spoken the Word of subjection.

3. Subjection to Word of God

Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people (Exodus 22:28).

God's Word tells us not to revile the gods, the satanic workers of the Devil. To *revile* means to make light of, trifling, easy, vile, abate, bring into contempt, curse, despise. This does not mean that we are to respect the Devil and his cohorts in the sense of esteeming them worthy of favor, for they are not worthy of any such respect, but we are to recognize the Devil for who he is, and also recognize who we are, and who God is. With all this in mind, we will keep the right perspective, and we will not negate or underestimate our enemy.

Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending

with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee (Jude 1:8,9).

It is our right to rebuke the enemy with everything that is in us. We are taught in the Word to resist the Devil, and he will flee from us. We must, of necessity, contend with our enemy, but we are not to come against him with a railing spirit, a despiteful and reviling spirit. Even Michael, the archangel of heaven, contended and disputed with the Devil, but he did not come with a railing spirit. Our spirit, our attitude, has to be one of reviling in order for us to revile someone. By allowing this spirit to remain on us, we open the door for the Devil to enter our hearts.

And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? (Zechariah 3:1,2),

Even the Lord did not use a reviling spirit when He rebuked the Devil. He did not say, “You ugly devil, you just wait until I get through with you. You are going to literally burn in hell...” No, He said, “The LORD rebuke thee.” We must learn to subject our spirits to the Word of God so that we will have the right attitude when we come against our adversary. We cannot come against the Devil with fleshly rebuke, for only the rebuking power of the Holy Ghost working through our spiritual man will prevail against the enemy.

4) Restraint

And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect; and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth (Exodus 23:13).

The Word of God teaches us God’s attitude toward the gods; His Judgment, His Commandments, Subjection to the Word, and finally Restraint. We are not so much as to make mention of other gods. Some people get into trouble because they converse about wrong things. If we persist in talking about certain types of things, we are soon open to the spirits that light upon that kind of conversation. This is why the Lord exhorts us in Ephesians 5:11,12, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.” For example, when an individual talks only of sex, obviously this is what is on his mind, and it is this sort of conversation that devils light upon. Devils and demons feed on talk of that nature. Another example is a person who persists in speaking critically. Demons of criticism light upon this kind of conversation, and with demons directing one’s thinking, the individual only sees things to criticize on every hand. It does not take long for a person’s nature to conform to the demon’s image of faultfinding. Then criticizing becomes a characteristic of that person. This continual pattern of behavior indicates demon activity. We are, therefore, exhorted to restrain our conversation.

How much better it is to keep our conversation centered on the Lord. God will keep such an one in perfect peace, because his mind is stayed on the Lord. Furthermore, the Word says, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psalm 1:1,2).

That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them: (Joshua 23:7).

“...neither make mention of the name of their gods....” Some fill their conversation with complaining, moaning, and groaning, little realizing that they are bringing reproach upon God while magnifying the work of the Devil. When we rehearse negative things, telling the details of spiritual battles and dwelling on the enemy’s power, we draw attention to the Devil rather than to God. Many people develop a hypersensitivity to the world of evil spirits by letting their minds continually dwell in this realm instead of letting their minds be permeated with the life and love and presence of Jesus.

On the stature of God’s attitude toward strange gods, we have now concluded the first point which included the stature: God’s judgment of false gods; what His commandments are regarding them; how we are to be in subjection to God’s Word of warning about them; and the restraint we are to practice in dealing with the Devil. All these points explain God’s attitude toward idol worship. However, these studies cover only the first point (God’s Word) on the stature of His Attitude. Let us proceed to point two as we study God’s Power and see what His attitude is.

b. God's Power

Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? (Exodus 15:11)

What a wonderful question to ask ourselves! Sometimes we become discouraged and forget in whom we are really trusting and confiding. Our God is glorious in the innate power of holiness and in righteousness. There is great power in holiness and in righteousness. No demon can stand up and say its holiness approaches the holiness of our God.

Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them (Exodus 18:11).

These were the words of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, as he rejoiced over the goodness of the Lord in having delivered Israel out of Egypt and from the hand of Pharaoh. The Egyptians had dealt proudly with the Israelites in certain things, and it was in these very things that God proved His greatness of power in the sight of all men. The Egyptians were exalted with pride over their greatness, but God defeated them in all their greatness. Surely the LORD is greater than them all!

For the LORD your God is God of gods, and the Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward (Deuteronomy 10:17).

We cannot buy God's favor. It is His grace not our goodness that makes us worthy to stand before Him. If we could only get a picture engraved on our minds of how we will appear before God stripped of all that man values. Great wealth, fame, great acts of charity-make a list of man's achievements and mark them off one by one as inconsequential if our building of these things has not been founded on gratitude and thanksgiving to God for His goodness, His power and His might. When we leave this world, it will be our relationship to God that counts, not our relationship to this world or anything in it.

Let us not lose sight of His mighty power. We face the onslaught of demon power in ever increasing intensity as we move toward the end of this age; nevertheless, we need not fear for our God is great. He is mighty. He is terrible in power!

And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: ye have not obeyed my voice (Judges 6:10).

The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the LORD, (save us not this day.) (Joshua 22:22).

Here we see God's power of knowledge, for the Lord is a Lord of lords, and He is above all gods, all demons, devils, serpents, and dragons. Praise the Lord! He is omniscient in power. Nothing can be hidden from the power of His knowledge. And because God knows, Israel, who is a type of the spiritual man, shall also know. God's people are an enlightened people. God dwells in light, and those who continue to walk on with Him walk in light and understanding. Though we live in the midst of the gods of this world, we need not fear if we are walking in obedience to His precious voice.

And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods, And the Philistine said "David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied (1 Samuel 17:43-45).

This is the *warrior* God, the LORD OF HOSTS. The Devil has his army, but how weak it is in comparison to the mighty power of our God. How ridiculously frail and audacious David must have appeared that day. He was only a stripling, a mere lad, yet he came forth as though the mighty Goliath was nothing but a little dog. Undaunted by the fearsome giant who towered over him, spewing out his disdainful threats, David proceeded with confidence. Did he not come in the Name of the LORD OF HOSTS? What simplicity of faith! What a challenge to our hearts!

And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name,

and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? (II Samuel 7:23).

God is more powerful than the gods of Egypt, He redeemed Israel from the Egyptian gods. We need have no fear of the gods, the devils, the demons, or the evil spirits that surround us in our world today, for our God is greater than all of them. This is God's attitude concerning His power: it is more than sufficient; more than adequate; it supersedes our greatest need or our deepest understanding.

And the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods (II Chronicles 2:5).

For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised: he also is to be feared above all gods (I Chronicles 16:25).

We need fear only one thing. In spite of the increasing influence and pressure of anti-Christ demons and spirits these days, we need not fear these gods, but rather we need to fear the true and living God. With this reverential fear of God surrounding our hearts, we will walk carefully and softly before His presence, ever seeking to please Him and to do His will.

Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? (II Kings 18:33).

These were the mocking words of Rab-shakeh which were intended to destroy the confidence and faith of the Jews as they looked to God for their deliverance from the siege of Sennacherib, king of Assyria. He sought to counteract Hezekiah's expectancy, for Hezekiah believed that God was able to deliver them.

Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand: Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria (II Kings 18:29,30).

And then Rab-shakeh proceeded to ask the question, "Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?" Did the gods of Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, Hena, or Ivah deliver them? None of these gods had sufficient power to deliver their devotees from the hand of the mighty Assyrian king, so how could these Jews expect their God to deliver them?

Comparing gods (demons, devils) with the true God, Jehovah, is ridiculous. These gods have some power it is true, but their power is ineffectual compared to the omnipotent power of Jehovah God. True, the gods of the other nations had failed, but the LORD in whom the Jews put their trust never failed and never will fail.

Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria...! will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh (II Kings 19:32-36).

This is a beautiful illustration of the attitude of our God in relation to His power over other gods. It transcends the limited ability and power of all of the others.

...for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD. In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing (II Kings 5:17,18).

These Scriptures relate to Naaman's experience of healing. His gods were unable to cure him of his leprosy, but a faithful little Jewish servant who lived in his house spoke up, telling him that there was a prophet in Israel who knew the true God who could heal him. We know the story well. Finally Naaman humbled himself and obeyed the words of the Prophet Elisha, dipping himself seven times in the River Jordan, "...and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant (II Kings 5:15).

Elisha refused the offered reward, as a true prophet of God would have, for he knew this was the miraculous work

of God and not his. Naaman realized also that his gods had not been able to heal him, but that the God in heaven, the God of Israel, had wrought this mighty deliverance for him. He assured Elisha that from then on he would worship no other gods, but offer his burnt offerings and sacrifices only unto the LORD, (Naaman wanted it to be clear that in having to fulfill an obligation to assist his master into the house of his gods, and having to help him bow down in no way indicated that he, Naaman, was bowing in worship to any other god.)

This is just another example of the mighty power of God in contrast to the impotency of gods who are limited and inferior in power and authority to the God of gods.

And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God, And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken (I Kings 18:24).

On this occasion, the prophets of Baal and the prophets of the groves having gathered together on mount Carmel, Elijah appeared before them to challenge the people: "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." Elijah was willing to put his God to the test. The 450 prophets of Baal accepted his challenge and prepared their sacrificial bullock. Elijah dressed his bullock, laid it on the wood, and said: "Call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." The prophets of Baal called on their god from morning until noon. The answer was silence. So they cried aloud, cutting themselves with knives and lancets until the blood gushed out upon them. Midday passed. They continued to prophesy, yet by the time of the evening sacrifice offering, there was still no voice, no answer, no response.

To make it all the more impressive, Elijah poured four barrels of water upon his sacrifice—one, two, three, four times until the water ran round about the altar. Then he filled the trench around the altar with water, too. At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice Elijah said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel...Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou has turned their heart back again." The fire of the LORD fell! It consumed the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the dust. Its fiery tongue even licked up the water in the trench. The people fell on their faces crying out, "The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God."

Surely He is great and His power is mighty. What a privilege to worship and serve the living God!

Among the gods there is none liken unto thee, O LORD: neither are there any works like unto thy works (Ps. 86:8)

For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods (Ps. 95:3).

For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens (Ps. 96:4,5).

Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him all ye gods. Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD. For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods (Ps. 97:7-9).

Our LORD is a great God. He is above all gods, all devils, demons and fallen angels. He is sovereign in power and majesty. All other gods are mere idols, whereas the LORD created the very heavens. In Psalm 97 the LORD commands that all gods worship Him. If graven images were only pieces of wood, metal, and granite, how then, could the Lord command them to worship Him? The command is directed not to the visible idol but to the spirits that inhabit that image. The spirits are to bow in worship and acknowledgment of God's deity and power.

For I know that the LORD is great, and that our LORD is above all gods (Ps. 135:5).

O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever (Ps. 136:2).

This, then, is God's attitude- in respect to His power as compared to the world of gods. How great, indeed, is our God, for He excels all other gods in power and glory.

c. God's Purpose

Next let us consider God's purpose which also reflects His attitude toward gods. God's purpose is that of proving men. God takes the very thing that the Devil intends for destruction and evil, and uses this to work for Him to prove the hearts of men. Jesus used the Devil to prove what was in the hearts of people. For example, when He healed the demon possessed man of the Gadarenes, they failed to rejoice in the man's deliverance. Instead, they begged Jesus to leave their country, for their pigs had been drowned in the sea, and their financial loss meant more to them than the work of God in their midst. Evil and anti-God demons, though bent on resisting the works of God, are used by God in fulfilling His purpose to prove the hearts of men.

If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul (Deuteronomy 13:1-3).

Why does God permit demoniac activities, and the prophesying ministry of false prophets who are demon inspired to continue? He allows it so that people might be proven. Will people follow the Word of God, taking heed to the Lord's admonitions and warnings, or will they choose to hear and follow these false ones? If the Lord never did permit the Devil and his army to come against us, we would never know what it is to be a soldier, what it is to fight for the truth. We would not know whether we had any real substance of loyalty and obedience to the Word of God in us. As the Apostle James stated, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations (various trials and testings)" for this proving works many good things in our behalf.

But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him (Deuteronomy 18:20-22).

We need not fear presumptuous prophecy. Beloved, if we are walking sincerely with God, and if we are earnestly endeavoring to follow the Word and to live under the precious Blood of Jesus, meanwhile yielding our lives daily to the will of God to the best of our ability, then we need not fear anything. Regardless of what someone may prophesy against us, it will never come to pass if we are truly and sincerely walking with God. Although others may not approve of our walk, they have no power to call down judgment upon us. Presumptuous prophets often speak judgment upon others, assuming the government over the lives of others, but these presumptuous prophecies carry no weight with God whatsoever. Such prophecies should drive us closer to God, proving again the realities of God which constitute the spiritual substance within us.

d. God's Prophecy

In our study of gods, we are on the third point; that of God's attitude in regard to gods. We have seen His Word, His Power, His Purpose, and now we shall see His Prophecy concerning this matter of gods. Even though God prophesied warnings to the children of Israel, they failed to heed them.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned into other gods. Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant (Deuteronomy 31:16-20).

Our greatest spiritual danger is not when we are down and struggling, but when we are fat and prosperous. It is then that we become lethargic and relaxed, thinking that we have become self-sufficient. After the children of Israel made it into Canaan's land, as God had prophesied, they relaxed and sat down. They became dull of heart and mind,

waxing great in their own eyes. This sleepy, relaxed, fattened sort of attitude is a very vulnerable one to the temptations and attacks of the Devil, In this state it is easy to grow careless and to backslide on God.

They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not...And he shall say, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted (Deuteronomy 32:16,1737).

Israel forsook their God after He had so graciously brought them through the rigors of the wilderness journey. They were home at last in the promised land, the land flowing with milk and honey, but here they turned their backs on God and brought their sacrifices and worship to strange gods, to devils. Understandably, Israel soon found herself in all kinds of trouble, and in the face of her dilemma God asked them, "Where are your gods now? where is the rock you trusted in?" No longer were they under the loving and protecting power of Jehovah God; they stood naked and stripped, helplessly exposed to the evil forces of the gods, the demons, the devils. What a poor exchange indeed!

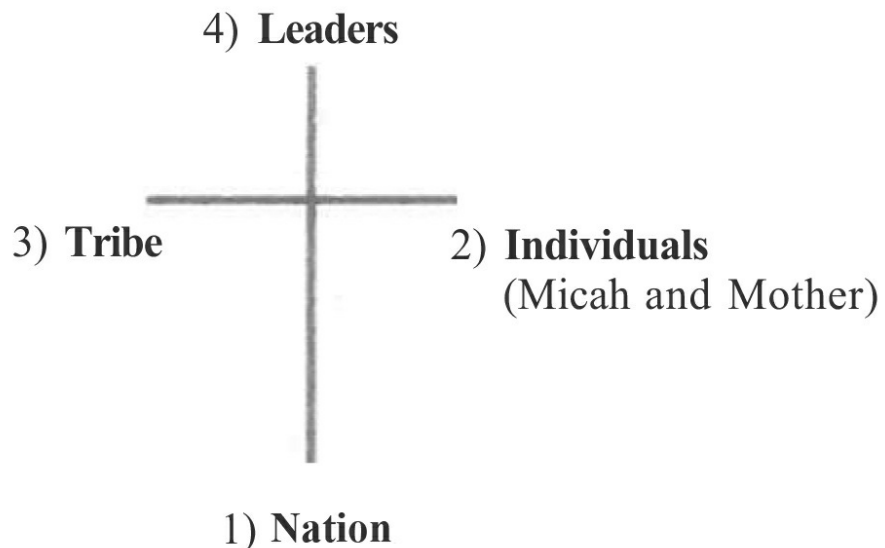
4. Man's Choice

In our study of the gods we have seen their Images, their Power, God's Attitude concerning them, and now we shall study our fourth point, Man's Choice. To *choose* implies the exercise of judgment in settling upon a thing or course from among those offered. Ever since the fall of man through Adam the first, man's will has been perverse and contrary to God's way. Even though God's way is good for man, man consistently chooses the other way. God's Word says:

As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one...There is no fear of God before their eyes...For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (Romans 3:10-23).

a. Man's Choice for gods

We shall note the four classes of those making choices for the gods of *this world*.



Let us consider Israel as our example in the respect of a *nation* making a choice for the gods of this world.

1) Nation of Israel

God is going to judge nations as such, dividing between the sheep and the goat nations. The sheep nations will enter into His millennial reign, but the goat nations will be cast into everlasting fire. The goat nations are those who

have chosen to worship other gods, serving the Devil rather than the living God. In spite of all her knowledge and blessings from God, we find Israel as a nation falling by the wayside as she yielded to temptation time and again and was led into heathenish worship of false idols. Although she had received many warnings, exhortations, and prophecies, yet the scriptural record shows her waywardness, her contrariness, and her deliberate choice of other gods.

And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim... And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroah... Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them... And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way (Judges 2:11-19).

Even after they had gone astray, God raised up judges to draw them back to the Lord and to show them the right way. But as soon as one judge died, they corrupted themselves again as a nation by choosing to return to worshipping their own gods instead of walking in faithfulness to Jehovah God.

The problem of straying from the right way arises from man's stubborn and corrupt will. God never created man's will to stand alone. He intended for man's will to know union with His divine will. Adam the first was given the privilege of choice. He could choose the will of God as it was offered to him in the garden of Eden, or accept union with the corrupted and perverted will of fallen Lucifer as it was offered him through the serpent. The story is well-known. Exercising their power of choice, Adam male and female accepted the will of Lucifer. Hence the human will, which was united with the evil will of Lucifer through Adam's choice, has been passed down through the human race to this present time. The problem of wrong choice-choosing AGAINST God rather than FOR Him goes back to this age-old condition of man's corrupted will which is contrary to the will of God. In spite of all the blessings that God poured out upon Israel, she still had this stubborn will within her which she followed in worshipping as she pleased, rather than worshipping according to the will of God.

The Lord commands us, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth" (Psalm 46:10). We misunderstand this Scripture if we think the Lord is saying that our worship should be silent. This stillness cannot mean that, for then it would countermand all God's other instructions concerning worship when He tells us to clap our hands, to shout, to make a loud noise, to leap for joy, to dance, to come into His presence with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise. This stillness means the inner stillness of our heart and will. Our human will must be still in choosing its own willful way. It must surrender to do the will of God.

I am afraid we have many gods of form in our so-called Christian worship today. Christians become so married to their own particular form of worship that they fail to see God's order and instructions regarding worship. The book of Psalms particularly deals with the subject of worship, as it instructs us how to worship God correctly. The Word of God gives us a pattern of worship that is pleasing to the Lord. It is sad when we choose man's form rather than God's pattern. The difference between a pattern and a form is that there is no life; none of God's unction; nor His blessing in a form. Conversely, all are present when we follow God's pattern of worship. Then our worship is filled with vibrancy, vitality, and vigor, which bears evidence that the presence and the blessing of God is being manifested in it.

Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). True worship is comprised of two main facets: the truth (the Word of God), and the spirit. The spirit of man must be a participant. Man must yield his body, soul, and spirit to the power of the Holy Ghost, for mere lip service and cold form is not acceptable to God. God's Holy Spirit lights upon the Word of God, for they are congruous one with the other. True worship is the working together of the Spirit of God and the Word of God in beautiful harmony and unity. If we neglect either one, we have destroyed God's pattern of true worship. The Word, without the liberation of the Spirit to energize, release, and quicken, results in a dead letter and a binding of the spirits of the worshippers. On the other hand, all Spirit and no Word results in confusion, and it oftentimes opens the door to error and delusion. We MUST worship God in spirit and in truth!

And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and the Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgoat the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves. Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushan-rishathaim eight years (Judges 3:5-8).

They chose new gods; then was war in the gates: was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel? (Judges 5:8).

So the children of Israel chose unto themselves new gods, foreign gods, and rejected the God who had wrought such wondrous things in their behalf as a nation.

And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served him not... Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation (Judges 10:6-14).

Again we see the choice of Israel as a nation when she chose to worship the strange gods of the heathen people that surround her in Canaan's land. In view of her choice, God spoke saying, "You have made your choice so I will not be with you to deliver you anymore. When trouble comes, call on the new gods of your own choosing and see whether they can help you." It is a frightening thought, but nevertheless true, that there comes a time when God's ear will be deaf to the cries of the people. This only happens when people choose their own way, rejecting God and His way, His love, and His forgiveness. Having done this repeatedly, there comes a time when God no longer hears them, but withdraws Himself from them. This same principle is stated in Proverbs 1:24-31.

Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices (Proverbs 1:24-31).

How self-willed the human heart is. If man persists (or if a nation persists) in choosing his own way, opposing the will of God, God finally turns that individual, or that nation, over to his own will; then our choice becomes our just punishment.

But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah (Jeremiah 2:28).

They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers,- which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers. Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them. Then shall the cities of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem go, and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense: but they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble. For according to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal (Jeremiah 11:10-13).

This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing (Jeremiah 13:10).

Israel continually turned her back upon the God of their fathers. These were God's covenant people, yet they deliberately chose to worship and serve other gods, God used Jeremiah to make a demonstration of how Israel's end was to be. The prophet took a girdle and buried it, marring and disfiguring it until it was good for nothing. Then he held this up before the nation of Israel, declaring, "this is how you are—good for nothing."

Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink-offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink-offering unto her, without our men? (Jeremiah 44:15-19).

Israel played the part of the spiritual harlot, turning her back upon her spiritual husband, God in heaven, choosing

rather to worship and bring offerings of incense and drink offerings before her idol god, the queen of heaven. Therefore God began to afflict Israel with the rod of His correction, troubling her with famine and wars, hoping to awaken her to the realization that God's blessings were no longer upon her. Finally, out of mercy He sent the Prophet Jeremiah with His Word, His message, hoping to bring Israel to a place of repentance that she might be restored unto the Lord once again. But Israel missed the whole point. Instead of confession, repentance, and restoration, she flaunted her idol worship in the face of God saying, "Why should we worship you? When we offered our offerings to the queen of heaven, we prospered and everything went fine. Now all we have are problems and wants." In other words, Israel was saying that she had it better while she served fallen Lucifer and his demon gods, than when she served God. Is it not a marvel that God does not weary of all mankind and do away with us all?

2) Individuals (Micah and Mother)

And there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name was Micah. And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my son. And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee. Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the rounder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah. And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest (Judges 17:1-5).

Micah had robbed his mother of her eleven hundred shekels of silver, but he was so terrified of his mother's curses that he restored the money.

Micah and his mother agreed to turn their money into a god, and set up idol worship in their family. Micah was so greatly pleased and so strangely bewitched by the demons that rested on this image that he made a building in which to house the other gods that he made. Thus Micah and his mother chose the corruption of idolatry and their house of gods in preference to the true God and His house (His sanctuary that abode at Shiloh). Their choice caused idolatry to spread like a fretting leprosy.

3) Tribe

And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh (Judges 18:30,31).

The tribe of Dan also chose the images of Micah and incorporated them into the tribe along with Micah's priest. Idolatry spread like leprosy through the tribe of Dan, which proves that others follow our choices whether they are good or bad. The tribe of Dan followed the choice of Micah in idolatrous worship. The demon powers of the image deceived the tribe of Dan into perversely attributing to this idol, the success they had in conquering the land. If God had not been infinitely patient, He would have wrought sudden destruction upon them.

4) Leaders

a) Priests

The priest said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit. Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your children's children will I plead. For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit (Jeremiah 2:8-11).

Those whose office it was to attend immediately upon the LORD, were not concerned about acquainting themselves with Him. Those who should have made a choice for the true God, and those who should have instructed the people in the knowledge of the true God, took no care nor concern in making the right choice, or in getting knowledge for themselves to share with others. Those who should have kept God's people from transgressing by making the right choice, were themselves the ringleaders in transgressing and leading the people of God into idolatry. Baal's prophets joined with Baal's priests to lead God's people into choosing false gods instead of the true

God. The LORD challenged Israel to produce an instance when any heathen nation had changed their gods and had chosen other gods. Though their gods had never done them any kindness, nor could they for they were not true gods, the heathen nations kept them to worship; yet, Israel's leaders and people had exchanged the true God for false gods, and had chosen the demon power that accompanied them in preference to the glory and power of Almighty God.

b) Kings

(1) Solomon

But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods (I Kings 11:1-8).

This is a very sad story of Solomon's degeneracy. Just as Israel was drawn into worshipping the idol god, Baal-peor by the daughters of Moab, so Solomon's revolt began when he took many strange women and clave unto them in love. Solomon left his first love of the true God and chose the false gods of his wives. His apostasy was great before God. In compliance with his wives, he built chapels for their gods and maintained their priests.

When Solomon chose false gods and their demon power, he stirred God's anger against him. The magnitude of Solomon's ingratitude was astonishing when we realize how he turned from the true God who appeared to him twice (once before he began to build the temple, chapter 3:5, and once after he had dedicated it, chapter 9:2). These glorious appearances should have confirmed his faith, forever preventing him from choosing and worshipping false gods.

The Lord told Solomon that since he revolted against God, then part of his kingdom would revolt against his family. Solomon gave God's glory to images and demon power; therefore, God would give Solomon's crown to his servant. "Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant" (I Kings 11:11). Surely we can expect ruin and destruction if we choose false gods and their demon powers.

(2) Jeroboam

And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph. And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: (I Kings 11:28-30).

This prophecy was fulfilled when Israel became a divided nation after Solomon's reign. Rehoboam reigned over Judah, while Jeroboam reigned over Israel. Since Solomon's temple was in Rehoboam's territory, Jeroboam feared losing his people if they journeyed into the southern kingdom to worship at the temple as they were supposed to do. To maintain his control of the people, Jeroboam had two calves made of gold, and said to the people: "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (I Kings 12:28). The people willingly chose to forsake the true worship at God's temple in Jerusalem for these idols. They forgot God's displeasure with their fathers when they had made only one calf in Horeb. By following Jeroboam, they displayed their contempt for God's wrath and God's law; thus adding sin to sin. When man chooses the false gods of this world, he heaps sin upon sin.

There is a lesson to be learned from these people of Israel who chose the false gods and their powers of darkness. Jeroboam's idolatrous acts became sin to his house. Therefore, it was cut off and destroyed, also the nation as a whole received this word from God's prophet:

For the LORD shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the LORD to anger (I Kings 14:15).

Nineteen kings followed Jeroboam in sins of idolatry before God dealt the final death blow to the northern kingdom about two hundred years after the prophet brought them this message.

Thus, we have man's choice for false gods. First, the nation of Israel; secondly, Micah and his mother; thirdly, the tribe of Dan; and fourthly, the leaders of Israel in the persons of her priest and kings.

b. Man's Choice Against gods

1) Sons of Levi

Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him (Exodus 32:26).

The idolaters in Israel had erected a golden calf upon which the demon gods of this world had lit. The demon powers on this idol had magnetically drawn many of the Israelites, causing them to bow down in worship and to dance before it with great frenzy. Moses stood in the gate of the camp, the place of judgment, clad with zeal as with a robe, and summoned every individual to choose between God's side and the idol god represented by the golden calf. He displayed a banner, as it were, to enlist soldiers for God. The sons of Levi chose the Lord's side, and enlisted in God's royal army declaring vengeance against the idol god. The sons of Levi were infused with a fervent zeal to perform the Word of the Lord to slay the offenders.

One of God's principles is illustrated here which should encourage us all. If we will only choose the LORD's side, He will clothe us with the necessary power and authority to tear down the idol gods of this world; then He will reward us as He did the tribe of Levi. They were chosen to come near and minister in the sanctuary of the LORD. What greater blessing can one have than to be invited to come close to the precious divine presence of God and to minister before Him in His sanctuary?

2) Joshua

Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: (Joshua 24:14-17).

Joshua earnestly urged the Israelites, after they were in Canaan's land, to choose against the idol gods whom they had inherited, both from the Chaldeans and the Egyptians. He realized that if these gods were permitted to stay in their midst, the devils that rested upon the idols would surely tempt the hearts of the people and lead them astray. If the people chose to go after the idol gods, they would lose their reverence for God and His infinite power; they would not fear offending Him; they would forfeit His goodness; they would lose the awe of His majesty; they would despise His authority; they would not dread His displeasure; they would not regard the all seeing eye of God. Therefore, Joshua pled earnestly with the individuals of Israel that they deface and destroy their idol gods, lest they be tempted to serve them. It is God's will that we *choose* to serve Him, not that our service be by chance or force. Joshua made an individual choice to serve God and to reject idols regardless of what others did. He resolved to choose for God, to steadfastly adhere to Him, though everyone else revolted against Him, Accordingly, everyone else on this particular occasion expressed an identical choice of heart—to cleave unto the LORD and to reject the idol gods.

3) Ruth

And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law. And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall

be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: The LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me (Ruth 1:15-17).

The book of Ruth relates the story of Naomi, her husband, and her two sons who left the land of Israel in the time of famine and sojourned into the land of Moab. There Naomi's sons married Moabite girls. In the process of time Naomi's husband and two sons died, whereupon Naomi decided to return to her native land of Israel. Therefore her daughters-in-law were faced with a choice: to stay in Moab, or go with Naomi. Orpah chose to go back to her land and her gods, but Ruth, uttering a most solemn profession of immovable resolution never to forsake Naomi, nor to return to her own country or gods, chose to return with her. What a momentous decision Ruth made on this occasion. She chose against the gods, the demon powers of Moab, and set her heart toward the true God of Israel.

4) David

And the Philistines came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. And David enquired of God, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? and wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto him, Go up; for I will deliver them into thine hand. So they came up to Baal-perazim; and David smote them there. Then David said, God hath broken in upon mine enemies by mine hand like the breaking forth of waters: therefore they called the name of that place Baal-perazim. And when they had left their gods there, David gave a commandment, and they were burned with fire (1 Chronicles 14:9-12).

David, in his distress, ran to God to enquire at His oracle for direction and for the will of God. God assured David of the victory. After God had given David victory over the Philistines, David chose to burn the idols which the Philistines had left behind with fire, thus destroying the demon's abiding places, David chose against the idol gods of the Philistines and clung to the true God of Israel. David must have had this occasion in mind when he said, "I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee" (Ps. 138:1). What a beautiful testimony, that with his whole heart, with all uprightness of intention and fervency of affection, David made his choice before the face of the gods. With great freedom and boldness he declared his choice for the true God before the gods.

We, too, can stand as King David and boldly renounce these angels and gods of fallen Lucifer. By the free choice of our human will, we can cast our ballot for the true and living God and thus gain overcoming, conquering power over all the devils who seek, through their evil forces, to war in the physical and spiritual realm against God's children. The dumb devils, the blind, the exceedingly fierce devils, the vexing, and the lunatic devils—all are forced to bow before the power of God's Word. The devils that would cause us to betray our brother, or to turn from the Word of God, are helpless when we get our human will joined or married, as it were, to the humility of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Once we realize that even the fallen angels of Lucifer are under the authority and sovereign will of our heavenly Father, then we need not fear them. Though judgment awaits them, they continue in their evil ways, scheming to bring man into the same condemnation that they must share with their leader, fallen Lucifer. Their very nature exposes these particular angels, enabling us to war against their limited powers. They seek to usurp worship which rightly belongs to God. Covering themselves with a thin layer of stolen glory, they appear to be transformed into angels of light. But the child of God has the true Spirit of God and the living Word of God to use in exposing these impostors. When the truth strips them of their false glory, they stand revealed in all the hideousness of their wickedness. Although they are rulers of the pit, and though they fight and war in the heavenlies (even against Michael and his angels) they have no prevailing power. Fallen Lucifer in his full stature of Dragon, Serpent, Devil, and Satan, plus all of his angels, are all going to be cast out of heaven into the earth during the tribulation period. However, this is not their final end; the burning torment of the lake of fire will be the everlasting abode of these fallen angels and Lucifer.

Down through the ages man has, with his own hands, made himself idols or gods upon which devils rest, thus breaking God's holy commandments. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any Likeness of any thing that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD, thy God am a jealous God,..." (Exodus 20:3-5). These idols of metal, wood, and stone made into images of God's creations, have power to detract the hearts of the people from worshipping the true God, the omnipotent, all-powerful Creator, in whose presence all others' glory dwindles and fades into oblivion. God's attitude toward such pagan practices is clearly revealed in His Word. He is a jealous God; He will not share His holiness, His glory, nor His majesty with

the corrupted, perverted gods of men. Judgment is prophesied against those who continue in this form of worship. But, praise the Lord, man has a God-given free will to choose. It is man's choice. He can bow down in worship to the idols of his own making, thereby giving worship to the devils which abide upon these gods; or he can execute judgment against wicked idolatry and follow after the living God. Let us pray diligently that God will give us the wisdom and fortitude to always choose Him and reject these devils, angels and gods of Lucifer's army.

CHAPTER IV

SERPENTS

When we begin our spiritual journey up through the stature of Christ, as pictured for us in the Mosaic Tabernacle with its seven pieces of furniture, it seems as if all the forces of hell and darkness break loose against us. There is a battle to be fought for every bit of spiritual ground that we gain in possessing the stature of Jesus Christ. There are different things that God permits to come against us from the world, the flesh, and the Devil in order to prove us to see how deep our desire is to lay hold of the full mature stature of Jesus Christ. God is not going to commit His storehouse of spiritual treasures unto us unless we are really sincere and earnest in our desire to grow up and be like Him. We are tried again and again to give us opportunity to see how much we want to go on for God. As we progress further in our study of the serpents, we will see other reasons why God allows fallen Lucifer to turn his serpent army loose against us.

Let us first consider the word *serpent* itself, and we will gain a clearer understanding of what we are warring against. The word *serpent* means sharpness of vision; a snake (as a type of sly cunningness); and artful malicious person, especially fallen Lucifer the Serpent.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover (Mark 16:15-18).

This Scripture gives no license for Christians to deliberately drink poison or willfully take up serpents to prove their spirituality to others; to do so is to tempt God. Our holy life bears witness to others of the presence and power of God within us, and we must remember it is the responsibility of God to confirm His Word to the hearts of others. If, however, one of these serpent spirits, working either in the natural or spiritual realm, seeks to bring premature death to us, we do have the assurance that, by the power and authority of Jesus Christ, these serpents can be rendered powerless. This is part of the supernatural signs that follow them that believe. The Apostle Paul experienced the fulfillment of this Scripture in the natural when he was unhurt by the viper that fastened on his hand. This was acknowledged as a great miracle by the barbarous people who watched (Acts 28:5,6).

Turning to the book of James, we find another reference to serpents.

Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison (James 3:5-8),

What great power this little member, the tongue, has. It has enough fire in it to kindle, as it were, a whole forest fire. It is so full of iniquity that it can defile the whole body (course of nature). Our entire wheel of nature is ignited by this fire, which burns throughout the whole wheel of our nature. The affairs of mankind are often thrown into confusion and is set aflame by the tongues of men. It is from yielding to evilly intended temptations, and from serving some diabolical scheme, that men's tongues are inflamed. Our greatest enemy is our own tongue, for it is unruly and evil, full of deadly poison and untameable.

The Devil can give men power to charm a natural serpent such as the cobra in India where snakes are worshipped. They charm the cobra until it is coiled and its head is standing erect while it sways to and fro. Then the worshipper bows down before the cobra in adoration and reverence. The cobra may not bite, but he spews out his venom all over his worshippers and they go away thinking that they have been blessed.

How thankful we should be, those of us who know Jesus Christ as our Saviour. Had we been born in India, and reared in that particular religion, we could be involved with that same kind of worship, but instead we can bow

down and worship Jesus Christ. Instead of having the venom of a cobra spewed out upon us, we receive the sweet Holy Ghost anointing upon us. If man, by the power of fallen Lucifer, can charm a natural serpent, surely we, by the power of Jesus Christ, can overcome the spiritual serpents in the spirit world. God has given man power over the natural world and over the spiritual world. The lion, the most savage of beasts, crouched to Daniel instead of devouring him because he was filled with the Spirit and the Word of the Lord. The ravens, despite their wildness and timorousness, and though they have wings to bear them up out of reach, fed Elijah who was also full of the Word of God and the Spirit of God. The whale was made serviceable to Jonah and carried him through the depths of the sea to dry land.

Surely, if God can give man supernatural grace and assistance to bring his natural creation under subjection, He can also endow us with supernatural power to bring under subjection the spirit world of serpents that war against us in our spiritual journey to Canaan's land. Let us therefore fast and pray that we might press on in our personal spiritual growth, and that we might carry the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world that every creature might have the privilege to hear this good news.

Literal serpents will never hinder us in going on for God but the spiritual ones can. The word *serpent* also means to proceed, take heed, to behold, to attain, to gaze, to discern, to stare. Let us study a stature of truth concerning these spiritual serpents.

D. SERPENTS' DEFEAT

B. SERPENTS' DWELLING
PLACE

C. SERPENTS' POWER

A. SERPENTS' NATURE

A. SERPENTS' NATURE

The Word of God gives us a threefold description of the serpent's nature. Fallen Lucifer is called the Serpent and the serpents in his army have identical natures.

1. Burning Nature

And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread (Numbers 21:5).

The people of Israel had just obtained a glorious victory over the Canaanites, the enemy from the outside, but they had not conquered the inward enemies of distrust, discontentedness, rebellion, murmuring, and complaining against the leadership of God and what He had provided.

They had sufficient bread, yet they complained, "there is no bread." Though they ate angels' food, they were weary of it. The manna was loathed and they called it light bread. The light bread was the manna that God rained down daily from heaven furnishing them with a fresh supply. This was God's miraculous provision for their needs while they journeyed in the wilderness, yet Israel only murmured and complained about their diet. They wanted to make their own selections of what they were to eat. Looking back to Egypt with longing appetites they remembered the leeks, the garlic, the fish, the cucumbers, and the melons.

And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died (Numbers 21:6).

All the while that Israel traversed the desert, it was infested with fiery serpents. “Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint” (Deuteronomy 8:15). Hithertofore God had wonderfully preserved His people from their fiery bite, but then God in His righteous judgment chastised His people and permitted the fiery serpents to invade their camp.

We reap what we sow. Israel had impudently spat her poisonous venom of distrust and accusation in the face of God, Himself, therefore, God let them reap the fiery attack of serpents. Thus we may say, that when the creature wars against God, the whole creation becomes his enemy.

It is a serious thing to murmur and complain against God’s diet and God’s leaders. The children of Israel complained about three things: the headship of God, the leadership of Moses, and their diet. When we begin going on for God He sets the bread of separation, the bread of crucifixion, on our spiritual table. It does not always seem very tasty to the fleshly nature of man, but it is sufficient bread to help us to grow up into the full stature of Jesus Christ.

In the spirit world, there are serpents with fiery natures, burning power, so that when they light upon the mind, it causes one to become abnormally stirred up and excited, thus depriving one of rational thinking. When these fiery serpents light upon the emotions, a person’s emotions become abnormal and they begin to burn with fiery lust. When these fiery serpents from Lucifer’s army light upon bitterness and unforgiveness in one’s heart, the spiritual boils and sores brought on by bitterness and unforgiveness become inflamed, and one reacts abnormally even in normal circumstances of life. The burning nature of these serpents is an absolute reality both in the natural and in the spiritual. I dealt with a poor, demon-possessed woman some years ago who was attacked often by these spiritual fiery serpents from fallen Lucifer’s army. When they leaped upon her, burning her, evidence of the burning was left upon her forehead, in her scalp, on the back of her neck and on other parts of her body. Large, red, ugly blisters would appear, but never was a hair burnt. When these serpent spirits strike, they can bring their fiery burning either to our bodies or to our emotions.

Literal fiery serpents were turned loose in the camp of Israel because of their sin of rebellion. We can know from this that when one suffers such an attack in the spiritual, it is time for us to seek the Lord to learn how we have rebelled. Have we rebelled against God in some way? Is our rebellion directed toward God’s appointed leaders? Or, are we rebelling over the bread of crucifixion that we are being served? Rebellion opens the door for the fiery serpents from Lucifer’s army. They are God’s judgment on rebellion. How much easier it is to follow the Lord. A rebellious soul finds many difficulties in his way, but the obedient soul is blessed.

2. Nature of Wisdom

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves (Matthew 10:16).

Jesus warned his disciples that they would not have an easy time of it, for they would go forth as sheep into the midst of wolves, they were to be as wise as serpents (not wise as foxes whose cunning was to deceive others), but as serpents whose great concern is to defend themselves and to seek safety. Christ’s disciples are hated and persecuted as serpents; therefore, they need the serpent’s wisdom to defend themselves. The wisdom of the serpent protects its head that it may not be broken, and leads it to take shelter in the clefts of the rocks. May we learn this class of wisdom in Jesus Christ that will protect our head, Jesus Christ, that His headship might not be broken in our lives; that we might flee to the clefts of our Christ, our Rock, in the times of danger and distress. How necessary, then, that we go forth with the gentle meekness of the dove and with the wisdom of the serpent who knows how to silently crawl back and forth, in and out, to protect himself. Likewise, the serpents in Lucifer’s army are wise in their movements to protect their head and master, Lucifer, and his kingdom.

3. Nature to Beguile

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ (II Corinthians 11:3).

With its alluring, tempting, beguiling power, the Serpent is able to corrupt us from the simplicity that is in Christ. The Serpent is able to mislead with his guile and deceit. The Serpent beguiled Adam female from the will of God.

Likewise today, the Serpent is busy beguiling people from the will of God by filling them with all sorts of erroneous ideas and false beliefs. God's way is the best way, yet we are beguiled by the serpent spirits of Lucifer to forsake this simplicity of Christ, which is so easy to walk in, and when we are beguiled, we open our hearts to many things that enslave us and make life difficult. The farther we go in God, the more simple things become, for the Lord unloads us of many unnecessary encumbrances of life. But the serpent spirits seek to corrupt the children of God, alluring them into worldly paths and practices that hinder, ensnare, distract, and entice from the will of God. The Serpent's nature is fiery, wise, and beguiling.

B. SERPENTS' DWELLING PLACE

Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; (Deuteronomy 8:15).

The dwelling place of serpents is the great and terrible wilderness. Jeremiah describes their dwelling place very vividly: "Neither said they, Where is the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?" (Jeremiah 2:6).

The wilderness is said to be a land of deserts and pits, a place of barrenness and loneliness, a place of drought, no water supply, a place of the shadow of death, where there is all manner of evil to be feared. In this terrible place dwelt the fiery serpents, and yet God displayed His power to rule over all these and gave His people bread out of the clouds and water out of the Rock.

Let us remember also that as we walk through the wildernesses of this world; the places of fear and dread, the situations that are extreme, intense and severe, circumstances that are bad, unpleasant and disagreeable, that God will give us spiritual meat and drink and will protect us from Lucifer's serpent army if we will not rebel or murmur or complain.

As we press on toward Canaan's land (Beulah land, Marriage land) where we will know that oneness of relationship with the will of God, let us not rebel as some of Israel rebelled and miss Canaan's land. Remember, before we come into Canaan's land we must pass through the waste and howling wilderness and overcome the serpents in the way by drinking the water from the Rock (Christ), by eating the manna (the strength of His headship), and by following the cloud and the fire (the light of the headship of the Holy Ghost). As we go on for the Lord and find ourselves in special wildernesses, or a particular valley experience, or in low places, spiritually speaking, then we must be on the lookout for the serpents, for they inhabit the wilderness.

The Serpent is wise. He knows that when we are down in a low place, we are tempted to murmur and complain against our circumstances, which really is a complaint against God who has permitted us to be there. Thus he stands ready to enter through our door of murmuring and complaining, to try to talk us out of our spiritual journey to Canaan's land, our oneness of relationship with Christ Jesus. Once the wise serpents have entered our hearts through this door of complaining, they fasten themselves on our wills, and begin their alluring work to beguile and deceive us into thinking it is useless to strive for the prize, the stature of Jesus Christ, and the possession of spiritual Canaan's land. It is their purpose to sap our spiritual life and even our physical strength at times.

Deliverance from serpent spirits comes when we go to the Word of God and see what God thinks and what He does with those who murmur and complain. The Word will bring holy fear into our hearts, making us willing to repent of our sin. With a contrite spirit, comes intercessory prayer, which will enlighten us so that we can deal with the root of our rebellion and murmuring and thus gain the victory. Why do we murmur and complain in our wilderness journey and our valley experiences? We murmur because we are not getting our way. Things are not going to suit us. This whole thing is resolved when we yield our will to God and get back under the Headship of the Lord where we can know that all things are working together for our good. Then we can know that we are in this place by God's appointment in order for Him to work out something good for us, which in turn will work for His glory. Rather than murmuring and complaining, we need to pray, "Lord, what is it that you are after. What lesson do I need to learn here?"

So the dwelling places of serpent spirits are in Our wilderness journey and in the places of our valley experiences. It is during these times that we frequently encounter them in spiritual battle.

C. SERPENTS' POWER

1. Poison

They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust (Deuteronomy 32:24).

The power to reject poison is one of the serpent's attributes both in the natural and in the spiritual. The poison of the serpents of the dust was for Israel's chastisement for turning her back upon God and His Rock of truth. The judgment of God was to be upon those who forgot their God; "Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee" (Deuteronomy 32:18). God, who had begotten Israel in the natural sense as well as the spiritual, was forgotten by His people, and when the Lord saw this He abhorred Israel and said that He would hide His face from them. By turning from Him unto other gods and whorish practices, they had provoked His jealousy and anger. Among His judgments upon them were the serpents of the dust with their poison. Although God had wrought a mighty deliverance in bringing Israel out of Egypt, and though He had met their every need in the wilderness, yet they turned back from the living God. Since they would not come under the power of God, they were therefore left to come under the poisonous power of the serpents of the dust. Israel did not like the pure and holy diet of manna, hence they were given up to the poisonous diet of the serpents' power which destroyed many of them.

The serpents have power, and that power is in their poison. We shall see another terrible demonstration of the serpents' power during the tribulation period.

2. Head to Hurt

And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit (Revelation 9:1,2).

The bottomless pit is a very real place. During the tribulation time an angel will come out of heaven, and with the key that he possesses, he will unlock and open the pit. How great the fire must be there, for when the pit is opened there arises a tremendous smoke, so great that the sun is blotted out and the air darkened. Out of this smoke came locusts with great power, not to kill, but to torment for five months. Men shall seek death in those days, but it shall flee from them. There is no escape. And what grotesque creatures these are!

And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months (Revelation 9:7-10).

For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt (Revelation 9:19).

These perverted creatures have tails like serpents, whose power to hurt is in their head. The head speaks of the mind, and it is with the corrupted wisdom of fallen Lucifer that they torment and afflict the minds of God's people. Although man will seek physical death in preference to the mental anguish of these serpent spirits, he will find no escape from the heads of Lucifer's army of serpents. Special mention is made of the mouth; they are equipped with teeth like that of lions with which they rend and tear the truth from the minds of the people. What a fearsome creature comes out of the pit in that horrible time of judgment.

3. Tail to Hurt

And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails...(Revelation 9:10).

For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents...(Revelation 9:19).

What perverted creatures these are—bodies like a horse, faces like men, hair like women, teeth like lion’s teeth, and tails that sting. Moreover, they have the power to torment like unto that of the scorpion. Their sting will torment for five months without any respite. How fearsome is God’s wrath!

4. Mouth to Hurt

And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth (Revelation 12:13-16).

Although this Scripture refers particularly to the Dragon, still the word is the same in Revelation nine, for these serpents (plural) have the same nature of the great Serpent himself, fallen Lucifer. Out of the mouth of the Serpent comes a flood, a powerful flood which tries to devour the fleeing woman in the wilderness. It is my impression that this flood is the Serpent’s doctrine coming like a flood to overtake her with its alluring and deceiving power. Should it reach her, it will destroy her, but the earth opens up and swallows it, and the woman (part of the church) escapes.

In the last days the flood will be a deluge of false ideas (doctrines) and accusations against God, for the world will be anti-God serving an anti-Christ, and no true religious doctrines will be taught. The authority of God, Himself will be denied by the world leaders at that time, so that everything which comes against the remaining church will be intended to strip her of any shred of truth or belief in God. God’s people will be accused of suffering from delusions, and they will be made to appear false when the opposite will be true. They will be persecuted and ridiculed, but they alone will have any semblance of the truth. Most of the world will be under Lucifer’s control.

God permits false doctrines to cross our pathway to prove us, to see whether or not we really love the Truth. If we wilt but humble ourselves on our knees before God, He will lead us into all truth and guide us safely beyond the reach of false doctrine and its death.

D. SERPENTS’ DEFEAT

How wonderful that this is the closing point on the subject of serpents — their defeat. We do not need to live in fear because of the serpents’ nature, their dwelling place, their power to poison, their hurting power in the head and tail, or their power to spew death against us. The serpents are part of THE Serpent’s army, but thank God, they are defeated foes.

They shall take up serpents;...(Mark 16:18).

Why does the believer “take up serpents”? They pick them up, spiritually speaking, in order to cast them out. If a serpent spirit comes crawling along, we have the authority and power to rebuke, resist, and cast it out through the Name of Jesus. The Lord is looking for spiritual soldiers who will get into His army and war against these vile spirits of the Devil. Warfare is not for babes, but for men. We need not sit passively by, permitting the Devil and his cohorts to bind and hinder and discredit the work of God. We must war against them, take hold of these serpent spirits by the neck, so to speak, shake them violently in the mighty Name of Jesus, and cast them out. If we will resist them, they will flee. It is that simple. The power of all heaven backs up the precious Name of Jesus. Sometimes an individual receives deliverance in a prayer line, but that person must continue warring, for that serpent spirit will try to crawl right back in again if he can. The delivered person needs to do his own praying, his own warring, his own resisting, until that spirit is gone for good.

As we studied the Serpent’s nature of wisdom, we learned from the Word of God that it is the nature of these spiritual serpents to protect their head, Lucifer. Therefore, we must go to God’s Word to find His way for us to overcome this army of serpents.

Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven (Luke 10:19,20).

In speaking to His disciples, Jesus reminded them that they had power over the enemy right then. He told them that they had power to tread on serpents and scorpions. We know He was not speaking of literal serpents here, for in the next verse he specified the fact that “spirits are subject unto you.” We are to rejoice over our names being written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Nevertheless, the fact is established here that we have power to tread upon serpents. First we take them up and cast them out. Should they persist in bothering us after that, we have the power to trample them under our feet. When God cursed the Serpent in the garden of Eden, He said, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15). We know from this Scripture that the treading power is in the bloody heel of the Crucified Christ. No physical implement of warfare could ever have imposed the bruising blow that was dealt to the head of the Serpent. It was accomplished by Jesus Christ’s obedience in hanging on Calvary’s Cross. Only eternity will reveal the tremendous victory that was won through the humility of the Son of God. Beloved, treading power over serpents was granted to the disciples and we, too, can lay hold of the same victory by faith. The same power that is in the crucified heel of Jesus Christ can be used by us. If we are walking in the way of the cross, the Crucified Way, and following in the footprints of Jesus, then we have a crucified heel anointed with the Blood of Jesus Christ — a heel of authority and power whereby we can crush the serpents’ heads under our feet.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess...Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? (Matthew 23:25-33).

Jesus exposed these scribes and Pharisees for what they were. He called them “serpents and vipers” because they were fellowshipping these spirits. Religious leaders can also be motivated and directed by serpent spirits. Having opened themselves to the serpents’ poisons, their ability to allure and deceive, they can be swallowed up by a flood of death, false doctrine. In the last days there will be a flood of seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. This accounts for the great apostasy that characterizes the time just prior to the rapture of the overcoming believers out of the church of Jesus Christ.

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him unto the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him”, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season (Revelation 20:2,3).

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth...And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Revelation 20:7-10).

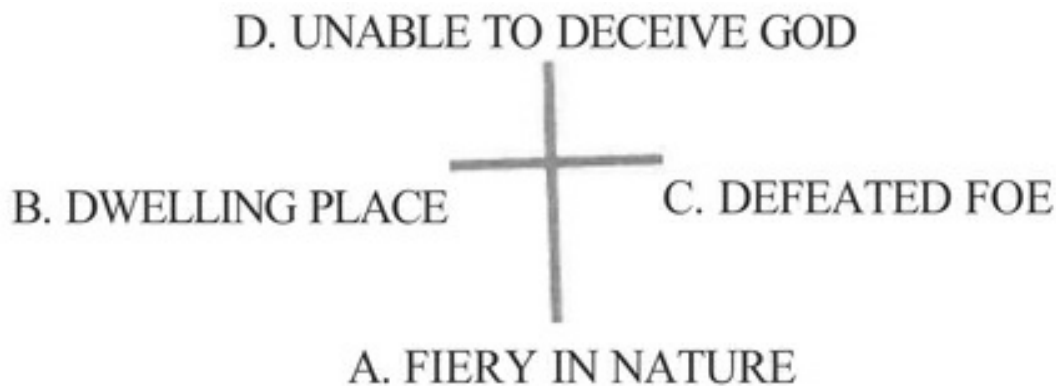
For the time being we have to tread the serpent spirits under foot, but the time is soon at hand when Jesus Christ will move once and for all against His arch enemy, fallen Lucifer, (known as the Dragon, the Serpent, the Devil and Satan) who will be cast into the bottomless pit. After one thousand years of millennial reign here on earth, fallen Lucifer, with his nature as Satan and the Devil, will be loosed for a short season from the bottomless pit to lead in the final rebellion against God and His forces. Then shall the Devil and Satan be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone to be tormented day and night for ever and ever. When he comes forth for the last time, he comes crippled and limited in power, for the greater degrees of satanic power (known as the Serpent and the Dragon) are never released from the bottomless pit. It is only the lesser degrees of power that come forth to war—the Devil and Satan. After the final battle, the lake of fire becomes their eternal dwelling place. This is a place of fire and brimstone and never ending torment.

We have studied the Spirits, the Devils, and the Serpents. We are now ready to consider the final and most powerful rank of Lucifer’s army. Holding the highest position, staturewise, we find the last class of soldiers in Lucifer’s army to be the Scorpions.

CHAPTER V

SCORPIONS

A scorpion's poison is in his tail. Understanding the great part that the tail plays in the dragon nature of fallen Lucifer, helps us to understand more about the power of the scorpion. In speaking to Israel concerning the conditions of blessing in the land, God said, "And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them:" (Deuteronomy 28:13). When relating the conditions which would bring chastisement, God once again referred to the tail. "He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail" (Deuteronomy 28:44). In both instances the tail speaks of shame. He told Israel, if she would hearken and observe and do the commandments of the LORD, that He would exalt her to a place of honor and blessing, but if she hardened her heart and rebelled, she would occupy the position of shame. With this in mind, let us study the stature of truth concerning these scorpion spirits in Lucifer's army.



A. FIERY IN NATURE

Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint (Deuteronomy 8:15),

The scorpions are fiery in their natures even as we saw the same truth concerning the serpents. It lies within their power to torment by burning; moreover, their degree of torment is even greater than that of the serpent class. A literal scorpion has a front pair of nipping claws, and a long, slender, jointed tail ending in a curved, poisonous stinger. The scorpion's tail is like a whip or scourge with which he lashes his victim and inserts his poison of death. Likewise in the spiritual, the scorpion spirits in Lucifer's army seek to lure God's children from His will, and then they lash them with their poison of death until the child of God feels no life in his will, mind, or heart to press on in his walk with God, or to remain in His service.

As these scorpion spirits lash out with their tails against Christians, they cover them with their poison of shame. Suddenly Christians are ashamed to pray, or to lift their voices in praise and worship to God. Perhaps it was one of these scorpion spirits that caused Peter to deny that he knew Jesus, when a mere maid suggested that he was a follower of the accused Nazarene. After a Christian fails, these scorpions take special advantage of him. When one, because of the weakness and frailty of the flesh, falls down along his spiritual journey, the scorpion spirits are right there to lash him with their tails. They are ever present to make him feel too ashamed to pray, too ashamed to come into God's presence to ask the Lord's forgiveness. But God is merciful, "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth

that we are dust” (Psalm 103:14). His Word tells us, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). We need not live under the shame and condemnation of these scorpions. “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36). Peter must have found this victory over the scorpions of shame, because he was in the upper room when the Holy Ghost fell on the day of Pentecost, and it was he who stood up boldly declaring to the Jews, “...that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). No more was he ashamed of Jesus.

Many Christians have failed to testify and to witness to the living reality of God in their lives because, just as they were about to speak, the tail of one of these scorpions poisoned them with shame. Reminding the believer of sins which have already been confessed and put under the Blood of Jesus, Lucifer’s scorpions wave every weakness, every failure, before the eyes of the one about to speak for Jesus, and suddenly he is too overcome with humiliation and shame to say a word. Beloved, God puts our sins behind His back never to be remembered against us! Therefore, we have authority in the Name of Jesus Christ to rebuke the scorpions which would make us ashamed because of our past, and we can boldly declare the miracle of righteousness which He has wrought in our hearts.

Many of us, like the Apostle Paul, must overcome these scorpions which seek to make us ashamed of the Way of the Cross of Jesus Christ. Paul, by his own admission, had every reason to trust in the flesh. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless” (Philippians 3:5,6). In the flesh Paul had no reason to feel shame; he was on his way to persecute the followers of Jesus Christ when a great light shone from heaven, and he heard a voice saying, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (Acts 9:4). Although the Name, Jesus of Nazareth, had been clothed in shame by the religious leaders of his day, after Paul met Jesus face to face, he recognized where the real shame should be. To the Romans he said, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16). How perverted and twisted are these scorpion warriors in Lucifer’s army. They seek to get us to take pride in the very thing we should be ashamed of — our flesh. The very thing we should delight in, they try to make us feel ashamed of, and that is the humility of Jesus Christ. Paul never came under the power of their tails, for he knew the true worth of Jesus Christ. He testified, “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count ail things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Philippians 3:7,8). He said, “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13,14). As we go on for God let us follow the example of Paul. Let us forget those things which are behind, whether they be the sins and weaknesses of our flesh which cause us shame, or the sins of pride. Putting all these behind our backs, let us set our faces like a flint toward the prize at the end of this spiritual race, even Jesus Christ Himself.

B. DWELLING PLACE

Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions...(Deuteronomy 8:15).

As the serpents inhabit the wilderness places in the natural, so also do the scorpions. This illustrates the same spiritual truth, for spiritually we find these scorpion spirits lurking and waiting to beset us in our wilderness experiences in life. However, if we remain in subjection to the headship of God, we need not fear their power.

And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house (Ezekiel 2:6).

The Prophet Ezekiel had a divine visitation, and from out of the glory of the LORD, a voice spoke commissioning him to go to the rebellious nation of Israel. Whether they would hear him or not, they were, nevertheless, going to realize that God had placed among them a prophet whose call was repentance. Ezekiel was to speak forth God’s message fearlessly, even though he ministered in the midst of scorpions. What a dreadful thought! Here is another dwelling place of spirits—among God’s own people. Experiencing the Lord’s gift of salvation, does not imply that we are exempt from all spiritual battles. In fact, the very opposite is true. Once we become a child of God, the onslaught of the enemy begins. He first comes against us as Satan, and as we progress in spiritual growth and stature, he comes against us as the Devil, the Serpent, and the Dragon. And he also will war against us with his army

of serpent and scorpion spirits. The fact that we are with Christians, or in the house of God, in no way guarantees us safety against the spirits of Lucifer's army. In fact, it is here we fight the greatest warfare. Sometimes God's greatest enemies are found in His own house, for instance Judas, when he betrayed Jesus. The Word says Satan entered into Judas while he was still in the very presence of Jesus.

C. DEFEATED FOE

Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions... (Luke 10:19).

This authority and power has already been given to us, for we stand in the ranks of the Army of the LORD GOD JEHOVAH! Our great Captain, Jesus Christ, has equipped us with power, and the greatest power of them all is the authority of His invincible Name, the NAME OF JESUS! With the power of His great and matchless Name, we can tread on serpents and scorpions. The word *tread* means to walk on or over, to do or follow by walking, dancing, stepping. With our feet shod with the Word of God, we can step on scorpions, walk over them, and follow our Captain to Canaan's land, dancing as we go, as King David did when he brought the Ark to Jerusalem.

BELOVED, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world (I John 4:1-4).

Because the full stature of fallen Lucifer (Satan, Devil, Serpent, Dragon) is already a conquered foe, we have overcoming power through the mighty Name and Person of Jesus Christ. Our Captain is greater than Lucifer and all his angels. The enemy who battles us has already been defeated by the Blood of Jesus.

D. UNABLE TO DECEIVE GOD

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? (Luke 11:9-13).

Scorpions can roll themselves up into small balls so that they appear to be an egg. A scorpion may be able to deceive us human beings, and cause us to think we are giving our child an egg when in reality it is a scorpion trying to disguise himself. But, Jesus said, "I cannot be deceived. If you ask of me an egg, that is what you will get-not a scorpion." Beloved, what a comfort to know that we can come boldly to the throne of grace, making our requests known unto our God. If we but seek, we will find, knock and it will be opened, ask and we will receive. Thank God, we will not receive a stone for bread, a serpent for a fish, or a scorpion for an egg. Beloved, the nature of God is good! When His hungry children come asking for the Bread of His Word to nourish their spiritual bodies, He will never give them Word that will break their spiritual teeth and lie undigested in their stomachs. No matter how young or how small our spiritual stature may be, God has just the kind of Bread that will sustain life. All we have to do is to ask Him for this Bread. Those seeking the meat (fish), which has power to cause our spiritual bodies to be strengthened and to grow, need never fear their heavenly Father serving them a poison serpent. It is the will of God for us to grow in His Word. He will not feed us with death. Just as eggs have the seed of natural life within them, so also the Word of God possesses the seed of spiritual life. The seed is that part which is able to reproduce the life of Christ within our hearts. Those who cry daily to be conformed into the image of God's Son, Jesus Christ, will not be tormented by scorpions of shame and death. Our precious Lord will give us the Holy Spirit if we will but ask it of Him.

There is no power of fallen Lucifer that is great enough to deceive our God, and as we cleave to Him and obey His Word we are privileged to draw from His tremendous storehouse of wisdom and knowledge.

This concludes our study of Lucifer's Army. Although our enemy is formidable in numbers, tenacity, and power,

yet, he is a defeated foe. The Word of God has pulled back the veil of darkness surrounding these enemies, and ignorance is no longer a hiding place, for the bright light of Truth has shone forth to expose their secrets.

We have seen how disembodied spirits seek full satisfaction of their evil and wicked desires by possessing the body of another. As familiar spirits they speak and foretell safety, happiness and prosperity, thus luring many away from the true Word of God. Unclean spirits fill the world today; even Christians find their minds being assailed by the impure, lustful thoughts of these spirits. Many others fall victim to the misery and wretchedness of the evil spirits which afflict through woe and torment. The desire of the seducing spirit is to entice souls from the paths of virtue and truth, and it often accomplishes its end by flattery and deceit.

More enemies in this army include devils, fallen angels, and gods. All of these are supernatural beings, each with his own special duty or ministry, as it were, against God's people. Working first in the physical realm to bring dumbness and blindness, devils also cause many to become exceedingly fierce. They also vex, and some of them are lunatic devils which take control of the mind. All of these enemies also have power to work identical afflictions in the spiritual realm. Devils inspire betrayal, and they seek to turn us from the Word of God!

Fallen angels use their corrupted glory to usurp worship from God. This they do as they transform themselves into angels of light. As rulers of the pit they bring torment, and, finally, their fighting, warring nature is exercised in heavenly places.

Gods of metal, wood, stone, made in the likeness of God's heavenly creation or His earthly creation, are all strengthened and empowered by the presence of the devils resting upon them. Although each of these supernatural beings differ slightly one from the other, they have the same purpose and goal. They all seek to turn man away from God. It is God whom they desire to affect; men are their tools to strike at God. The devils afflict and torment the body trying to destroy man's fellowship with God. As angels they try to deceive man's spirit with their stolen glory, and thus gain his worship. The gods seek the affection of the soul because they know we cannot love God and mammon. Beware! These devils are out to destroy our love for God and our allegiance to our Creator.

The third class of satanic spirits are the serpent spirits which we encounter in our wilderness experience. Their fiery, burning poison causes men to burn with abnormal lust, to burn with desire for satisfaction outside the will of God, They inflame hearts with bitterness and strife, making them incapable of reacting properly in the normal circumstances of life. These fiery serpents come in through doors left open by rebellion. When we deal with our rebellion, we find Holy Ghost treading power coming up and crushing the heads of these particular serpents.

Scorpions are the fourth and highest realm of warfare. They, too, have a burning fiery nature, and their dwelling place is also in the wilderness. However, their poison and their power is in their tails. When they sting with their tail, they inject great poison of shame into their victim, and render them powerless to offer praise and worship to God or to witness for Him. Great is the power of the enemy, but our mighty Captain, Jesus Christ, has left us well equipped with all the necessary weapons of warfare to wage a successful battle. Perhaps we suffer temporary defeat in some skirmishes, but the end of the whole matter is victory for our Captain, Jesus Christ.

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that 10 man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Revelation 19:11-16).

Jesus Christ the Victor! When the cry goes out, "Who is on the LORD's side," let us be like the sons of Levi, Let every man put on his Christian armor, and with his sword upon his side, go forth as a good soldier of Jesus Christ against these warriors from Lucifer's army. Jesus Christ is our Captain, strong and mighty. In Him is no defeat. Praise His Name forever!

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