

World Harvest presents ...

THE CROSS

&

'The Great Exchange'

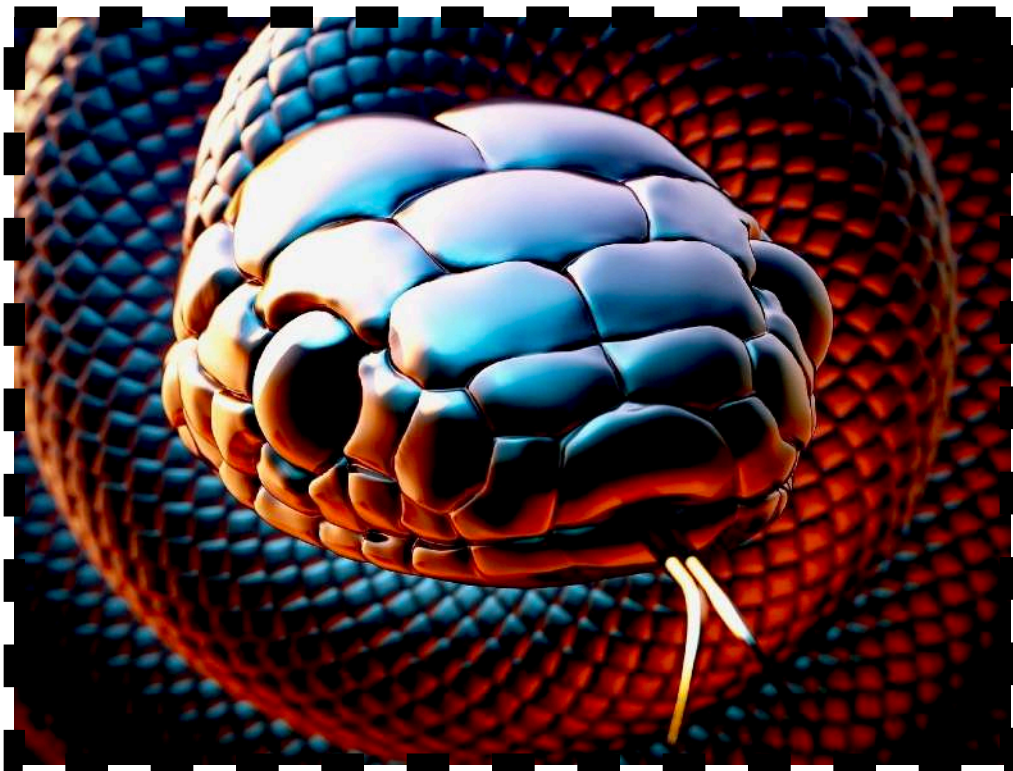
~ PART TEN ~

THE VIPEROUS VILLAIN OF THE CROSS

A Faith Message by Len Lindstrom

Down through the history of recorded time — all good stories have had two things in common — a Super Hero and an evil Arch Villain — and the Bible is no exception — in fact the Bible is the original or true prototype from which virtually all tales of heroes and villains have derived. The only difference is the Bible narrative is true — not fictitious — and our super hero JESUS is real — and the villain who is none other than the devil is every bit real as well!

I can already hear some saying — what — now you want me to believe in a literal tangible devil — I'm still having a hard enough time trying to wrap my head around the reality and true existence of God — and now you expect me



to believe the devil is real as well. But here is the crux of the matter — if we don't believe and accept the entire Bible as the infallible Word of God including the literal existence of the devil — none of the rest of the story will make much sense.

Or as numerous enlightened scholars of the Word have stated over the years — if you don't understand what took place in Genesis 3 and the fall of mankind due to the devil's deceit and insurrection then the rest of the Book will seem completely irrational or senseless — especially the need for the CROSS and Man's eternal redemption!

This dynamic and central truth of the Bible is succinctly summed up in these explicit words of the apostle John — *“For this PURPOSE the Son of God was manifested, that He might DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL.”* 1 John 3:8

Which leads us to a fundamental truth that is absolutely paramount to victory in all manner of conflict, battle or war — including the Battle of all Battles — the Conflict of the Cross — for we must know and understand who we are actually fighting — **KNOW WHO IT IS THAT CHRIST AND WE AS HIS CHILDREN ARE AT WAR WITH** — and we must know why we are fighting!

THE NEED TO KNOW THE REAL ENEMY

Many people are familiar with the secular writings of Sun Tzu (544–496 BC) — the ancient Chinese general, brilliant military strategist and philosopher who lived in the Eastern Zhou period of China about 2500 years ago — and who is generally credited as being the author of *“THE ART OF WAR”* — a widely influential literary work loaded with military strategies which have greatly impacted both Western and East Asian philosophy and military thinking for millennia around the world.

In fact, almost every leader in any major army of the world has read and studied its principles — as have the vast majority of politicians, corporate executives, criminal lawyers and even many sports coaches as the military strategies and tactics articulated in this book designed to help one gain the advantage over their foes or opponents are just as useful and applicable in the political, corporate, legal and even sports arenas as they have proven to be on the bloody battle fields of the world.

It is a book of military stratagems, delay tactics, the use of spies and double agents, the art of making and keeping needed alliances, the use of deceit and deception and even a willingness to temporarily pretend to submit to more powerful foes to catch them off guard plus a myriad of other strategies and trickeries all designed to gain every advantage possible in war — but I mention this book for one reason only — and that is the imperative need to identify and know the enemy — a truth every bit as important in our Christian walk and understanding as it has been on any

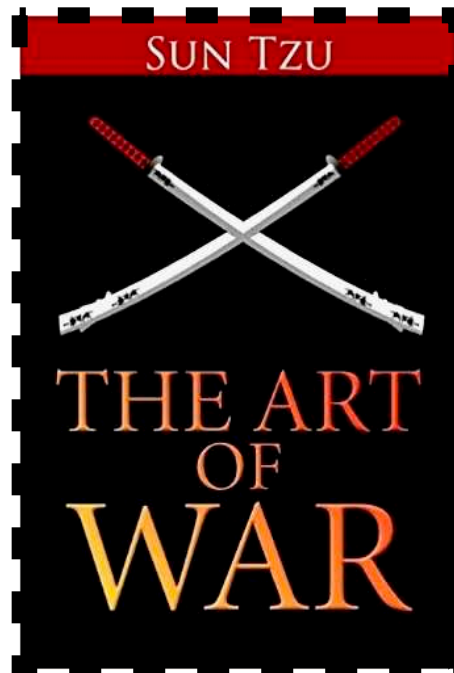
military battle field over the ages!

One of Sun Tzu’s key principles is worded as follows — *“If you **KNOW THE ENEMY** and **KNOW YOURSELF**, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles”* — indicating first and foremost the imperative need to truly know and understand your enemy!

Then he finishes this principle with these two maxims of war and conflict — *“If you **know** yourself but not the **enemy**, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. And if you **know** neither the **enemy** nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.”*

Simply extrapolated — we as believers can never wage a proper or strategic warfare without truly knowing who our enemy is — but we really have no excuse for not knowing who we are in battle with because the Bible clearly informs us.

“FOR WE DO NOT WRESTLE AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darkness of this age, against Spiritual Hosts of Wickedness in the heavenly places.”
Ephesians 6:12



Sad to say but this puts all unbelievers as well as a lot of nominal Christians at a very serious disadvantage before they even start — simply because they do not believe in the devil — and many have absolutely no idea who they are in Christ — so they readily fail to qualify under Sun Tzu’s military advice on both critical counts.

They don’t know their real ENEMY — and they don’t know THEMSELVES — which according to the military insight of this brilliant strategist means they will most likely lose every battle they become engaged in — but if we as true believers would take time to search the Word and learn who or what kind of spiritual forces we are really fighting — and who we have truly become and now are in Christ

Jesus — and rely solely on the *“Greater One”* within us — then we could — and likely would — win every battle!

But here’s the tragic reality of such lack of understanding of biblical truth and revelation — if you do not believe in a literal spirit being known as the DEVIL you will constantly be blaming God for all the evils of this world — even though God is not the author of evil, injustice, sin or sickness nor any of the other horrific atrocities and problems of our day!

Now consider the Cross in light of this spiritual fact — do you realize it was not the Pharisees who were the real enemies of Christ — they were mere men so bound up in their legalistic religious views that they were totally blinded to the reality of who Jesus was — but they were not the real enemy!

Nor was it the Romans with their myriad of hardened soldiers and ruthless leaders for they also were mere men — just political pawns in a highly oppressive, cruel and heartless regime but they were not the real enemy that Christ was contending with either — NO — the real enemy was and always has been the devil!

So just who exactly is the devil and what do we know of him or his ways and his origin?

From comical cartoons to grotesque gargoyles, most can immediately recognize an image of the devil — vividly depicted in colourful caricature as almost any kind of deplorable being from a split-tongued talking serpent to some kind of goat-headed dastardly dude with long black horns, hooved feet and either hairy legs or clad in his infamous red long-johns.

But regardless of imagery, this malevolent miscreant — along with his hoards of demon spirits — is the one who for many millennia has struck people with fear and a foreboding sense of present and dangerous evil — as he is the malignant antithesis of all things good, safe, wholesome and divine.

But such a statement immediately poses a serious question that we must answer before we get into the heart of this spiritual Battle of the Cross — in fact it is an absolutely imperative question that must be answered if we are to understand the Cross — and it is simply this — did God create a Devil?

DANTE'S INFERNO A RELIGIOUS VIEW OF SATAN

Before we get into a little biblical exegesis on the devil and his true origin and character — let's briefly consider two of the world's most important literary works which have highly influenced the majority of people's perceptions of satan and hell throughout the recent ages — namely the Medieval poem penned by Dante entitled "*Inferno*" — and an equally famous work entitled "*Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained*" wrote centuries later in Baroque style by the Renaissance poet Milton.

And then to round this topic out, we shall briefly consider a few excerpts from the Book of Enoch since of all literature ever written — whether one considers it canonical or non-canonical — no other book has had as much influence on the topic and understanding of satan and demons as the disputed scrolls of Enoch.

Nevertheless, aside from the actual Bible texts which we shall shortly explore plus the extra or non-canonical book of Enoch — no literary work made such a profound impact in its time on man's spiritual thinking about the devil and hell than that written by the Italian poet and philosopher, Dante Alighieri (1265 – 1321) —

most often referred to simply as DANTE — and his voluminous work entitled "*INFERNO*" — which makes up the first lengthy section of a three-part masterpiece known as "*THE DIVINE COMEDY*".

For more than 700 years this book has been widely acclaimed as the most important poetic tome of the Middle Ages and one of the greatest literary works of all

time — and still to this day the *INFERNO* remains literature's most hallowed and graphic vision of Hell and the Devil ever to be penned by the imagination and inspiration of mortal man — so it is certainly deserving of a brief review as we broach this topic of satan and the battle of the Cross.

Dante began this literary epic in 1308 and finally completed it in 1320, only a year before his death — with its 100 cantos divided into three major sections — *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso* — all of which deal with the "*State of Souls After Death*" and divine justice meted out as due punishment or reward as the poet describes his own travels through "*Hell, Purgatory and on into Paradise or Heaven*" — in which imaginative vision of the afterlife he draws heavily on Roman Catholic theology and medieval world-view as it had developed in the Western Church by the 14th century.

In Dante's *Inferno*, the pilgrim who also carries the name Dante (the poet himself) — is accompanied by three guides — Virgil the ancient Roman poet (who represents human reason and philosophy) — Saint Bernard (who represents contemplative mysticism and deep devotion to Mary in the hope of ascending to God) — and Beatrice, the love of Dante's life who died at age 24 and whom he saw as a consoling saint guiding him into Paradise (who in the poem represents divine revelation, theology, faith and grace).

Which in my view, if one were to categorize these three guides as the three primary influences of thought life in the here and now they would equate to — all human sense-ruled thinking including science and philosophy



— religious confusion, erroneous doctrine and distortion of scriptural truths coupled with misplaced or misguided faith — and divine revelation and true faith in God's infallible Word — which could explain why there is such an intense battle being waged in most people's minds between natural sense knowledge, religious misconceptions and the reality of God and His Word.

But Dante plunges his readers straight into this unforgettable underworld and one of the most graphic visions of hell ever created — starting with a deceptively simple but now legendary tercet — “Midway upon the journey of life, I found myself within a forest dark, For the straightforward pathway had been lost.”

In this first part of the epic, Dante finds himself lost and perishing in his sins and he is led by the renowned Roman poet Virgil who lived 1300 years earlier (70-19 BC) through the Gate to Hell which bears the inscription, “Abandon all hope, ye who enter here.”

The first or outer circle of Dante's hell is called Limbo — the place where he believes all virtuous pagans and unbaptized souls end up — which is still hell but not apparently not quite as bad a hell.

The second circle in is called Lust with its unbridled Sexual Desires and Passions, the third Gluttony and unrestrained appetites and from there on, circle by concentric circle, Dante lays out what he believes to be categorically worsening types of sins with increasing degrees of punishment — listed as Greed, Anger, Heresy — and then the seventh circle called Violence wherein the poet includes Murder and Sodomy — and then the eighth circle which is Fraud which has ten ditches — including those dug special for sorcerers, simonists, seducers, hypocrites and (I like this one) unscrupulous politicians — a ditch that must be very full today!

The final ninth and centre circle is reserved explicitly for the greatest acts of Treachery and Betrayal — which inner circle finds the vilest of sinners encased alive in solid ice — and Lucifer himself stuck and imprisoned to his waist right in the centre of it all along with some of the world's most infamous traitors and backstabbers.

As Dante journeys further and further down into these nine circles of Hell, he is led through a myriad of nightmarish landscapes crawling deep with worms and maggots, burning tar, fetid cesspools, viper pits, frozen lakes, and boiling rivers of blood as he witnesses sinners being eternally beaten, burned, eaten, pecked by birds, defecated upon, torn to pieces by demons and

locked in burning tombs as infernos forever — in ever darkening and increasingly punitive measures of sin and retribution as each circle of hell becomes more wicked, vile and grotesque.

As the poet passes through these various concentric regions of hell he encounters multitudes of the most fascinating characters known to the classical and medieval world — the silver-tongued Ulysses, lustful Francesca da Rimini, the heretical Farinata degli Uberti, and scores of other intriguing and highly notorious figures — all real life or classical people of the time or centuries before — and all now imprisoned in their various circles of deserving hell and punishment depending on the severity and depravity of their sins.

But here is the principle point which has left an indelible mark on much of society's perceptions of satan for the last 700 years — as in Dante's INFERNO — satan is vividly portrayed as a gigantic demon — already incarcerated in hell — and frozen mid-breast in solid ice at the very centre of hell.

The appearance of satan as first seen by Dante as they approached the centre of this innermost circle through the thick fog and gloom of hell was gigantic — in fact far bigger

than any giant or behemoth of legend or lore — and he was exceedingly repulsive — with three ugly different coloured faces sticking out three sides of his bulging head and a pair of monstrous bat-like wings bigger than any sails on the ocean affixed under each of his three chins — and as Satan beat those massive wings, they created an icy wind filled with such cold “un-love” or voidness of love that it froze the waters solid surrounding him and all the other sinners trapped in this Ninth Circle — and winds so strong they were felt throughout all the other circles of Hell — literally sealing those so snared in their tragic states of eternal doom.

And as portrayed by Dante, in each of satan's three slobbering mouths was entrapped a tortured sinner whose head he was continually chewing upon — but these were not just any sinners — the first was none other than Judas Iscariot — the eternally despised and forsaken traitor disciple who sold out our blessed Redeemer for 30 pieces of silver — the second, Marcus Junius BRUTUS — the Roman senator who was the most infamous of the assassins of Julius Caesar whose “Et Tu Brute” act of betrayal and treason made his notoriety as a traitor second only to that of the biblical Judas — and the third was Gaius CASSIUS Longinus — the Roman general, brother-in-law to Brutus and co-conspirator in the assassination of Caesar.



All three of these most notorious of traitors were not only found locked in the innermost labyrinth of this horrendous ninth circle of Dante's Hell — but each one had been literally stuffed into one of the Devil's three drooling slobbering mouths where they are being continually chewed on between his filthy yellowed teeth and agonizingly gnawed upon for all eternity.

Of course, most biblical scholars whether Catholic or Protestant consider satan to have been "*a once splendid being — the most perfect of God's creatures — from whom all personality has since drained away*" — as the real satan, also known as Lucifer, was formerly the Angel of Light who once tried to usurp the power of God and as punishment, God had banished him out of Heaven to an eventual (but not fully enacted yet) eternity in Hell.

Satan's plan to take over God's place and throne had immediately backfired and God banished him from Heaven — and Dante uses or builds upon this idea of satan being physically hurled out of heaven with such force as to create a physical place inside the earth which was the result of satan's impact with the earth — as according to Dante, the pit which the Pilgrim climbs down to reach the centre of Hell and the abode of the damned is literally the hole that was made by satan when he was flung out of heaven to earth — and the extra dirt which was forcefully pushed out by the impact formed Mount Purgatory on the other side of the Earth.

As one can readily see, Dante possessed a fairly fertile imagination and he took great liberty and literary license in translating his theology into medieval prose. Couple that with the fact that even though Dante was an extremely devoted Catholic, it is somewhat ironic that he believed the pope of his day, Pope Boniface VIII, was an arrogant and power-crazed ruler — all of which factors left their impact on Dante's *Inferno* and his perception of the devil and hell.

But for whatever it's worth — Dante illustrates a far less powerful satan than most standard depictions of the devil — as he sees him as having been reduced to nothing more than a slobbering, speechless, fallen being who receives the same punishments in Hell as the rest of sinners.

Regardless of what one thinks of his theology — there should be little doubt that Dante vividly illustrates satan's grotesque physical and spiritual attributes — nor little doubt as to why the *Divine Comedy* is often said to be one of the primary influences for all modern day fiction and subsequent portrayals of such varied and imaginative depictions of satan and the demonic realm so popular in today's entertainment and horror movie industry.



But in actuality, the overall plot of *The Divine Comedy* is quite simple — as it chronicles the journey of a man from darkness and error of sin who has been miraculously enabled to visit the souls in Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise — guided through the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*

realms by the historic poet Virgil — and then guided by his loving Beatrice into *Paradiso* and the revelation of the divine light which culminates in his beatific or rapturous vision of God.

The picture one gets — even though quite unscriptural — is that of a long and gradual ascent — as Dante begins in hell, moves on to purgatory and finally reaches heaven — and to an even greater degree than John Milton who came after him, Dante regarded himself as "*a privileged witness of these realities who was sent back as another apostle to reveal God's purposes.*"

PARADISE LOST PARADISE REGAINED

Now let's jump forward about 350 years to the middle of the Renaissance period and another world famous epic poem on the devil and hell entitled "*Paradise Lost — Paradise Regained*" which was penned in blank verse by the 17th-century English poet John Milton (1608–1674).

This is another massive literary work originally compiled in a series of 10 books of prose detailing the rebellion of satan, revolt in heaven, expulsion of the devil and his angels and the seduction of Adam and Eve in the Garden, followed by the devil's return to hell as the great deceiver who plunged God's creation into sin and separation — the one whose expulsion was caused by a tragic self-inflicted flaw — as satan brought about

both the eternal damnation of himself and his fellow fallen angels as well as the downfall of all mankind — which reveals a much more accurate version of this Villain of the Cross.

Like Dante's *Inferno*, this massive poem took a long time in writing as Milton began *Paradise Lost* in 1658 and didn't finish until 1663 — five years and more than 10,000 lines of poetic verse later — but it was considered the "*magnum opus*" of all his works and solidified his reputation as one of the greatest English poets of all time, elevating him to almost the same literary status and fame as Shakespeare (1564-1616).

The poem starts with the fallen angels who were cast out of heaven chained in a lake of fire in hell — and the first portrayal or picture of God is actually voiced by these fallen angels who from their chained and prejudiced perspective describe God as a highly questionable tyrant and blame him for their fall — setting the tone for the poet to answer the question — a question that almost all Bible disputers and God rejectors have posed down through the ages and still ask to this day — IS GOD JUST and IS GOD FAIR!

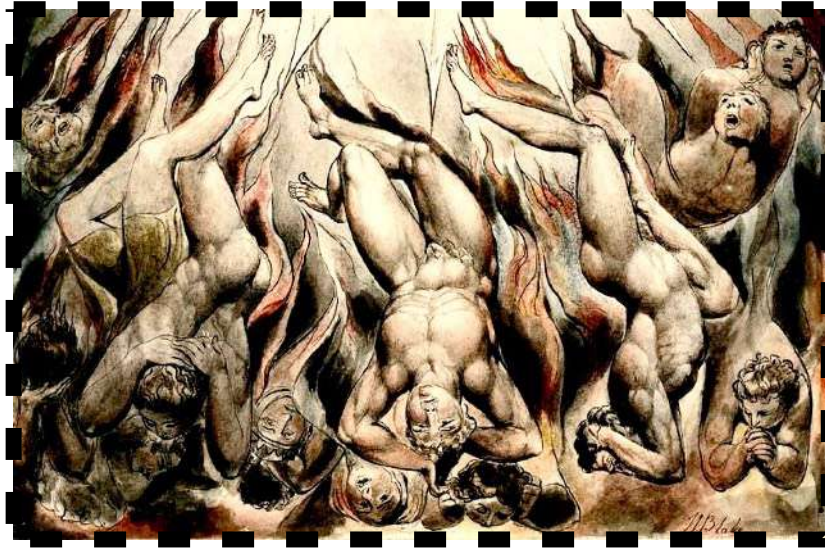
Milton gradually works the story around to answer that question but meanwhile — satan and his fallen angels manage to free themselves from their chains in the Lake of Fire and fly to its subterranean shore where the devil exhibits his great resilience and determination — the embodiment of all perverted reason who uses his eloquence and talents for wholly corrupt ends.

Hence, once free of their fetters, satan along with a few of his fiendish friends such as Mammon and Mulcibar — tap into their unrelenting sin of pride to develop the lofty idea that "*Hell is bad, but with a few improvements we can make it a lot better — even attractive — and with the right improvements Hell may even be made nice enough that others may want to relocate.*"

The poet uses this rare touch of sardonic humour to establish the building of Hell's Capital which would be named "*PANDEMONIUM*" — a brand new word that Milton himself coined by joining the Latin word "*pan*" (all) with "*demonium*" (demons) — thus establishing the capital of Hell as "*The Place of All Demons*" — and the devil and his fallen angels go to work building their underworld citadel from which to run their evil affairs.

With the passage of time, the word "*Pandemonium*" came to mean any place of wild disorder, noise, and confusion — but its true origin was to be the citadel of hell and domain of the demonic.

Inside this new capital, the rebel angels strategize and debate whether they should begin another war with God — but it's the crafty Beelzebub who exercises a little more pragmatism and ingenuity as he suggests that rather than commence another war which they cannot win (as it obviously didn't go so well the first time) — that they attempt to corrupt God's beloved new creation — humankind — whom God has placed in the Garden.



Satan agrees, and as the leader of this ragtag bunch of rebel rejects volunteers to do the dirty job himself — thereby securing his position as the true leader of Hell —

and as he prepares to leave Hell, he is met at the gate by his two children, SIN and DEATH, who follow him — already conjuring up the means of eventually building a "*wide gate*" and "*broad way*" to span the distance between between Earth and Hell.

Of course, these malignant offspring of satan have proven down through the ages to be two of mankind's greatest enemies — SIN and DEATH — horrific and direct products of the rebellion of satan — and they are also two of the most figuratively and graphically described characters in Milton's poem.

SIN, who is none other than the devil's own daughter who sprung fully-formed straight out of satan's head even while he was still in heaven — as scripture says, "*perfect till Iniquity was found in thee*" *Ezekiel 28:15* — has the shape of a beautiful woman above the waist and that of a serpent below — and her middle is ringed with "*Hell Hounds*" who periodically burrow into her womb and gnaw on her entrails.

Then satan impregnates his own daughter SIN and she gives birth to DEATH — who in turn rapes his mother begetting the mass of hellish beasts who torment her lower half — which twisted incestuous diabolical relationship between these three devilish entities — satan, Sin and Death — depicts an unholy infernal trinity of evil, filth and blasphemy.

When SIN is cast out of heaven into Hell along with satan she becomes even more monstrous and is given

the keys to this dark hellish domain — but she immediately turns the keys over to satan — as they await the time when SIN and DEATH shall enter the earth and infect all humans with their contagious condition.

With an evil craving to carve out a place where he can at last reign supreme, satan completes the long and arduous journey from hell to the Garden of God — lurking outside until he can elude the watchful eyes of the guardian cherubs and the flaming sword by leaping like a wolf over the wall — and then he perches himself as a cormorant, a huge bird of prey, high in the branches of the Tree of Life to surveil the scene and await the opportune moment to strike.

Interestingly, it is at this point in the narrative that Milton captures what could be a sense of Lucifer's remorse — as he looks across the beauty of Eden with pangs of regret — realizing what he has forfeited by his rebellion — even momentarily contemplating if he should ask God for forgiveness but he knows his repentance would be a total farce — and then reluctantly acknowledges that God exists as Ruler Supreme without equal.

"O sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams, That brings me to remembrance from what state I fell; how glorious once above thy sphere; Till pride and worse ambition threw me down, Warring in heaven, against heaven's Matchless King!"

Then, taking on the form of a serpent, he catches Eve alone — coils up to get her attention — and employs one of his most insidious and enticing tactics of deception as he begins to flatter her for her beauty, grace and godliness.

Amazed to hear a snake talking, Eve is enticed as the beguiling serpent tells her that he gained the gifts of speech and intellect by eating the savoury fruit of one of the trees in the garden — and then continues flattering her by claiming it was this special fruit that gave him the wisdom to seek her out so he could worship her beauty.

The Seducer was firing on all eight cylinders that day — and by the time the devil showed her which tree it was Eve's head was so filled with his deceptive praise and twisted flattery — coupled with his lie that God actually

wanted her and Adam to show their independence so they too could *"become like gods"* — she abandoned the last of her resistance and partook of the forbidden fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

As she plucks the fruit and takes a bite — to be quickly followed by Adam who eats as well out of love for his wife — choosing to fall with her rather than remain pure and lose her — the whole earth immediately feels its wound and all nature sighs in woe — mankind has fallen — the curse has come — and they shall both be driven out of the Garden — and satan's two hideous offspring will follow them — SIN and DEATH.



Now let's do a few quick takeaways from Paradise Lost — beginning with one of the most well known and illustrious quotes of the entire poem — *"The mind is its own place, and in itself, can MAKE A HEAVEN OF HELL, A HELL OF HEAVEN"*

Almost all psychologists and Christian counsellors would readily agree that is a brilliant declaration — but unfortunately it was not God who said it in the poem but rather the devil — in fact, much like a modern day *"positive-thinking guru"*, the devil makes this self-empowerment statement while still chained in the lake of fire — as he determines

to transform the hell he is in.

Many of the 17th Century Romanticists of Milton's day envisioned the *"mind"* as the seat of all imagination — the force of our very existence — the power that puts our individual worlds into motion — and the very idea or concept of freedom is sealed within it — which elevates Milton's *"satan"* to the state of being sublime for the ideals of freedom he embodies.

Thus, if Paradise Lost teaches us anything, it should be to never underestimate satan's powerful ability to pervert and twist human reason, logic and intellect to his own purposes — as in Milton's portrayal, satan represents freedom of mind — unbridled thinking — self seeking for self acknowledgement — searching for one's own place independent of all including God — reclaiming oneself for oneself — and if not to be self-begotten or self-created to at least be self-sufficient and self-developed — which according to some literary critics makes Milton's satan appear as pure *"Poetic Genius"* and the *"Genius of Liberty"*.

This exalted but sadly twisted concept of total freedom of thought independent of our Creator which ideology gave root to satan's rebellious attitude is sadly shared by many to this day — as is this Traitor Angel's second most infamous line in the poem which states — *"BETTER TO REIGN IN HELL, THAN TO SERVE IN HEAVEN."*

Many critics have actually sided with the devil and stated that *Paradise Lost* is *"a fierce argument about God's justice"* and that Milton's God has been deemed too inflexible, cruel, legalistic and unfeeling — but by contrast it is actually satan who exhibits a dark charisma — as the poet states — *"he pleased the ear"* — while exhibiting a revolutionary demand for total self-determination.

Lucifer's speech in the poem — symbolic of much of the political turmoil in 17th Century Europe as well as much dissent and rebellion today — is peppered with the language of democratic entitlements — free choice — all rights — no responsibilities — no restrictions — no servitude — no overlords — total independence — which lawless sentiments led to the devil making his infamous declaration — *"BETTER TO REIGN IN HELL, THAN TO SERVE IN HEAVEN."*

According to the British Museum website and a BBC documentary — some nonconformist, anti-establishment Romanticist poets such as the intellectual atheist Percy Shelley (1792-1822) and the luminary William Blake (1757-1827) found a kindred spirit in this depiction of satan and classified him as the HERO of *Paradise Lost* — with Shelley stating that *"Milton's Devil as a moral being is...far superior to his God"* — a fitting comment for a Christ-rejecting atheist to make.

Blake went on to state that — *"The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devil's Party without knowing it"* — and Shelley wrapped up their analysis with the words — *"Nothing can exceed the energy and magnificence of the character of satan as expressed in Paradise Lost."*

Both of these critics delighted in the fact that satan rejects what Milton refers to as God's *"splendid vassalage"* — his former high position and privilege of

exalted service to God in heaven — refusing to submit to what satan himself deemed *"the Tyranny of Heaven"* — seeking rather to live *"free, and to none accountable, preferring hard liberty before the easy yoke of servile pomp."*

Thus with no allegiance to anyone but himself — the devil is portrayed as the very first or original revolutionary — which has given rise to many more taking the devil's side in this poem — a dangerous perception embraced by many revolutionary thinkers over time including, as just one quick example, the infamous community activist and political theorist Saul Alinsky (1909-1972).

In the prologue to his much lauded by some and denounced by others 1971 book entitled *"Rules For Radicals"* — which is a type of modern day Communist Manifesto and manual for Political Warfare, Alinsky pays tribute to satan, the rebellious angel, with this epigraph found in the book's foreword regarding Lucifer which states — *"the first radical known to man who rebelled against the establishment and did it so effectively that he at least won his own kingdom — LUCIFER."*

While some have attempted to say Alinsky was not paying homage to the devil as an icon of revolution — his comments just prior to his death made during a 1972 interview with *Playboy* magazine seem to contradict those sentiments — as he stated that while he identifies as being Jewish, he would readily choose to

go to Hell — *"Hell would be heaven for me,"* because it is full of *"have-nots"* and *"they're my kind of people."*

Apparently old Beelzebub's philosophy is still working — as with a few improvements to Hell — or at least a few adjustments to one's conception of Hell — it could sound *"nice enough that others may want to move there"* — and the devil's seeds of insurrection and rebellion sown throughout the entire world are still bearing fruit.

But I do believe if one were to ask any of the multitudes who have had near-death experiences or died and were fortunate enough to come back after having seen hell and its agonies or temporarily tasted its forlorn feelings of eternal lostness or what Milton described as *"Darkness Visible"* — like flames that give no light — absolute blackness thick and palpable — the total absence of light and total absence of God — they would certainly disagree.



Interesting and unlike most earlier (and later) representations of hell — Milton does not see hell as a place designed by God to torture sinners — a point with which I readily concur — but rather as the eternal domain of the fallen angels where — according to the poet's analogy — these rebellious beings build a kingdom, play music and freely debate — but void of all divine presence, guidance, correction and eternal light or love — it is these fallen angels themselves who turn their eternal hell into a place of even greater suffering.

But one must give Milton credit for the challenge he undertook as he clearly states near the start of his poem that his main purpose was to *"JUSTIFY THE WAYS OF GOD TO MEN"* — and he certainly did not make the task easy -- nor did he hold back in using the devil's arrogance, cunning and charisma to unjustly hurl accusations at God — much the same as people have done throughout the ages — but God is more than able to counteract any accusation or vile insult!

To meet the challenge Milton must attempt to reconcile both the paradox of human free will and divine foreknowledge with the paradox of human suffering and God's goodness — no small challenge for anyone to do!

But there is a scripture that readily comes to mind which to me reveals both much of the source of our problems and the compassionate heart of God to reconcile — *"For all have sinned and FALL SHORT of the glory of God"* Romans 3:23 — and fortunately for us the inspired words of the Bible do not stop there — for this is precisely where both the battle and the work of the Cross kick in to make all the difference.

"Being JUSTIFIED FREELY by His GRACE through the REDEMPTION that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a PROPITIATION (appeasement, to REGAIN favour) by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance (long suffering and mercy) God had PASSED OVER THE SINS that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS." Romans 3:24-25

WHY — *"that HE (GOD) might be JUST — and the JUSTIFIER of the one who has faith in Jesus."* Romans 3:26

Thus, in one great act of love and sinless sacrifice — the demands and punishment of sin would be fully met

— and God would be both JUSTIFIED and the JUSTIFIER!

This is what scripture clearly teaches — and it is precisely what took place on the Cross during the Great Exchange — but unfortunately it is not the route that Milton took in his attempt to justify man to God.

Paradise Lost is 10,565 lines in length and brimming with eloquence and poetic language — but the second section — *Paradise Regained* is only 2,065 lines long — less than one fifth — not as flowery — much simpler — more direct — and more inviting to the simplistic ear of common man.

The main character or protagonist in *"Lost"* is satan — who some even see as the hero — while the true hero in *"Regained"* is indisputably Jesus Christ — but from my much simpler and far less intellectual or high brow perspective there are some serious flaws in Milton's exegesis.

Paradise was lost by Adam and Eve through yielding to satan's temptation — a tenet which is basically true from all scriptural perspectives — but in what I consider to be Milton's faulty analysis — Paradise was said to be regained by virtue of Christ, the Son of God as a man,

resisting satan's temptations in the wilderness.

The poet goes to great lengths emphasizing the human element of hunger — both spiritual and physical — drawing on the *"Temptation of Christ"* in the Gospel of Luke for its inspiration — and devotes most of this second poem to this trial of temptation.

Milton considers satanic temptation to be the primary instigator of all evil and vice — and emphasizes Christ's humanity and His overcoming of satan's temptation in the wilderness as the model or divine prototype for us to follow in order to regain our standing with God.

Simply put, he depicts Christ's victory over satan's temptations as the key to restoration implying the same opportunity exists for mankind to come back into fellowship with God by also overcoming our temptations.

In other words — the Cross does not appear to be necessary or at least it is definitely not the chief instrument of redemption — it is all about the virtue of overcoming temptation — just overcome temptation as Jesus did in the wilderness and you will be saved — as if that was even possible in our own power.



Now with all due respect — Milton was brilliant — a true literary genius — and of an intellectual calibre far exceeding any I could ever even dream of laying claim to — and much of his allegorical and poetic portrayals of the biblical story truly masterful — but when it comes to the single most critical element being our eternal salvation I have only one thing to say.

Pardon me — but that sounds like a bunch of poetic hogwash and spiritual blither — for in so inferring Milton totally bypasses the true message of the Gospel — which must have the Cross at its very centre!

The fact that Christ overcame Satan's temptations in the desert certainly illustrates His preeminence and great superiority over the devil even from His pure humanity side — and provides a powerful example for how we as His redeemed can overcome the temptations of both the devil and the flesh by using His Word — declaring as Jesus did, *"It is Written"* — but it does absolutely nothing to remove the sins of fallen mankind — nothing to make us right with God — and nothing to regain what was lost in the First Adam — and certainly nothing to truly regain Paradise.

Salvation is only in Christ Jesus — as already referred to in this revelatory verse which we do well to take another look at — *"whom God set forth as a PROPITIATION by His blood."* Romans 3:25

As I was writing this, I was struck afresh by the definition of *"Propitiation"* by Merriam Webster — *"the act of gaining or REGAINING the favour or goodwill of someone or something; the act of propitiating; appeasement; a sacrifice in propitiation of God or the gods"* — and only the sinless sacrifice of Christ could accomplish that — and if Paradise was to be regained it could only come about through the Cross where Christ sacrificed and shed His own holy blood!

Compare that indisputable spiritual truth to what Milton wrote — *"A fairer Paradise"* is foreshadowed by *"this glorious triumph where man shall dwell secure, when time shall be of Tempter and Temptation without fear"* — as the angels proclaim, Christ will revitalize the flaccid garden — *"now thou hast avenged supplanted Adam, and BY VANQUISHING TEMPTATION HAST REGAINED LOST PARADISE."*

We would expect better from Milton — after all Dante was a Catholic and perhaps more prone to embrace a Gospel of Works — but Milton was a Protestant — a Calvinist no less — and yet he somehow falls into the

same age-old futile trap of attempting *"JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS"* — and salvation supposedly achieved by what we do through our good works or improved conduct or by resisting temptation rather than by what Christ did for us on the Cross alone!

This classic work on the devil and hell has been dissected by myriads of renowned scholars with many — especially in more modern times — ending up dismayed that Milton seems to reject the popular Reformation understanding of the *"penal-substitutionary"* theory of Christ's atonement —

and that he was uncomfortable with the Crucifixion of Jesus as God's only means of human salvation — while others argue that a closer reading of *Paradise Lost* and his *"De Doctrina Christiana"* reveal that he did believe Jesus' death on the cross affected the atonement.

But regardless of Milton's true belief — there is ever so little mention of the Cross in this epic writing — just as there is so little of the Cross in so many preacher's preaching

today — which is also the reason I believe there is so little power in the pulpit today!

But the bottom line is this — Paradise was definitely Lost in the Garden — and it is only through the Battle of the Cross that Paradise could be REGAINED!

As such in the midst of such poetic genius — in light of one of the greatest literary masters of all time — amidst speech so eloquent it flows like liquid text — there is still the high and likely possibility of grave error and gross distortion in the writings of man — which brings us full circle back to our introductory comments and our dire need for the *"Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation"*.

So once again — it is no wonder Paul so ardently stated, *"When I came to you, I did not come with EXCELLENCE OF SPEECH — (poetic eloquence) — or of (earthly) wisdom — (understanding of this world with all its fleshly pomp and coveted accolades) — declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except JESUS CHRIST and Him CRUCIFIED."* 1 Corinthians 2:1-2

Which leads us to one final famous line of Milton which states, *"DEATH is the Golden Key that opens the PALACE OF ETERNITY"* — and when that door swings open we need ensure we have not succumbed to the evil one's enticing deception of trying to establish our own righteousness — but be found solely and completely trusting on that which was freely and fully achieved for us through the Cross!



DID GOD CREATE A DEVIL ORIGIN OF EVIL

But who exactly is the devil — and do our modern day conceptions of satan hold any resemblance to the devil in the Bible — be it some red-skinned horned hellion with pitchfork and tail out of a comic book — or Dante's great triple-bat-winged slobbering beast now locked in ice in the underworld — or Milton's slippery-tongued side-winding swindler who was the world's first free-thinking radical revolutionary — or perhaps something even far more sinister.

And most important of all — DID GOD CREATE HIM AS A DEVIL — or did something happen that transformed him into a such a fearful fiend.

We know the devil is universally considered the personification of all evil and the nemesis of everything good and decent — and we find a myriad of caricatures and depictions of his malignant character in almost every culture, creed and country under a vast variety of names and titles — but in the Holy Ghost inspired texts of the Bible he is best known as *LUCIFER* — *SATAN* — the *PRINCE of DARKNESS* — the *LORD of the FLIES* — and the *ANTICHRIST* — to name just a few.

And his influence and varied roles are best depicted by some of his descriptive titles — such as the “*FATHER OF LIES*” *John 8:44* — the “*RULER of the power of the air*” *Ephesians 2:2* — “*BEELZEBUB* — the *RULER of the demons*” *Matthew 10:25, Mark 3:22, Luke 11:15* — the “*ACCUSER of the Brethren*” *Revelation 12:10* — and especially one of his most highly explanatory but misunderstood titles as the usurper or little “*GOD OF THIS WORLD*” *2 Corinthians 4:4* — which is the primary role we shall shortly deal with in this Battle of the Ages!

But first, back to our key question — did God create this one known as Lucifer and satan as a devil — or is his malignant nature as the villain of all villains the result and unintended product of his own demented decision and making!

Of course, this is a loaded question which could easily devolve into a multi-faceted debate of encyclopedic proportion on the origins of the devil and the sources of all evil — but we shall endeavour to limit this to a few

simple but key biblical points — just enough to show that God did not create a devil — even though the Bible is explicitly clear that the devil does exist — and that God created all things!

So let's quickly consider these few indisputable biblical points to settle this age-old conundrum.

The Apostle John begins his Gospel by expounding on the eternal deity of THE WORD which became FLESH — the One we call the Incarnate Christ — of Whom he declared, “*ALL THINGS were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*” *John 1:3*

The Apostle Paul echoed this same truth of Christ the Creator, “*For by Him ALL THINGS were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were CREATED THROUGH HIM AND FOR HIM.*” *Colossians 1:16*

Even John the Revelator in the last and final book of the Bible stated, “*You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honour and power; For You created ALL THINGS, And by Your will they exist and were created.*” *Revelation 4:11*

So it appears readily obvious that God is the Creator of all things — but did God create a devil — that is the paramount question right now.

It is of interest that we find our first clue to this paradox in the very first chapter of the Bible which states that God created all things “*Very Good!*”

Listen to this verse — “*And God saw EVERYTHING He had made, and behold, it was VERY GOOD.*” *Genesis 1:31* (*Hebrew Meh-ode — exceedingly, abundantly, greatly good — pleasant, excellent, rich, prosperous, bountiful, happily and morally good*) — it simply does not get any better than that! Creation was perfect in every way!

And “*Everything*” had to include all the angels God had created — as well as man whom he made “*in His own image*” — after which the Bible states God quit creating and He rested.

So whatever was made was already made and the Bible clearly states it was all VERY GOOD — including all the angelic beings — in fact, perfection, beauty, peace and harmony were seen everywhere in creation — but then something diabolical happened!



THE ANOINTED CHERUB

Now listen to this description from the book of Ezekiel — a somewhat difficult text for some to interpret but almost all scholars readily affirm it describes the origin of the one who would become known as the devil who was originally described as the “*ANOINTED CHERUB*” — as seen in the veiled language of Old Testament prophecy where the King of Tyre is referred to as a cherub who was once in the Garden of Eden and walked amidst the stones of fire.

But of course the natural earthly king of the city of Tyre was never in the Garden of Eden nor was he ever an anointed angel or cherub walking amidst fiery stones — so this is really a vivid and figurative depiction of the advent of the evil one!

There has been much confusion and guesswork regarding the rank and status of this exalted spirit being who became the devil — was he an archangel like Michael and possibly like Gabriel — was he perhaps even the highest or most exalted of all God’s angelic beings — we don’t really know and the Bible doesn’t tell us — so we should not be so foolish to join the ranks of those who need an answer to everything even if they have to make one up — but here is what we do know from the Bible!

“You were the ANOINTED CHERUB who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.” Ezekiel 28:13

God is describing the origin of Lucifer — and here we see him prior to his fall in an exalted position ministering directly to the Lord — one of the principle cherub who was in such elevated position he literally ministered to God around the immediate throne.

Now catch this detail — “*You were PERFECT (totally upright, sincere, truthful, without blemish, perfect) in all your ways from the day you were created, UNTIL INIQUITY WAS FOUND IN YOU.*” Ezekiel 28:15

Perfect — that is how God created him — flawless — without blemish — perfect in all ways — but somehow INIQUITY — apparently in the form of jealousy, pride, rebellion and insurrection — developed within him!

“Your HEART WAS LIFTED UP (grew exceedingly proud) because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendour; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you.” Ezekiel 28:17

So what was Lucifer’s primary sin — what caused him to fall — what motivated God to cast him as profane and polluted out of heaven — it was PRIDE — rotten, stinking, self-exalting, God-defying pride!

Strange is it not — his own exquisite beauty and stunning splendour which God so graciously endowed and gifted him with had spiritually blinded him to what was real and true and ultimately led to his own pitiful downfall.

Little wonder Paul admonishes his young preaching protege — “*Not a novice, lest being PUFFED UP he fall into the CONDEMNATION of the DEVIL*” — 1 Timothy 3:6 — the very sin that took Lucifer down and which this insidious enemy of every human soul has used to destroy multitudes ever since!

And when the sin of pride rose up within Lucifer, God had no choice but to cast him out of heaven — He could not allow this now-degenerate angel to stay there polluting the heavenly things — “*Therefore I cast you as a PROFANE THING (desecrated, defiled, polluted) out of the mountain of God*” Ezekiel 28:13-15



If one studies deeper into the text of Ezekiel 28 we find that Lucifer’s PRIDE was generated by three primary things — first his personal BEAUTY — as Lucifer was stunning in appearance to the point his elegance and beauty would no doubt take one’s breath away — second his RICHES as every precious stone was his covering — talk about

being decked out with “*bling*” as he was literally bedazzled with diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, topaz and more — and then his WISDOM which imparted brilliance, sagacity and hidden knowledge was so great he was second in wisdom only to His Creator — all of which sublime attributes and treasures God had freely given him — and all of which if we do not maintain our guard can still become deadly traps today.

But did you catch this — aside from his major flaw of putrid palpable pride, God said — “*You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendour*” Ezekiel 28:17

“*CORRUPTED WISDOM*” — which equates to marred and twisted reasoning — soiled and spoiled understanding — as Lucifer literally cast off truth for the sake of his own resplendence — and in so doing lost all ethical prudence, skill and godly wisdom — which willful rejection of God’s divine Truth and revelation knowledge would eventually lead to the

devil's flood of manmade substitutes for godly wisdom — foolish fables, mystical myths, pseudo-sciences, half-baked philosophies and false gospels — all so prolific and so deceptive in the world today.

And Lucifer was hurled out of the mountain of God as profane — vulgar, debased, unworthy — for the once most beautiful of all God's creation had become the most baneful, boastful and banished!

Thus it is perfectly clear by Ezekiel's account that God did not make a devil — and still, as descriptive as Ezekiel's narrative is — it is the Prophet Isaiah who provides us with an even more vivid picture of what truly transpired to bring about the dastardly fall of this once majestic archangel.

HOW ART THOU FALLEN O LUCIFER

Isaiah gives us a front row seat to the actual discourse surrounding the revolt, rebellion and subsequent revulsion of this high ranking angel which took place so long ago in the heavenly sphere.

Once again the scriptures carry a double connotation as in the natural the chapter describes the fall of Babylon — which some scholars believe refers to the destruction of the Babylonian king and capital as would happen in their day — while others believe it is prophetic of end time events when God will bring the entire Babylonian system crashing down — but the primary emphasis and purpose of this chapter is a full unveiling of how this exalted archangel named Lucifer fell from his lofty position and became the Evicted Evil One.

“How art thou FALLEN from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!” Isaiah 14:12

And then we see the reason why — *“For thou hast said in thine heart, I WILL ascend into heaven, I WILL exalt my throne above the stars of God: I WILL sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I WILL ascend above the heights of the clouds; I WILL be like the most High!” Isaiah 14:13-14*

His speech reeks of self will, arrogance, vanity, ungodly aspiration and vaunted self importance — I WILL be like God — I WILL make myself as God — I WILL literally become God!

This rampant display of arrogant pride does not only pertain to Lucifer in this text — but also to the corrupt king of Babylon — and ultimately to all who would hunger for power and greed down through the ages —

in essence, to all who would foolishly desire to be God.

Such swift and righteous judgment should pose a sober warning to all world leaders today who revel in their pomp and power and position — especially those who dominate in the political world, the high tech media world of propaganda and censorship, and even in some dictatorial ranks of the global health world — who have become corrupted by their power, positions and penchants for apocalyptic control — many of whom are attempting to completely lord it over God's people like a bunch of Tin-Pot dictators with lunatic laws while beating their chests as though they were God.

Woe unto them — for if they do not change their ways and sincerely repent judgment shall come just as surely and suddenly as it did to Lucifer — the foolish father of all such arrogance, pride and evil thinking!

As despite all of Lucifer's arrogant bluster and maniacal boasting — God would have the last say — and there was no room to tolerate such blatant insurrection or selfish ambition — *“Yet thou shalt be brought down to HELL, to the sides of the pit.” Isaiah 14:13-14*

As the prophet introduced this segment on satan he declared — *“Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, And the sound of your stringed instruments; The Maggot is spread under you, And Worms cover you” Isaiah 14:11* — Ah — we are catching a few

shades of Dante's Inferno now.

Five Fatal “I WILLS”

Now here's some food for thought — it has long been accepted almost to the point of being classified as cardinal truth that one of the greatest gifts God gave to man was *“FREE WILL”* — or the freedom to choose — and virtually anyone who has ever preached the Gospel has no doubt expounded to some degree on this point.

But what if that theological premise is wrong — what if it was not God who initially implanted this means to choose within the soul and psyche of people — but rather this ability we call *“Free Will”* was a direct result of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Think of this — how many times has using your freedom to choose got you in trouble — *“don't answer that question as it may be used against you in a court of law”* — the point being that it is most often what we consider our own will that gets us in trouble — causes us to lose peace — vexes our soul — fills us with the sense that we deserve much more and life is simply not fair — so we take the situation into our own hands to rectify!



Was this not what happened to Lucifer when he expressed his own will and desire — as it was certainly not God's will he was spouting off about like a spoiled child having a tantrum fit — when five times in a row he brazenly declared, "I WILL — I WILL — I WILL — I WILL — I WILL."

One thing we can be certain of — the devil was the first to express a will contrary to *"the will of God"* — so does that suggest we may have received our will power from the same fall — was freedom of choice and personal volition a divine impartation from God long before mankind was ever tempted to disobey — or was it a result of the fall — just a thought to ponder!

But had there been no Lucifer — no satan — no tempter — there would have been no need for man to decide — so perhaps our so-called *"Free Will"* was something we received in the Garden as a result of our first fore-parents succumbing to the temptation of the Evil One — but prior to that *"free will"* may not have been part of our nature — or at least not awakened within until such time as man fell — but I will leave the answer to that perplexing question to theologians of a higher calibre and pay grade than I to figure out!

But here's what we do know — after the fall — after all mankind had partaken of the same fallen and somewhat rebellious sin nature that had oozed into the very essence of Adam and Eve's beings in the Garden — God gave mankind an ultimatum — *"CHOOSE you this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."* Joshua 24:15

Now notice in Isaiah's account of Lucifer's fall that he is called, *"Son of the morning"* — and several translations use the term, *"O shining one, son of the dawn"* or *"shining one, star of the morning!"* Isaiah 14:12

The term is derived from the Hebrew word *"shakhar"* — meaning the early light of rising day — like the first shaft of early morning light bursting with almost blinding brilliance over the horizon — such was Lucifer when God created him in the perfection of beauty — in fact the name *"Lucifer"* means *"the Shining One"* — like the first star of morning — VENUS — which shines so brightly it is the first star to appear in the sky after the sun sets and the last star to disappear before the sun rises!

Now apply that dazzling description of Lucifer to the words spoken by Jesus to the seventy additional disciples He sent to cast out devils and heal the sick — and they came back rejoicing that even the demons were subject to them in His Name.

Jesus said to them, *"I SAW SATAN FALL LIKE LIGHTNING FROM HEAVEN"* Luke 10:18 — He is referring to the exact same event the prophet Isaiah was describing — as Lucifer was cast down like a flash of lightning — and no doubt like a *"falling star"* that bursts into flame and its own destruction when it enters the earth's atmosphere — much of satan's former lustre and glory were burnt off in the fall — and the rest shall surely be fried off when he is ultimately cast into a burning lake of fire.



Now here's another fallacy that needs to be laid to rest — as some have foolishly assumed that because Lucifer was called the *"son of the morning"* and there is a scripture where Jesus is referred to as the *"Bright and Morning Star"* that they may be equals — and others have even ridiculously suggested they must be brothers — but that is utter religious rubbish!

First — Lucifer was the one who was created — Jesus is the Creator — and second, the descriptions are quite different as Lucifer was the *"son"* or *"bane"* of the morning — while Jesus is the true Bright and Morning Star — *"like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter and brighter unto the perfect day."* Proverbs 4:18

Here's the scripture found in the last chapter of the last book of the Bible — like a final capstone to the manifest end time glory of God — *"I Jesus have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I AM the Root and the offspring of David, the BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR!"* Revelation 22:16

Thus, to compare Jesus to the devil simply because the devil was once described as a *"bright shining being"* is like saying they must be related as they are both compared to lions — but there is a vast difference between the one described as our *"Adversary the Devil"* who goes about *"as a Roaring Lion...seeking whom he may devour"* 1 Peter 5:8 — who is still to this day making a lot of noise but has no teeth as Jesus defanged him at the Cross — and Jesus Christ who truly is *"the LION of the Tribe of Judah!"* Revelation 5:5

But back to our main point — imagine — the creature — the created being — who decided to bring his own will into the universe — and instead of following the Lord, this high and mighty archangel went in his own direction — and when his act of willful rebellion occurred — the beautiful angel BECAME A DEVIL — something God did not create — all as a result of Lucifer's own choice — and certainly not part of God's original design or intent!

And in so doing Lucifer sealed his own eternal fate — *"Hell from beneath is moved for you to meet you at your coming: it stirs up the dead for you, even all the chief ones of the earth; it has raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto you, Are you also become weak as we? Are you become like unto us?"* Isaiah 14:9-10

What a tragic fate — created in stunning beauty — to be ultimately cast down to eternal hell — not of God's doing or design but due to his own vanity and deceit!

ANGELIC WAR IN THE HEAVENS

I believe the fall of Lucifer in heaven was far more catastrophic than most people have ever imagined — and if we are to truly *"know our enemy"* we need to understand how these spiritual forces operate and how far their spheres of influence reach — so the next question we should try to answer is — when exactly was satan cast out of heaven — and when did (or perhaps when will) the GREAT WAR in Heaven take place.

Listen to how John the Revelator saw this battle as he was *"in the Spirit"* and watched it unfold in original HDTV — *"High Definition To-Tell-A VISION"* — while in exile for his faith on the Isle of Patmos.

"And there was WAR IN HEAVEN: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was place found for them in heaven any longer. So the GREAT DRAGON WAS CAST OUT, that serpent of old, called the Devil and satan, who deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and HIS ANGELS WERE CAST OUT WITH HIM." Revelation 12:7-10

No other biblical text so emphatically details this battle in the heavens — and few scriptures have so many variant views as to when it happened or what it really means — so let's just simply review the texts and see where they lead.

As just seen, the apostle John vividly describes this great *"War in Heaven"* — and this was not just another little Saturday night friendly *"fist fight"* between the pugilist bully boys in some barroom skirmish where they beat on each other a bit and then get up and laugh

as they share another beer — as liquid bravado turns to liquid Ibuprofen.

No, this was — or perhaps more accurately this shall be — a true Battle of the Cosmos with flaming swords, celestial spears and burnished shields of faith and force — fought between two groups of the mightiest angels ever created — the Good, the Faithful and the Holy host of heaven led by the mighty archangel Michael who make war against this rebellious army of renegade angels — the Bad, the Ugly and the Fallen who are led by *"the Dragon"* which is none other than the devil or satan — who are decisively defeated and thrown down to the earth — as also paralleled in some of the writings of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

But here's the major quandary — did this cataclysmic event happen in eternity past when Lucifer initially rebelled and was thrown out of heaven as many think — or is it an entirely futuristic event yet to take place as many others believe — and of even greater importance — what restraints and limitations were placed on the devil after the original fall — and how has he functioned in the earth since the fall.

To avoid confusion let's quickly settle the first part of this query — when did satan fall — as in my view there are

only two possible answers that are viable — it had to be either pre-Adamic creation or shortly after Adam and Eve were created — but it was definitely somewhere in the eons of time past — perhaps pre-Adamic — or perhaps when Lucifer watched in absolute amazement as God created Adam and Eve — breathed into them the breath of life — and then gave them *"dominion"* over all things on earth.

Scripture does not give us the exact timing but it is quite possible — as Milton proposed in *PARADISE LOST* — that when Lucifer heard the Lord say, *"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth*

and SUBDUE it, and have DOMINION...over every living thing that moves on the earth" Genesis 1:28 — that Lucifer may have decided then and there that he would not bow down to mankind nor would he be subjected to this new creation of God whom the Lord had just meticulously and lovingly made in His own image.

Which if such be the case — and as we shall surely see in the next chapter or two — Jesus would radically change the balance of power at the Battle of the Cross — and ever since that triumphant day believers have been given total dominion over the devil — if we would only learn how to use it.



But regardless of exactly when this event occurred — the fact remains — satan rebelled and he was surely cast out of heaven — which leads us to the next common misconception that satan and his demons were immediately locked away in hell right after the fall.

Such erroneous belief was clearly articulated in Dante's faulty theology as he envisioned satan already bound and chained in the centre of hell — but it is obvious satan was not chained nor was he barred from heaven or from the earth after his initial rebellion and eviction — as clearly evidenced in these next few scriptures.

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and satan also came among them." Job 1:6

The Book of Job is widely considered the oldest book in the entire canon of scripture — written long before even the Pentateuch was penned by Moses and his contemporaries — but satan was still long time fallen and cast out of his former heavenly position when this account of Job was scribed — and yet he apparently still had some avenue of limited access to heaven.

"And the Lord said to satan, 'From where do you come?' So satan answered the Lord and said, 'From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.'" Job 1:7

Which further indicates that even in his post-rebellion fallen state, satan could freely roam up and down the earth and on occasion even bounce back and forth into some dimension of heaven to accuse God's people.

We see the same in the book of Zechariah as satan appears before God to accuse his servant — *"Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. And the Lord said to satan, 'The Lord rebuke you, satan...Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?'" Zechariah 3:1-2*

Again, as already seen in the Genesis account — satan, as a fallen angel, was able to enter the Garden of Eden and tempt Eve — and in like manner he appeared in the Judean wilderness to tempt Jesus just before He began His earthly ministry (Matthew 4:4-11) — all of which raises a serious question — if Satan had already been cast out of heaven which he surely had been — why is he still free to appear in heaven and roam around on earth.

Part of the answer lies in Paul's revelation that there are actually three heavens (2 Corinthians 12:2-3)

where he talks about himself being caught up into the *"third heaven"* — the most exalted and highest sphere of heaven where the Lord Himself dwells — an area where satan was once welcome and where he ministered to the Lord — but is now totally off limits.

But he still has access to the second heaven which could be considered the universe or space — as implied by Ephesians 6:12 — *"spiritual hosts of wickedness in the HEAVENLY PLACES"* — as well as to the first heaven which could be described as our atmospheric region or covering layer of air — as referenced in Ephesians 2:2 — *"the prince of the power of the AIR, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience."*



These scriptures clearly indicate that satan and some of his demons are still allowed (at least for a limited time) to move in these spaces — from where they are still able to oppose the Will and the Word of God — and from which spheres satan and his minions will be finally removed and fully banished in the great and final battle of Revelation 12.

Now here in my opinion are a few reasons why I do not believe this battle can be isolated to the initial or first celestial conflict when Lucifer rebelled and was tossed out of heaven.

Many theologians hold to the opinion that these scriptures actually refer to the initial coming of Christ into the earth as our Redeemer — as taken in its context as we see *"a WOMAN clothed with the sun...and the moon...and on her head a garland of twelve stars"* (which almost all would readily agree was Israel) and *"the Great Dragon"* (of whom it is clearly stated was satan) stood before the woman who was in labour ready to devour her child as soon as it is born — and she brought forth a *"MAN CHILD"* (who is clearly the Lord Jesus) — *"who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron."* Revelation 12:1-5

"And her CHILD (Jesus) was caught up to God and His throne" — which surely refers to the Resurrection after Christ had paid the price of our redemption on the Cross — and then the woman (Israel and/or the Church) *"fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God"* — God always has a place of safety and refuge for His people — and then — not until then — does this particular *"War Break Out In Heaven"* — which results in satan along with all his fallen devil angels being cast out with him! Revelation 12:5-9

Now here comes some shouting material — *"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, NOW is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God,*

and the power of his Christ: for the ACCUSER OF THE BRETHREN is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.” Revelation 12:10

Now do you see why it is virtually impossible that this WAR in Heaven could have happened at the time of the original fall of Lucifer — as there were no brethren to accuse back then — and yet it is satan “The ACCUSER” who is cast down — so there would have had to be brethren for him to accuse — in fact the devil is still in the business of accusing you and I and all the brethren (as well as all the sist’ern) to this very day — but there is coming a time when he — that rotten lying finger-pointing accuser — shall be cast down for the very last time!

But until that final defeat takes place and satan finds himself truly chained in the eternal lake of fire — which is his ultimate destination — God has given us powerful weapons to withstand and to overcome him — as seen in the very next powerful verse.

“And they OVERCAME him by the BLOOD of the Lamb, and by the WORD of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” Revelation 12:11

As such I believe there are numerous applications that can be made to this ongoing war in heaven — and even though I don’t generally concur with a lot of Catholic theology I am inclined to agree with a comment in the Catholic Encyclopedia (1911) which states — “St. John speaks of the great conflict at the END OF TIME, which reflects also the battle in heaven at the BEGINNING OF TIME.”



Milton envisioned this battle with the origin of satan when he rebelled against God in primeval times — other scholars and theologians see it as reference to spiritual warfare within the church — and still others see it as merely “allegorical” — not to be taken literal — but simply symbolic of random events on earth.

But it is a very real battle — and I intentionally left out one extremely important detail until now.

The Bible says when the “great, fiery red dragon” appeared in heaven — “His tail drew a THIRD OF THE STARS OF HEAVEN and threw them to the earth.” Revelation 12:4

This is a point where scoffers and mockers have had a heyday ridiculing the Bible saying how could the stars fall to the earth — but it is a readily known fact that

over and over the scriptures speak of the “angels” as “STARS” — so there should be little doubt that these so-termed “stars of heaven” which were swept up by the dragon’s tail and thrown down to the earth are angels — “fallen angels” — and they number one-third of all the angels that were in heaven!

Now this may surprise some but did you realize that even though “angels” are mentioned at least 273 times in the Bible — there are only three angels who are actually identified by name — GABRIEL (in Daniel 8:1 and Luke 1:19 & 26) — MICHAEL the Archangel (in Daniel 10:13, Jude 1:9 and Revelation 12:9) — and LUCIFER the fallen angel (in Isaiah 14:12)

And did you know that even though the exact number of angels is not stated — there are an almost unfathomable number of angelic beings — so are you ready to be blown away — to have your eyes opened to the reality of the spiritual world — to the unseen realm that is far more real than the seen realm.

The book of Hebrews describes such an enormous throng of angels they are far too many to count — “You have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to COUNTLESS THOUSANDS OF ANGELS in a joyful gathering.” Hebrews 12:22 NLT

The Hebrew word in this text is “*muriaj*” meaning myriad, unlimited, innumerable multitude, tens of thousands.

But this indication of the magnitude of angels expands even further in the book of Revelation — “Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, and the number of them was TEN THOUSAND TIMES TEN THOUSAND, and thousands of thousands. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.” Revelation 5:11

Other translations state “*myriads of myriads*” (ESV) and even “*millions*” (NLT) in this verse to express how many angels there are in heaven — but a little quick math from the original text of 10 thousand times 10 thousand equates to “100 MILLION” even before we begin to add in the extra thousands times thousands more.

And if that is not enough — many scholars believe there may be literally “BILLIONS” of angels — at least one for every person who has ever lived since Jesus stated of “these little ones” — meaning all children everywhere — that “in heaven THEIR ANGELS always see the face of My Father who is in heaven” Matthew 18:10 — making it painfully obvious how many of us mortal sense-ruled creatures have seriously short-changed the spirit world!

But that's still a lot of angels who fell with satan — or who will be thrown out in the final great battle — but here's the Good News — for every angel who fell there are still two who are firmly on God's side — which means they are also firmly on our side — as the Bible clearly states the angels are *“all ministering spirits, sent forth to MINISTER FOR THEM (on behalf of you and I) who shall be HEIRS OF SALVATION.”* Hebrews 1:14

Such vast numbers of angels and promise of protection quickly bring to mind the story of Elisha's fearful servant — when the king of Syria sent an entire army after them and — *“when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?”* 2 Kings 6:15

And then comes Elisha's confident reply — *“DO NOT FEAR — for those who are with us are MORE THAN THOSE WHO ARE WITH THEM.”* And Elisha prayed, and said, *“Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.”*

“Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was FULL OF HORSES AND CHARIOTS OF FIRE all around Elisha. So when the Syrians came down to him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, and said, ‘Strike this people, I pray, with

blindness.’ And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.” 2 Kings 6:16-18

So do you ever feel like Elisha's Servant — alone — outnumbered — about to go under — ready to throw your hands in the air in despair thinking it is all finished — the enemy is just too powerful — the problem too big to deal with — open your eyes and see — for there are many *“MORE WITH US”* than those who are against us!

But back to the principle point of our text on the *“War in the Heavens”* — as there have likely been several upheavals in heaven over the eons of time.

First there was undoubtedly a major revolt when satan was initially cast out of heaven — then there was surely a horrific battle in the unseen realm when Christ was going to the Cross — and there has been spiritual conflict against His Church by the demon hordes of darkness ever since — and there is still coming a GREAT AND FINAL BATTLE.

So in a nutshell — SATAN IS NOT YET IN HELL — he is not yet bound in the lake of fire somewhere — he is still our present day foe — and we are still in a serious battle — but praise God — we are not alone — two thirds of the angels fight on our side — and far more important — JESUS THE ETERNAL VICTOR IS WITH US AND IN US AND HE IS ON OUR SIDE AND WE ARE ON HIS!

STILL TO COME IN THIS SERIES

SECTION 11 — THE VILLAIN OF THE CROSS — Pt. 2
Enoch, The Watchers, The Nephilim & The God Of This World

SECTION 12 — THE BATTLE OF THE CROSS

SECTION 13 — THE WORKS OF THE CROSS

SECTION 14 — THE GREAT DIVIDE OF THE CROSS

SECTION 15 — THE POWER OF THE CROSS

SECTION 16 — THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS

**THERE IS NOTHING THE DEVIL HATES MORE THAN
THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS
THAT SETS THE CAPTIVES FREE**



Len Lindstrom Gospel Campaign — NAGPUR INDIA

*For this PURPOSE
was the Son of God
Manifested that HE
might DESTROY the
Works of the DEVIL
1 John 3:8*

**MASS MIRACLE
EVANGELISM PLAYS
A MAJOR ROLE
IN THE PROCESS
OF ACHIEVING
GOD'S GOAL
OF REACHING
EVERY SOUL
IN THE WORLD**

Dear Friend & Soul Winning Partner,

What an incredible blessing to be on the "WINNING SIDE" — to not only know the enemy is real but to know beyond every shadow of doubt that our GOD IS REAL — and that He is the far "GREATER ONE" and He is with us and He is in us! We cannot lose — we are already VICTORS in Christ Jesus our Lord!

But there are so many lost hurting people who do not have that assurance — and so many more who have never even heard that such great salvation and assurance is available — which means that we — the privileged who know — have a great responsibility to share the true message of Christ with them.

So please consider supporting this ministry to help us keep reaching souls in Canada and to prepare for more great campaigns overseas. If God touches your heart to "Sow Some Seed" you may:

- 1) Write a CHECK and send it to the ministry address below
- 2) E-TRANSFER and send a text with details to 1-250-300-8082
- 3) Or use CREDIT CARD by simply clicking this secure link: www.lenlindstromglobal.com/give

Now Be Blessed & KNOW YOU ARE GREATLY LOVED!

Len Lindstrom

**VICTORY
OVER THE
VILLAIN**

**World Harvest Outreach Ministries Inc
32509 Verdon Way, Abbotsford BC
Canada V2T 7Y3**

**1-250-300-8082
info@lenlindstromglobal.com
www.lenlindstromglobal.com**