

## **Spiritual warfare – Know your enemy**

### **Fall of a Rebel**

**You and I, as Christians, are in a war. We enlisted from the moment we accepted Christ as our Saviour.**

**Bur it's not a war involving bombs or guns or terror - although these tactics have been used on a human level by opponents of the gospel. No - it's primarily a spiritual war and our adversary is that age-long enemy of mankind, Satan, and the forces of evil in this world.**

**The weapons we use to fight this war are therefore spiritual and our armour is spiritual!**

**As [Ephesians 6:11](#) says:**

**Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.**

**Notice in this verse that's it's the Devil's schemes that we need to oppose. The Greek word for *scheme* here is **μεθοδεία (methodeia)** and it means: *cunning arts, deceit, craft, trickery*.**

**In certain parts of the world, Satan is openly and brutally active but Christians - especially in the western world - must be on special guard against his deceit and trickery. These appear to be his favourite weapons of choice! But**

to do so, we need to be aware - not only of *what* he's up to - but *why*.

The early Christians certainly knew!

In **2 Corinthians 2:11**, Paul talks about the importance of forgiveness and how necessary it is **in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.**

In this particular verse, the Greek word for *scheme* is **νόημα (noema)** - and it means: *thoughts* or *purposes*. In other words - *how he thinks!*

And that's what we need to talk about right now. If we get even a glimpse into how our arch-enemy thinks, we'll be better prepared to deal with his tactics. This is because he varies his tactics depending on the circumstances.

Sometimes he attacks with the savagery of a lion.

**1 Peter 5:8** says this: **Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.**

Paul experienced this particular tactic. Read **2 Corinthians 11:23-27** for a brief account of what he went through for the sake of the gospel. But through it all, he

says, in **2 Timothy 4:17**, that he was **delivered from the lion's mouth**.

On the other hand, Satan can be, -and often is - far more subtle! In **2 Corinthians 11:15** Paul makes the point that **Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light**. And what should really concern us is what Paul says next: **It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness**.

So what do we really know of our enemy?

Where does he come from?

What's he trying to do?

Well, the first thing we find is that he was originally an angel in heaven - a cherub by the name of *Lucifer*.

Exactly what form the fallen Lucifer takes today is quite unknown. Whether or not he can materialise at will is not something known to most of us in the west but from our reading of the Scriptures, we find that - in their unfallen state at least - the cherubim were remarkable beings. The main references we have to their appearance are found in **Exodus chapt. 25 and 37** and **Ezekiel chapters 1 and 10**.

From what is said of them in the Bible, it appears that the cherubim had a role in ensuring that the presence of God

was not violated by anything unworthy. For example, cherubim with flashing swords were placed at the entrance of the Garden in Eden to keep out fallen man. In the Tabernacle, figures of cherubim were woven into the veil that separated man from the holiness of the *shekinah* - the presence of God Himself. Only the High Priest could enter that sacred place once a year. And that was only possible when the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on the mercy seat.

There, in the Holy of Holies, we see two golden cherubim on the ark, with their wings stretched over the mercy seat, symbolically guarding the presence of God, who, as **Psalm 99:1** says: **sits enthroned between the cherubim**. Their position on the ark also suggests that they were looking down at the blood of the sacrifice made on the Day of Atonement, which signified that atonement had been effected (**Leviticus 16**). The High priest could then enter the Most Holy Place.

The throne of God itself was borne by cherubim as **Ezekiel 10** describes in some detail. And in **2 Samuel 22:11** we read that God: **mounted the cherubim and flew; he soared on the wings of the wind**.

Among the cherubim, one stood out from the rest. Lucifer; whose name means ‘the light bearer’, had apparently been the most glorious. **Ezekiel 28:14** seems

to suggest that his particular role was to guard God's glory. There it says that he was **anointed as a guardian cherub.**

He was certainly a very powerful angel - if not the most powerful of them all! **Jude 1:9** tells us that even in Satan's fallen state, the archangel Michael didn't dare condemn him for slander when they were disputing about the body of Moses.

It's difficult for us to imagine the splendour of this perfect creation! **Ezekiel 28:12** describes him as **the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.....**

Yet in spite of these advantages, this perfect, amazing creation sinned by instigating a monstrous rebellion against God Himself. In **Ezekiel 28:15** God says of Lucifer:

**You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.....So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones.**

What an appalling, ignominious fate to befall such a remarkable being!

So what brought about this catastrophic turn of events?

Verse **17** of **Ezekiel 28** explains:

**Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor.**

So Lucifer, the glorious heavenly cherub, became blinded by his own magnificence and succumbed to overweening arrogance.

**Isaiah 14** tells the story:

**vv 12-13** How you have fallen from heaven, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will make myself like the Most High.” But you are brought down to the realm of the dead.....

In his hubris - his blinding pride - Lucifer lost sight of the fact that no matter how splendid he was, he was still just a created being. Twice in **Ezekiel 28**, this crucial point is emphasized:

**Ezekiel 28:13** says: ...on the day you were created..

**Ezekiel 28:15** says: ...from the day you were created..

And in losing sight of this, Lucifer rebelled! He no longer wanted to obey or worship God; he refused to accept

**God's authority and wanted to be equal with God! He must have believed that he was - or certainly wished to be - in God's image, so that God was no longer supreme and that he, Lucifer, was also deserving of worship.**

**We aren't told precisely just what form this rebellion took but it does appear that a large number of angels joined him in this revolt against God. It may have been as many as a third of all the angels - if [Revelation 12:4](#) is anything to go by.**

**What we *do* know for certain is the final upshot of that rebellion. According to both [Ezekiel 28](#) and [Isaiah 14](#), Lucifer was expelled from heaven and driven down to this earth in disgrace, where he is now known as Satan - the Opposer - or the Devil.**

**And another thing we know is that this incident radically and catastrophically changed Lucifer forever - because his rebellion against God was more farreaching than a simple revolt against authority. It was an actual rebellion against truth itself!**

**Think of it! God is truth - the only source of truth - and throughout the Scriptures we find consistent affirmation of this reality.**

The Bible says in **Titus 1:2** that God **does not lie**. In **John 16:13**, the Spirit of God is described as **the Spirit of truth**; In **John 1:14** Christ is described as **full of grace and truth** and indeed He claimed to be **the truth and the life** in **John 14:6**. According to **John 17:17**, God's word is truth and the message of the gospel is therefore a message of truth. Paul speaks of the **truth of the gospel** in **Galatians 2:5** and makes the point that knowing God is knowing the Truth.

So what effect did this rebellion against truth have on the fallen cherub? Just this: because he was consequently expelled from the source of all truth, lies became his reality! In talking to the Jews on one occasion, Jesus described Satan in this way:

**He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44)**

As God is incapable of lying, so Satan is incapable of telling the truth - at least the *whole* truth! He's a master of the half-truth - which is, effectively, tantamount to a lie.

He lies by nature. He would have to stop and think and force himself to tell the truth - if he ever could! In fact, he's the very definition of a *compulsive liar*! At the very

**least he believes his own publicity. Why else war against the Almighty God Himself – and think you’re going to win?!**

**So, banished from Heaven, he is flung down to this earth and it's here that he has his fateful encounter with mankind.**

**And what a rude shock for him!**

**He was the proud cherub - expelled from heaven because he wanted to be equal with God - because he craved the worship and adoration that belonged to God alone. He was the proud, glorious cherub who boasted:**

**“I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God;..... I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”  
(Isaiah 14:13)**

**and now he's forever cast down to this dimension - to the dust of the earth! Only to find that from that very dirt, God subsequently forms, in the Garden of Eden, a creature - mankind - *in his own image!* (Genesis 1:27).**

**In God’s image! The very thing that Lucifer aspired to!!**

**And not only this, but man was created for intimate fellowship with His Creator; to walk and talk with Him. And of course we know that God predestined this creation to Sonship in Christ; to become a glorious being who would be an heir and co-heir with God's own Son.**

**Did Lucifer know all this beforehand? Could this have triggered his fall? Certainly the knowledge that such a lowly creature would be raised higher than him, the glorious cherub, would have been a decisive and unbearable blow to his blossoming pride and ambition! At the very least, he would have regarded God's love for mankind as a deadly threat to his own grandiose delusions.**

**And God's grand purpose - to make us heirs and coheirs with God the Son - was everything Satan had originally dreamt of! I mean - this was his burning ambition - an ambition for which he forfeited his place in Heaven.**

**And even though man is now a fallen, sinful being, he is still in the image of God - an image that has been effaced, to be sure, but certainly not erased.**

**For example - we can kill animals; in [Genesis 9](#), God gave us permission to do so. Then what makes *murder* so wrong?**

The answer is given in **Gen 9:6**: **Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for *in the image of God* has God made mankind. (*italics mine*)**

**Killing something in the image of God - is symbolically killing God Himself! Similarly God says it's a sin to blaspheme human beings for the same reason. **James 3:9** says:**

**With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's image.**

**So to blaspheme a human being is to blaspheme God in effigy! Made in God's image!! What a slap in the face for the glorious cherub!**

**But it gets worse for him!**

**Lucifer clearly lusted for power and leadership in his own right. If he couldn't rule in heaven, then surely he could rule over this earthly dimension to which he had been relegated.**

**But now he finds that one of the reasons mankind was made in image of God, was so that *he* could rule over the earth.**

**Gen. 1:26:** Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

How unthinkable for this arrogant self-serving angel! This creature of earth - of mud - of clay, given sovereignty (as God’s representative) over the very planet to which Satan was now banished!

But that's not the end of it!

In **Gen 3:14**, after Satan had seduced man into rebellion against God, the Lord says to the serpent (which was now the image or effigy of Satan):

“Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.

Now Satan is condemned, in effigy as the serpent, to crawl on his belly in that same dust from which Man was raised in the *image of God!* Not just lower than man; lower than even the animals!!

The concept of being condemned to crawl in the dust may also have been a definitive proclamation that Satan was

then and forever banished from dwelling in heaven. The poison of the serpent may also be a graphic representation of the poison of sin that was now part of Satan's very being – and which is graphically represented in the **Numbers 21** account of the serpent in the wilderness.

We know, of course, from **Revelation chapter 12**, that Satan and his angels are eventually thrown down from the second heaven by Michael and his angelic army. In any event, because of His deception in Eden, Satan is relegated to these lower regions.

But the bad news in his case doesn't end there! That same species that had so thoroughly usurped him, would produce a member that would one day destroy him! After the fall, God issued this dire prediction for the evil seducer:

### **Genesis 3:15**

**And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”**

No wonder there was - and is - so much Satanic hate and malignancy directed towards mankind! The Devil must have been beside himself with resentment, fury and

**loathing for creature who had so thoroughly displaced him!**

**And of course – ultimately -- his issue was with God.**

**He would have been seething with fury and a raging lust for revenge on His Creator. But he couldn't destroy God; his insensate rage was futile and his fury was impotent!**

**But lust for revenge isn't rational!!**

**The same warped, perverted reasoning that made him initially think that he could successfully usurp the Almighty Creator, now spawned that malignant insanity that has ever since prompted him to war against God and exact whatever vengeance he can for his banishment.**

**So if he couldn't overcome God, he could at least do as much harm as possible to his nemesis by corrupting and seducing the creature that was made in God's image - who was God's representative on the earth. Perhaps Satan reasoned that in this way he was at least destroying God in effigy. At the very least, he would have the malicious satisfaction of robbing God of His enjoyment of His handiwork - depriving God of His prized communication with His creatures!**

**But if the human race were to be drawn into sin, this would have more far-reaching implications than the mere corruption of the species – terrible though that would prove to be.**

**In [John 8:34](#), Jesus says that **everyone who sins is a slave to sin** and in [Rom.6:16](#) Paul infers that this sin principle is embodied in a particular being when he says: **Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey.** The Lord Himself is even more pointed when He says to the Jews in [John 8:44](#): **You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires.****

**So the act of sin would enslave the human race under the sway of Satan! Those made in the image of God would be under *his* control. In his eyes, what a slap in the face for God Himself!**

**And how to manufacture this to maximum effect? Devilishly simple: seduce mankind into sinning by turning from God to Satan as the source of truth. After all, the human race, while made in God's image, with all the advantages and benefits of a close relationship with God, would then be making a choice to believe and follow him, Satan, rather than their Creator.**

**By shifting his allegiance to the serpent, mankind would, in effect, be claiming Satan as his true god - thereby dethroning the Almighty and owning the devil as **the god of this world** (2 Cor.4:4). By procuring the allegiance and worship of those made in the image of God, Satan would, in his own mind, be placing himself as an equal - or maybe even above God in effigy! If he couldn't rise to God's level, then maybe he could drag God down to his!**

**This war against God was therefore not to be physical – it couldn't be! It would be a battle for the hearts and minds of human beings.**

**And Satan was well aware of the most effective tactic he could employ. He himself had personal experience of the seductive lure of power and independence. Succumbing to this temptation had caused his own downfall and his bitter experience would have thoroughly familiarized him with this potential weakness in mankind. It was a trait that could be exploited because mankind - like the angels - like Lucifer himself - had been endowed with a selfdetermining free-will.**

**So – as he himself had turned away from the truth, now Satan set out to deceive man into doing exactly the same thing!**

**This now brings us to the dramatic scenes in the Garden of Eden, where Satan launches his strike against the Almighty. And this will be the subject of our next message:**

**Rebellion on Earth**