

Is
There
Really a
DEVIL?



THIS PUBLICATION IS NOT TO BE SOLD. It is a free educational service in the public interest, published by the United Church of God, *an International Association*.

Is
There
Really a
DEVIL?

Introduction

“My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36).

Most people who live in advanced nations find it easy to believe that the state of humanity has never been better. For them, evidence they see every day would make it hard to argue otherwise.

Technologically advanced countries command the highest standard of living in history. They enjoy comfortable and affordable housing, fast and efficient transportation, plenty to eat and drink, mostly secure employment, educational opportunities and a dizzying array of entertaining gadgets and opportunities. They benefit from incomes high enough to meet their basic needs and have plenty left over for many of their wants.

But that’s not the case for most of mankind. Millions of people go to sleep with hunger gnawing at their stomachs. Their meager income goes to purchase just enough food to keep them alive. Some have a little left over for housing,



Millions of people go to sleep with hunger gnawing at their stomachs. Their meager income goes to purchase just enough food to keep them alive.

human life. Now we have the weaponry—nuclear, chemical, biological and conventional—to kill every man, woman and child on earth *many times over*.

The last century alone saw catastrophic wars that took the lives of more than 150 million men, women and children—mostly civilians. In more recent years

clothing and transportation. Every day 35,000 children—enough to populate a fair-sized city—die of starvation or disorders related to chronic malnutrition.

Disease prematurely takes the lives of tens of thousands more every day. Cholera, malaria, tuberculosis and typhoid—almost eradicated in developed nations—remain deadly threats throughout much of the world. Even in wealthy countries, cancer, heart disease and AIDS kill thousands by the hour.

None of us has experienced a truly peaceful world. During the last few decades humanity has developed the horrifying ability to exterminate all

dozens of armed conflicts, uprisings and insurrections have raged around the globe every year, shattering the lives of millions. Few realize that even now the stage is being set for far greater catastrophes.

Why does so much conflict, violence and absolute evil permeate our societies? Where can we find the answer?

If a bright spot could be found in the world, surely it would be in the arena of religion, wouldn’t it? But, sadly, even religion, to which many look for solutions to the world’s problems, is in disarray. Many recent wars have seen not just the obvious interfaith conflicts, but Christian fighting Christian, Muslim killing Muslim and Jew confronting Jew.

Confusion abounds in the



The last century alone saw catastrophic wars that took the lives of more than 150 million men, women and children—mostly civilians.

religious world. Even many pre-Christian religions with their pagan rites, practices and superstitions are making a comeback as people search for the meaning they no longer find in conventional rituals and beliefs.

Why are we plagued with these problems? Why such chaos and confusion? Is the anguish of the human race simply the result of uncontrollable circumstances—time and chance? Is our collective suffering simply the way things always have been and the way they always will be?

Scientists recognize that a basic law of the universe is that a *cause* exists for every effect. Things do not just happen. They occur because something or someone *causes* them to happen.

In fact, we can find a cause for every evil we see in the world. Crime, war, religious confusion, famine, starvation, disease and premature death in their many tragic forms all exist *for a reason*. Broken marriages, broken families, broken relationships and broken societies do not just happen.

You *can* know the cause for this world’s problems, the underlying reason for so many of the difficulties you face in your own life. This booklet will help you understand that cause and—more importantly—*what you can do about it*.

The Enemy of Mankind

“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8, New International Version).

One primary cause lurks behind the suffering and tragic circumstances that afflict so many people. The Bible reveals that a powerful, intelligent and vastly influential being actively orchestrates the wickedness that dominates our planet. Most of us have heard of him. The Bible most often calls him *the devil* and *Satan*.

You may have wondered whether he really exists. After all, to many the devil seems like a fairy-tale character—a grotesque, blood-red creature with horns, a pointed tail and bat’s wings who carries a pitchfork and inhabits an infernal region of ever-burning flames. Because he is typically depicted so fancifully, it isn’t surprising that few take the idea of a devil seriously.

Does such a being exist? Where could such a creature have come from? What is his purpose, his goal, his intent? What does he do? Is he, as many believe, simply a mythical embodiment of evil?

Most people aren’t sure what to believe. They either haven’t given the concept of the devil that much thought or don’t know where to look to find the answers.

Through the centuries belief in the existence of the devil—a being responsible for evil—has waxed and waned. During the Middle Ages belief in the evil one and his influence on mankind was unquestioned. But as scientific advancements during the Renaissance dispelled myths and superstitions related to demons and evil spirits, the notion of the devil as a literal being fell into disfavor.

Subsequent scientific advancements and increased education encouraged skepticism regarding the existence of a spirit world, good or bad. Today many ridicule the idea of a literal evil entity who is responsible for the misery and suffering we see around us. But what is the truth? Does the devil exist?

Finding a reliable source of knowledge

Where can we find reliable, accurate information on the spirit world? Only one source can give us the answers, revealing to us information we could find nowhere else. That single dependable source is the Bible. Beyond it, everything concerning Satan and whether he exists is only mythology and speculation. (For clear evidence of the reliability of the Bible, be sure to download your free copy of *Is the Bible True?* or request it from any of our offices listed at the end of this booklet.)

The Bible contains unequivocal internal evidence that it truly is the Word

of God. Through its pages God reveals true *spiritual* knowledge—information unavailable from any other source. It tells us in sobering terms that the devil *does* exist. It explains that this being and the spirit world are every bit as real as our own.

It shows us that Satan is an incredibly powerful spirit being with a pervasive influence over humanity. Along with his cohorts—called *demons* or *evil spirits*—he is mentioned frequently in the Scriptures. He shows up from beginning to end, from Genesis to Revelation.

The Bible reveals much about this being. It shows us his origin, how he came to be what he is. It reveals his intentions and the methods he uses to accomplish them. It describes his character and nature and the motivations that drive him. It helps us see



To many the devil seems like a fairy-tale character—a grotesque, blood-red creature with horns, a pointed tail and bat’s wings. Because he is typically depicted so fancifully, it isn’t surprising that few take the idea of a devil seriously.

the staggering impact his influence can have on us individually as well as his sway over the whole of humanity. It reveals his future. The Bible gives us knowledge we could never discover or understand on our own.

Real-life encounters

Jesus Christ spoke of the devil as a powerful, conscious, real being. If we accept Jesus as real, as the Son of God—and the Bible as giving the truthful account of His ministry and teachings—we must also accept the devil as real.

The writers of the four Gospels record instances in which Christ confronted Satan and his cohorts, the demons. The Gospels, the first four books of the New Testament, show Satan to be the enemy of Christ, determined to thwart and undermine His work. Just before Jesus began His ministry, Satan tried, through temptation, to turn Him aside from His divine purpose (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13).

Failing at every turn, Satan was finally allowed to influence other human beings to execute Jesus (Luke 22:2-4; John 13:2, 27)—making Him, as the Messiah and our Savior, the atoning sacrifice for the sins of mankind.

The apostle Peter, who experienced his own struggles with Satan (Matthew 16:21-23; Luke 22:31-32), warns us to be on guard against this powerful

wicked spirit: “Be self-controlled and alert. *Your enemy the devil* prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8, NIV, emphasis added throughout). Peter’s sobering warning helps us to realize that the devil is the enemy of not only Jesus Christ, but also the unwavering

Is the Whole World Deceived?

If you were the devil and wanted to deceive the entire world, how would you approach such a challenge? One brilliant strategy would be to convince people that you’re not really there—that you don’t even exist. And the best way to do that would be to get them to believe that the only source of information that reveals who you are, along with your motives and methods, is little more than a collection of fables that have nothing to do with their lives.

We have seen exactly that. Starting several centuries ago, and prompted by the theories of men such as Charles Darwin—who came up with a way to explain creation without the Creator—many people began directly challenging the authority and inspiration of the Bible. They began to ridicule, as mere myth and superstition, the existence of a spirit world, long accepted without question by those who believed the Bible.

In the world’s leading universities skeptics challenged the validity and accuracy of the Bible, and materialist reasoning under the guise of science—rejecting anything that cannot be detected by the physical senses—became the order of the day. Generations of leaders were taught to discard anything that

and sons lost on bloody battlefields in far-flung corners of the world, with neither war resulting in a lasting peace. Civilian casualties, too, were appalling, with tens of millions of lives snuffed out. Numbed by such brutal mass destruction of lives and property, many lost their belief in God, thinking that an all-powerful Supreme Being would never allow such carnage and suffering.

Thus, in only a few generations, belief in an almighty, all-loving God and trust in the Bible as His revelation to mankind were shattered.

In our modern world, although many people still claim to believe in God, few take their stated belief seriously enough to let it guide their lives. The Bible is consistently one of the world’s best-selling books, yet it is one of the least read and least understood. Most people think the Bible and the spirit world have nothing to do with them and their lives.



In two world wars, two successive generations saw their fathers, husbands and sons lost on bloody battlefields.

could not be measured by scientific methods.

Then came two world wars. Two successive generations saw their fathers, husbands

Although religion should provide an understanding of God and the spirit world, it is too often only yet another source of confusion and

enemy of all Christ’s followers, seeking to rend and consume them.

The father of lies

But we find more to the story of Satan. A central message of the Bible, from



whose aim is to “deceive the whole world” (Revelation 12:9). Many people do not believe in the devil at all, and many of those who do aren’t sure what they should believe, since so many religious teachings are confused and contradictory.

Most people are deeply sincere in their beliefs. But since the beliefs of so many professing Christians contradict the beliefs of other professing Christians, they cannot all be right. Many of them are sincere, but *sincerely wrong*. They, along with the rest of the world,

Numbed by such brutal mass destruction of lives and property, many lost their belief in God, thinking that an all-powerful Supreme Being would never allow such carnage and suffering.

disagreement. For example, Christianity is the professed religion of approximately a third of the world’s population and is the largest single religion. But it is splintered into thousands of sects and denominations, many of them claiming to represent the true teachings of the Bible and Jesus Christ.

Never in human history, of course, have professing Christians comprised a majority of the world’s population. Most people during the last two millennia have followed a bewildering array of deities, gurus and religious teachers. Some have believed in God, others in various good and evil spirits or no God and spirit world at all.

Obviously these incompatible and often opposite beliefs cannot all be right. God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). The effect of so much religious confusion and division is exactly what one would expect from a being

have been deceived. So what are the implications to professing Christians of Satan’s deception and its resulting confusion?

Christ challenged people in His day who were sincere yet deluded: “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and *do not do the things which I say?*” (Luke 6:46).

He cautioned His followers to be aware of religious deception. “*Take heed that no one deceives you,*” He warned (Matthew 24:4). He prophesied that religious leaders would arise who would claim to represent Him but in fact they would be impostors who would “deceive many” (verse 5).

Rather than a source of information and understanding about the great malevolent spirit that is the enemy of mankind, religion has actually been one of the major tools the devil has used to deceive people!

beginning to end, is that *the devil is the enemy of all humanity*. As we discover what the Bible says about him, we find him continually intent on mankind's harm, waging war against human beings in every way imaginable.

The very name *Satan*, the designation the Bible uses most for this evil being, helps reveal his malicious intent. God calls things what they are. *Satan* is a Hebrew noun meaning "adversary"—the *enemy, opponent, antagonist, foe*. The verb forms of the noun mean to "accuse," "slander" and "be an adversary" (*Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 5, 1992, "Satan," p. 985).

The other term the Bible most often uses to describe this being, *devil*, is similarly revealing. *Devil* is translated from the Greek word *diabolos*, the root from which we get the word *diabolical*, used to describe something wicked or sinister. *Diabolos* means "an accuser, a slanderer" (W.E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Exposit-*



Eve believed the serpent. She ate the fruit and shared it with Adam. Together Adam and Eve set in motion a tragic pattern that mankind has followed ever since.

tory Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, 1985, "Devil, Devilish").

We see that the meanings of the Hebrew word *Satan* and the Greek word *diabolos* overlap. In fact, the Septuagint, the oldest known Greek translation of the Old Testament, translates *Satan* with the Greek word *diabolos*. Both mean "slanderer" or "accuser" and can have the sense of an accuser or opponent in court (compare Zechariah 3:1). Both the Hebrew and Greek terms are used in the New Testament to refer to this enemy of mankind.

The Bible reveals much more about this evil being's nature and character. As we will see more about shortly, Christ says Satan is "a liar and the father of it" and that "there is no truth in him" (John 8:44).

It is through his lying, deceptive nature that Satan most successfully influences mankind. The Bible reveals the enormity of his lies and their impact, the apostle John stating in Revelation 12:9 that he "*deceives the whole world*."

Did you catch this stunning testimony to Satan's handiwork? He "*deceives the whole world*"! What does this mean? What is God telling us when He reveals here that this malignant spirit deceives the whole world? Consider the staggering implications of this statement.

John did not say that Satan *deceived* the world only at some time in the distant past. The word John uses—translated "deceives" in the New King James Version of the Bible—is in the present active tense, meaning that Satan's deception

iStockphoto

started in the past and is a continuous, ongoing process *that is not yet finished*. The book of Revelation shows that Satan's great deception will continue until God miraculously intervenes to put an end to his influence over mankind.

The beginning of Satan's influence

Satan has seduced humanity for thousands of years. But when—and how—did his influence begin? How did he gain his firm foothold in human thinking? What is it about him and his methods that allows him to deceive not just a handful of people, but virtually the entire human race?

The story begins with the very origins of humankind. As stated in the book of Genesis, God created our first human parents, Adam and Eve, and provided a beautiful garden paradise in an area called Eden as their home (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7-8). There He began personally instructing them (Genesis 2:16-17), laying the foundation for them to develop a close personal relationship with Him.

But something happened that suddenly derailed that relationship. "Now the serpent [the devil, Revelation 12:9; 20:2] was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say, "You must not eat from any tree in the garden"?''" (Genesis 3:1, NIV).

God had told Adam and Eve they could eat of all the trees in Eden except one—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17). He warned them they would perish if they ate of its fruit.

Satan, appearing in the form of a serpent, came privately to Eve and subtly contradicted what God had told her and her husband: "Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil'" (Genesis 3:4-5).

Eve believed the serpent. She ate the fruit and shared it with Adam. Together Adam and Eve set in motion a tragic pattern that mankind has followed ever since—choosing to decide their own way, which has brought them under Satan's deceptive influence (1 John 3:10), rather than the truth of God. Life for man would never be the same. *Sin*—rebellion against God's instruction—had entered the world (Romans 5:12). Mankind would now reap its tragic fruit.

Adam and Eve's surrender to Satan's influence was the beginning of "this present evil age" (Galatians 1:4). Satan managed to inject his cunning deceptions into the relationship between God and God's human children. By convincing Eve that God was lying to them about the consequences of partaking of the forbidden fruit, Satan showed early in human history that he is the *adversary* of both God and humanity, the ultimate *false accuser* and *slanderer*—the meanings of his biblical names.

A murderer from the beginning

Jesus referred to this incident in the Garden of Eden when He confronted those who opposed His message and work—murderous men who wanted to kill Him for identifying Himself as the Son of God. Jesus recognized the

source of their motivation: “*You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it*” (John 8:44).

Satan was truly “a murderer from the beginning.” Yet he did not need to physically harm Adam and Eve to bring about their deaths. He knew that if he could influence them to sin—to disobey God—they would bring death on themselves (Romans 6:23). His lies—his deception—did lead directly to Adam and Eve’s eventual submission to the clutches of death. By influencing all human beings since then to likewise choose the way of sin and disobedience to God, Satan has played a part in the deaths of all human beings since Adam and Eve (Romans 5:12).

Christ also said Satan is “a liar and the father of it.” His lies undermined and then destroyed the relationship between God and His children. By following in Adam and Eve’s footsteps in accepting Satan’s ways of sin and rebellion, we have cut ourselves off from God’s guidance and assistance and desperately need the redemption that can come only through Christ (Isaiah 59:1-2;

Romans 3:23-24; Acts 4:12).



The world suffers because of sin

Humanity as a whole has continued to follow the pattern set by Adam and Eve long ago. Satan, by deceiving us into rejecting God’s instruction and influencing us to follow him instead, has seen to it that we, like Adam and Eve, would continue to resist God’s rule over us (Romans 5:10; 8:7; Ephesians

Why is the world so full of misery? The answer, as revealed in God’s Word, is simple: We reap what we sow.

2:1-3). We suffer the painful consequences of our choices and actions just as they did. (Of course, Jesus came to die for our sins and show those of us whom God would call to salvation in this age before Jesus’ return the way to repent and come out of our miseries. To understand more, please download or request our free booklets *The Road to Eternal Life* and *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion*.)

Why is the world so full of misery? The answer, as revealed in God’s Word, is simple: We reap what we sow. “Do not be deceived,” writes the apostle Paul. “God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction” (Galatians

6:7-8, NIV). Our actions bring consequences. Much of the world’s suffering can be traced to people’s actions and decisions. We haven’t learned that many of our choices lead to tragic results regardless of our intentions.

The prophet Hosea understood the principle of cause and effect as he observed the sad spiritual condition of the kingdom of Israel in the 700s B.C. Hosea 2 and 4 show that idolatry, violence and sexual immorality were rampant in Hosea’s time. Within a few years the mighty Assyrian Empire would sweep down from the north and lay the Israelite kingdom waste, slaughtering and enslaving its inhabitants.

God revealed to Hosea what was coming and why: “They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind” (Hosea 8:7). “You have plowed wickedness; you have reaped iniquity. You have



When we search for the main reason people suffer, we can learn a great deal by tracing the circumstances back to their cause. Most often we will find that sin is the underlying cause—and suffering and misery are the sad consequences.

eaten the fruit of lies” (Hosea 10:13). In other words, said God, it was inevitable that the people’s sins would catch up with them: “Your own wickedness will correct you, and your backslidings will rebuke you” (Jeremiah 2:19).

When we search for the main reason people suffer, we can learn a great deal by tracing the circumstances back to their cause. Most often we will find that *sin* is the underlying cause—whether one’s own sin or that of others—and suffering and misery are the sad consequences.

By influencing mankind to sin, making it appear attractive and appealing, Satan holds our world in a deceitful grip of lies, suffering and death.

Did God Create the Devil?

*"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!"
(Isaiah 14:12).*

Where did the devil come from? How did such a creature come to be? Did God purposefully create an evil being? The Bible reveals the answers to these questions. They can help us understand *why* Satan really is the enemy of mankind.

To understand Satan's origin, we must go far back in time, before man existed. Genesis 1:1 tells us that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." However, as is usually the case, the Bible doesn't tell the whole story in one or even several verses. We find more details elsewhere in the Bible, in this case in the book of Job.

When Job, beset with terrible calamity and suffering in spite of being a very devout follower of God, began to question God's judgment, God responded with pointed questions to help him realize he didn't have the wisdom to question God. In His response, in the form of questions to Job, God revealed some details about His creation of the earth. "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?" God asked him. "Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? . . . On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone—while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4-7, NIV).

God here reveals information no man could know, since no man was present at creation. God described the earth at its creation as a dazzlingly beautiful jewel floating in space. The creation events were so magnificent that "all the angels shouted for joy." The angels—spirit beings God had created—already existed when God made the earth. They were united in their joy when God created the world, singing and shouting in exultation. They were in perfect harmony and agreement at that time. So how does the devil fit into this picture?

A beautiful earth becomes a wasteland

Some time after the world was formed, however, the situation dramatically changed. Genesis 1:2 tells us that, after its creation, "the earth was *without form, and void*." This English translation doesn't adequately convey the meaning of the original Hebrew. The words *tohu va-bohu*, translated "without form and void," are better translated "*waste and void*" (Young's Literal Translation).

However, in Isaiah 45:18, God expressly says of the earth that He "*did not create it in vain*." Here the same Hebrew word, *tohu*, is used. If God did not create the earth in a state of waste, how did it come to be in that condition?

Part of the answer is indicated in Genesis 1:2. The Hebrew word *hayah*, translated "was," can also properly be translated "became," as it is translated in

Genesis 2:7 and 19:26. The earth was not *created* waste and void but *became* that way at some point after its creation. In Rotherham's Emphasized Bible, Genesis 1:2 appropriately reads, "Now the earth *had become* waste and empty."

God created the earth in such sparkling beauty that the angels were overjoyed at its creation. But something happened to bring it to a condition of devastation and waste. Its original beauty was destroyed. God then reshaped it, forming it into a beautiful home for the first man and woman, as recorded in the remainder of Genesis 1. But the Genesis account does not tell us the entire story. Something else happened between the first two verses of Genesis that is not recorded there.

God does give us additional details in several other chapters of the Bible regarding what brought about this condition of waste and confusion.

In 2 Peter 2 the Bible records several examples of God's judgment for wrongdoing. Verses 5 and 6 discuss the Flood of Noah's time and the later fiery destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. But before this, in verse 4, we read that "God did not spare *the angels who sinned*, but thrust them down into Tartarus [a condition of restraint], and delivered them into chains of darkness, being reserved for judgment" (Modern King James Version). When did these angels sin, and what *was* their sin?

Again, we must look at other verses to find the answer. Jude 6 gives us additional details: "And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these [God] has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day" (NIV).

We saw earlier that at the earth's creation *all* the angels were happy and joyous, singing and shouting together. Obviously, then, it was at a later time that some sinned—*destroying* the wonderful harmony and cooperation they had once enjoyed. What was the nature of their sin? They "did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home"—they left the place and position God had given them. They rebelled against their Maker, the Creator of both the physical universe and the spirit world of angelic beings!

A rebellion against God

In Isaiah 14 we find more information. This chapter makes reference to the angelic rebellion, identifying its ringleader. It gives us important details we could learn of in no other way.

In verse 4 God addresses the "king of Babylon." In Isaiah's time the city-state of Babylon was emerging as the major power in that region of the world. Its king was a warmonger, expanding his empire through brute force. He enslaved, plundered and devastated the nations around him. (In context, this passage has dual meaning, in that it also refers to an end-time tyrant who will rule over a final global empire referred to in Revelation 17 and 18 as Babylon the Great.)

The philosophy of the king of Babylon here is satanic—acquiring wealth and power at the expense of others, gaining it through violence and bloodshed. The king of Babylon thus *exemplifies* Satan and his characteristics. Indeed, as we will read more about later, Satan is the real power behind the throne of the world's

kingdoms (compare Luke 4:5-7; John 12:31; Revelation 12:9; 13:2).

In verse 12 the subject shifts from the physical king to a ruler who is yet higher. Many scholars recognize that the original language of this passage is in the form of a *lament*, a reflection of God's mourning and sense of great loss due to the events being described: "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High'" (verses 12-14).

Who is this being who dares to exalt himself above the other angels (stars

The Word "Lucifer" in Isaiah 14:12

In Isaiah 14:12, the powerful being who led a rebellion against God is referred to by a word often translated as "Lucifer." The original Hebrew designation here—used only this one time in the Bible—is *Heylel*. Its precise meaning is debated. Some think it means "Praise of God," seeing a relation with the Hebrew *Halal* ("praise"), the *-el* at the end perhaps being a suffix meaning "God" (as in the angelic names Michael and Gabriel).

Others contend that *Heylel* means "brightness" or "shining one"—particularly given its apparent astronomical association. Paired here with the phrase "son of the morning," many believe the reference is to the planet Venus as the bright morning star shining in the east before sunrise. Indeed, this was evidently the understanding of the term shortly before Christ's time. The ancient Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament rendered the word as *Eosphoros* ("dawn bearer"), the Greek term for Venus as the morning star (also known in Greek as *Phosphoros*, meaning "light bearer").

This meaning was incorporated into the fifth-century Latin Vulgate translation with the word *Lucifer* ("light bearer" or "light bringer"),

the name Roman astronomers used for the same morning star. Yet we should further consider that the angels of God were referred to figuratively in Scripture as "morning stars" (Job 38:7; see also Revelation 1:20).

A little knowledge of astronomy helps us better understand the picture here. Venus is the brightest object in the sky except for the sun and moon. We now understand it to be a planet. But to the ancients it was classed as a star—simply because their words for star meant a small, shining point of light in the sky. Notice again that the reference in verse 12 is "son of the morning." The planet Venus is still referred to as either the morning star or the evening star—because it is visible only just before sunrise or just after sunset.

Thus the picture presented is of a grand star, likened to Venus, that wants to be grander than the other stars: "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God" (verse 13). Before dawn, Venus rises from the eastern horizon. But before it is able to climb into the sky—to rise above the other stars and be the highest—the light of the rising sun causes Venus to disappear in the growing light of day.

The parallels between the astronomical picture and what happened in the spirit realm are striking and reinforce the points Isaiah makes here in describing this tragic angelic rebellion.

symbolize angels, Revelation 1:20) of God, to challenge God Himself as ruler of the universe?

More details revealed

In Ezekiel 28 God gives us the answer. This chapter is written much like Isaiah 14. God begins by discussing a human ruler, then shifts to the spiritual power behind the earthly throne—the behind-the-scenes ruler who controls the kingdoms of this world.

In Ezekiel 28:2 God addresses the "prince of Tyre." Tyre, a coastal port city north of ancient Israel on the Mediterranean Sea, was famous as a major trading center. Its rulers had grown haughty and presumptuous because of their wealth and influence. In verses 6-10 God tells this ruler that because of his arrogance, his might and wealth would fail and he would be overthrown.

But notice in verse 12 that God begins to address "the king of Tyre" rather than the prince. This figure is the *true* ruler, the real power behind the throne. History gives some additional insight here, as the patron god of ancient Tyre was Melkart, meaning "king of the city." He was deemed to be the true ruler of Tyre. And consider that the false gods of this world can represent actual demonic powers, Satan being chief among them as "the god of this age" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

In fact, God's description of this "king of Tyre" makes it clear that He is speaking to no physical human being: "You were *the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty*. You were *in Eden, the garden of God*; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you *on the day you were created*" (verses 12-13).

No mortal man could accurately be described as being "*the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty*." This entity was *created*—unlike human beings who are *born* rather than created. This being had also been "in Eden, the garden of God." Other than Adam and Eve, no people had been in the Garden of Eden. God had expelled them, after which He placed an angel there specifically to prevent anyone else from entering (Genesis 3:24).

Fall of a superangel

In the next verse God mentions some of the history of this being: "*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 28:14).

What do these remarkable statements mean? What is a "cherub who covers"? Hebrews 8:5 tells us that the tabernacle established through Moses—the portable sanctuary the Israelites carried with them in their desert wanderings—was "a copy and shadow of *what is in heaven*" (NIV). In Exodus 25:18-20 we find that God instructed the Israelites to make a representation—a physical model—of His throne for the tabernacle they would carry with them in the wilderness. At either side of the "mercy seat," which represented God's throne, was a golden cherub with wings extended to cover the mercy seat. The two cherubim, fashioned out of

gold, represented real angelic beings—the great superangels whose wings cover God’s throne.

The being God addressed through Ezekiel is called the “cherub who covers,” indicating that he had once been one of the great angels depicted in the model of God’s throne. God gave these angels the awesome distinction of

Why Does God Allow Satan to Influence Mankind?

God is all powerful. Yet He allows Satan to carry out his deceitful and destructive activities—within certain limits—for a purpose. To understand that purpose, let’s begin with an example from the book of Job.

“One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. The LORD said to Satan, ‘Where have you come from?’ Satan answered the LORD, ‘From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.’ Then the LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.’

“‘Does Job fear God for nothing?’ Satan replied. ‘Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.’ The LORD said to Satan, ‘Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger’” (Job 1:6-12, New International Version).

God understood Job’s heart better than Satan perceived it. Though God granted Satan permission to afflict Job, the devil failed in his attempt to turn this righteous man against God. Nevertheless, the story of Job’s suffering under Satan’s affliction reveals much about why God sometimes allows us to suffer.

God tests the character of every human being, and that is a major aspect of what hap-

pened with Job. Paul wrote, “We are not trying to please men but God, who *tests* our hearts” (1 Thessalonians 2:4, NIV). Moses explained to the ancient Israelites, “Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to *test* you in order to *know what was in your heart*, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger [a form of suffering] and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to *teach* you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD” (Deuteronomy 8:2-3, NIV).

God allows mankind to *learn*—partly by firsthand experience—that the *only way of life* that will work is the way of life He reveals in His Word, the Bible. That lesson will not be complete until all of humanity has learned that “every word” of God’s revealed instructions is vital to our physical, mental and spiritual well-being (Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 5:29). No alternative way of life achieves God’s purpose or ultimately leads us to happiness.

But how can God get this point across to people who are born into the world with no knowledge or understanding? He could have preprogrammed us to behave only according to harmless predetermined instincts. But then we would be mere automatons, having no choices, no individuality, no character.

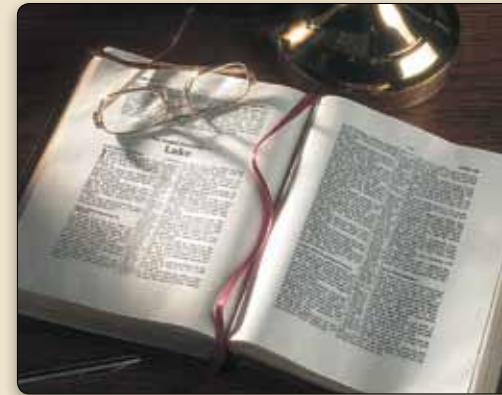
Such existence is not what God intends for us. He has created us to become members of His own family—His sons and daughters (2 Corinthians 6:18)—able to bear great responsibilities within His family.

At the beginning of human existence God stated His purpose for us: “Then God said, ‘Let

serving at and covering the very throne of God in heaven!

Many other scriptures say that God “dwells between the cherubim,” showing that these wondrous creatures accompany and serve Him at His seat of power (1 Samuel 4:4; 2 Samuel 6:2; 2 Kings 19:15; 1 Chronicles 13:6; Psalm 80:1; Isaiah 37:16). This magnificent being apparently held a position of high

Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have *dominion* over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the



God allowed Satan, the epitome of evil, to enter the Garden of Eden and tempt Adam and Eve to depart from God’s instructions. They then had to make a choice. They *chose* to follow Satan rather than God. Satan’s tragic delusion of mankind has been the result.

However, when Jesus Christ returns to the earth, He will remove the delusion of Satan. God then will begin, on a grand scale, the process of reversing the damage Satan has done. Eventually none of the devil’s influence will remain.

Mankind can then review thousands of years of tragic history and compare it with the blessings of

God allows mankind to learn—partly by firsthand experience—that the only way of life that will work is the way of life He reveals in His Word, the Bible.

cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ *So God created man in His own image*; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:26-27).

God created mankind to *be like Him*, to rule—have dominion—over His creation. To learn to properly exercise such a level of responsibility, man must first *learn* how to discern right from wrong, good from bad, and the wise from the foolish. Learning real wisdom involves *learning how to make wise choices*. From the beginning God pointed out the right way, but He allowed human beings to be exposed to and make foolish choices.

Christ’s rule. The Bible reveals that when this occurs the overwhelming majority of humanity will reject Satan’s deceptions and enthusiastically embrace every word of God.

God is in control, but He has allowed Satan to dominate humanity for two basic reasons. First, Adam and Eve, our first parents, *chose* Satan’s domination over them. Second, God wants all of humanity to learn important lessons—that “*the way of man is not in himself*; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps” (Jeremiah 10:23) and that Satan’s way leads to misery and suffering. (To learn more, request or download our free booklet *Why Does God Allow Suffering?*)

honor and distinction in God's angelic realm.

This same great cherub is also described as being "on the holy mountain of God." In the Bible, "hills" and "mountains" are often used to symbolize governments (see Revelation 17:9-10). Apparently this superangel was given authority in the governance of other angels, who number in the hundreds of millions (see Daniel 7:9-10; Revelation 5:11).

God also says to this cherub, "You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you" (Ezekiel 28:15). Like the description in Isaiah 14, this passage describes a *created* being, not a man. This being was extraordinary, *perfect* until he sinned, beginning with pride in his own beauty and splendor, which corrupted his wisdom (Ezekiel 28:17).

". . . You were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian [or 'covering,' NKJV] cherub, from among the fiery stones" (verse 16, NIV). This once marvelous being sinned and was expelled from God's throne, cast away in disgrace.

A personal choice to rebel

Satan's sin of pride and vanity ultimately led to outright and open rebellion against God. Isaiah 14:13-14, which we read earlier, states: "You said in your heart, 'I will *ascend to heaven*; I will *raise my throne above the stars* [angels] *of God*; I will *sit enthroned on the mount of assembly*, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will *ascend above the tops of the clouds*; I will *make myself like the Most High*'" (NIV).

This powerful spirit entity decided to challenge God for control of the universe!

What had been an amazingly beautiful, immensely talented spirit being with great responsibility in God's angelic order became, through his rebellion against Almighty God, a reprehensible, despicable creature. Thus, God did not *create* the devil. Rather, what God created was a magnificent and perfect being. But later, this powerful being, by his own will, *became* the devil and Satan—the adversary, slanderer, accuser and destroyer. He *made himself* the enemy of God and humanity!

The immense powers he had used in God's service were turned not to *serve* God, but to try to *thwart* God's purposes. This creature remains an enormously powerful spirit being, but now his powers are used for wicked, destructive ends.

As we've seen, so vain and proud did he become that he thought *he* should be ruler of the universe. His enormous talents and abilities led him to believe he was equal to, if not better than, God Himself. His thinking became corrupted. He rebelled against God and tried to overthrow Him. By his rebellion against his Creator, he transformed himself into Satan the devil.

Other angels in rebellion with him

Satan was not alone in this rebellion. Millions of other angels joined him in rejecting God's authority and leadership. We find this symbolically described in Revelation 12:3-4: "And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon . . . His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the

earth." Verse 9 identifies this dragon as Satan. As we saw earlier, the Bible uses stars as a symbol for angels (Revelation 1:20). This apparently indicates that a third of the angels followed Satan in this rebellion and were cast down to the earth with him.

The attempted takeover of heaven was, of course, not successful. Two thirds of the angels remained loyal to God and thus constituted a more numerous force. More importantly, God is omnipotent—all powerful—and cannot be overthrown.

Jesus said that Satan "[fell] like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18). It seems likely that this titanic struggle is what brought about the chaotic and wasted condition of the earth described in Genesis 1:2. As mentioned earlier, God then renewed the surface of the earth in preparation for human habitation, as described in the rest of Genesis 1. Yet to aid His purpose in developing righteous character in human beings, God allowed Satan and his minions to remain on the earth for the time being. Thus Satan was allowed to tempt Adam and Eve in the garden.

The Bible refers to Satan and the other rebellious angels as *evil spirits*, *unclean spirits* and *demons*. They are *fallen angels*—who had plummeted from their purpose of serving God and humanity (Hebrews 1:13-14), reduced to hatred and bitterness toward God and His holy purpose for humanity. In Scripture they are

Following the Footsteps of a Different God

The Bible makes it clear that civilizations and societies are influenced by Satan. The apostle John writes that "the *whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one*" (1 John 5:19). Through his influence Satan has deceived the whole world (Revelation 12:9). The entirety of civilization has been seduced by this cunning being through his persuasive deception and insidious lies.

The result has been thousands of years of human anguish, misery and suffering. Deceived by his lies, people have willingly adopted Satan's way of life rather than God's way. The result of following Satan's way, which through his deception appears fine and well and quite natural to most people, is predictable: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death" (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25, New International Version).

Satan's deception is so complete, so per-

vasive, that the Bible calls him "the *god* of this age" (2 Corinthians 4:4). The apostle Paul, in the original Greek, identifies him as the *theos*—the god, the one who is worshipped—of this *eon*, this age, this period in history.

Consider the magnitude of Satan's influence over humanity—so great that most of mankind unknowingly worships and follows *the devil* as its god. That is the incredible truth revealed in your Bible! Understanding that reality explains so many of the troubling paradoxes we see in the world around us.

Paul explained that, as a result of Satan's hold on humanity, most people do not believe the truth of the Bible. They do not understand the gospel—the good news—of God's plan for mankind.

As he stated in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds *the god of this age has blinded*, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them."

shown to be able to not only influence but even *possess* people (that is, exercise direct control over their bodies and actions). Such demonic control can cause people to exhibit violent and self-destructive behavior (Matthew 8:28; 17:14-18; Acts 19:14-16; Luke 8:27-33).

God's servants are not to be fearful or overly anxious about such demonic influence affecting them. While there are many evil spirits, they are fewer in number and inferior in power to God's faithful angels, who are "ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation" (Hebrews 1:14). Christians are to be confident because "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7).

A strong mind spiritually attuned to God's way of life is the best way to resist demonic influence. Faithful servants of God are to be filled with His Spirit (Ephesians 5:18), enabling them to resist such influence so that evil spirits are forced to flee (James 4:7). Also, the true ministers of Christ have been given authority over demons, enabling them to cast demons out of those possessed (Matthew 10:1, 8; Mark 6:13, 16:17). After all, God is the ultimate source of power.

Almighty God: Ruler of the Universe

Although the Bible identifies Satan as the "prince of the power of the air" and the ruler of this world (Ephesians 2:2; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), God maintains overall control as "Lord of heaven and earth" (Matthew 11:25). While He gives the devil considerable latitude in what he does for now, God retains the right and power to intervene.

The biblical record shows that during this age God uses His power to intervene sparingly, often letting the natural course of events work out His purpose and plan for mankind. Remember that Jesus told Pontius Pilate, "You could have no power at all . . . unless it had been given you from above" (John 19:11).

"The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the all-glorious Father" is the main subject of Ephesians 1 (verses 3 and 17, Revised English Bible). His throne is "far above all government and authority, all power and dominion, and any title of sovereignty that commands allegiance, *not only in this age* but also in the age to come.

He put all things in subjection beneath His [Jesus'] feet" (verses 21-22, REB).

Israel's King David recognized God's sovereignty: "The LORD has established his throne in heaven, his kingly power over the whole world" (Psalm 103:19, REB) and "The LORD looks down from his sanctuary on high; from heaven he surveys the earth" (Psalm 102:19, REB).

The Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar eventually came to see these same truths after God humbled him for seven years. "His [God's] sovereignty is everlasting and his Kingdom endures throughout all generations," said the king. "All who dwell on earth count for nothing [by comparison]; he does as he pleases with the host of heaven [the angelic realm] and with those who dwell on earth" (Daniel 4:34-35, REB; compare 5:21).

The first two chapters of Job show the earthly authority of the devil and how it fits into God's supremacy over the universe. Although the patriarch Job suffered immense tragedies because of the devil's activities, the narrative shows that in no case could Satan do anything that God did not allow. God remains in ultimate control.

Satan's Work in Our World

"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ"
(2 Corinthians 4:4, NIV).

Now that we have seen that Satan is a real being with real powers, we need to understand how he uses his powers. We should also understand his intentions and overall goal.

We saw in the previous chapter that Satan led other angels astray in a misguided attempt to overthrow God's authority. His vanity, pride and lust for power led him into war against the ruler of the universe.

Failing at that, Satan spitefully tried to thwart and disrupt God's dealings with the human race, doing whatever he could to bring harm. And his evil work has been incessant.

Satan's primary goal

The devil wasted no time before interfering. As we saw earlier, Genesis 3 describes Satan's appearance on the scene shortly after God created Adam and Eve.

The first thing Satan tried to do was to destroy God's relationship with the first human beings. He subtly asked Eve, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" (verse 1). He cleverly avoided mentioning all that God *had* given to her and Adam—every other plant, tree and kind of fruit in the garden. Instead he succeeded in getting her to concentrate on the fruit of the *one* tree from which God had forbidden them to eat.

He slyly began to deceive Eve. He introduced his first lie, telling her she would not die if she took of the forbidden fruit (verse 4). He followed with another falsehood, slandering God by accusing Him of holding Eve back by withholding valuable knowledge from her (verse 5). She was seduced by his persuasiveness. She took of the fruit and then shared it with Adam.

Eve was deceived by Satan's craftiness (2 Corinthians 11:3). Adam wasn't deceived (1 Timothy 2:14). He simply followed along and joined his wife in disobeying God's clear instructions. We see that pressure from others to go along even when we know a course of action is wrong has been with us for a long time.

This account helps us see that Satan's primary goal is to thwart God's plan to build a family relationship with mankind.

From the beginning God has had a magnificent plan for human beings—to extend to us His gift of eternal life. One of the Bible's most familiar passages makes this plain: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

God's goal is to vastly expand His family. Right now that eternal family consists of two divine beings—God the Father and Jesus Christ, His Son (Luke

10:22). God's goal for humanity—eternal life in His family—is the central focus of the entire creation: “For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God” (Romans 8:19, New American Standard Bible).

Satan's False Advertising— Even in Christianity

If you could see and meet the devil face to face, what would he look like? He is commonly depicted as a cartoon character in a red suit with a pitchfork or as a hideous-looking ghoul.

But neither of these characterizations is anywhere close to the truth. In reality, if you were to meet the devil, you would find him attractive, engaging and persuasive. Though he is really the prince of darkness, Satan successfully *presents* himself as “an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14).

Satan is a master of misrepresentation. He is the world's greatest advertiser, packaging his product so it seems attractive and appealing, while in reality it is poisonous and deadly. He wants his clients to see him as good, beneficent and trustworthy. He wants his product—sin and rejection of God—to appear enticing and inviting, and he is usually quite successful.

Satan never presents sin as it really is. He never presents both sides of the story, pro and con. He presents only what he wants us to see, something that appears fun and exciting. He wants us to focus on *pleasure*, on what *feels or looks good* at the moment. He wants long-term consequences to be the last thing on our minds while he entices us to sin.

The vast majority of people have lost sight of the real connection between *cause and effect*. We rarely hear or see that concept mentioned, much less discussed. Instead we hear people clamor for quick fixes to every problem, ease for every discomfort and a pill for every ailment. We seldom stop to consider the long-term consequences of our actions. (To better understand these principles, download or re-

quest your free copy of the booklet *Why Does God Allow Suffering?*)

Our approach is shortsighted and foolish. “Do not be deceived,” cautions Paul. “God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow” (Galatians 6:7, New Revised Standard Version).

We live in a world that pays little attention to the long-term results of sin. We don't think through the consequences of our words and deeds, and we're constantly under pressure from a society that is built on Satan's standards and values rather than God's.

It's neither easy nor popular, considering the culture surrounding us, to adopt a different set of values and standards—those that God reveals. As Jesus said: “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world . . . the world hates you” (John 15:18-19). God's way will never be popular in this day and age.

Nevertheless, most people appear supremely confident that their ways *are* pleasing to God. They defend their religious beliefs and practices as being perfectly satisfactory and acceptable in God's eyes. They *assume* that all, or most, teachers and churches bearing the Christian name teach the truth. Few indeed stop to consider that Satan's great deception is not only worldwide, but *has deeply infiltrated Christianity*.

Notice the context of Paul's words when he writes that Satan appears as “an angel of light.” In 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 Paul warns of “false apostles, deceitful workers, *transforming themselves into apostles of Christ*.” We shouldn't be surprised at this, writes Paul, because “Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if *his ministers* also transform themselves into ministers

This close family relationship is God's fervent desire for humanity. Paul calls Jesus “the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:29). As the firstborn Son of God, He is the first of many children of God to be ultimately born in God's

of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”

Is that possible? How could people who



Few indeed stop to consider that Satan's great deception is not only worldwide, but has deeply infiltrated Christianity.

claim to represent Jesus Christ in reality be Satan's “ministers,” his servants, used by the devil to spread deception?

Jesus Himself repeatedly warned of this very thing! He said that many would appropriate His name but deny Him by their actions. He stated: “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” (Matthew 7:22-

23). Of such, he asked, “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and *not do the things which I say?*” (Luke 6:46).

Jesus and His true apostles spoke of *false* apostles, *false* prophets and *false* brethren. Jesus further warned: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For *many will come in My name . . . and deceive many*” (Matthew 24:4-5, 11). He knew that false teachers would arise who would teach a distorted, corrupted version of Christianity. That deception began in the first century, when Paul wrote that some were already teaching a “different gospel” and “pervert[ing] the gospel of Christ” (Galatians 1:6-7).

To carry out his purpose, Satan uses some people to deceive other people. This is especially true when they are motivated by personal ambition to be teachers of spiritual matters but lack a proper understanding of the Scriptures. Satan simply takes advantage of that desire and seduces susceptible individuals to represent Christ falsely, though often sincerely,

while advancing the devil's own deceptive, disguised agenda. Indeed, such teachers are usually *unwitting* agents of Satan, being deceived themselves along with everyone else.

Lest you be misled by this greatest of all of Satan's deceptions, you need to be sure that your beliefs are based firmly on the Bible. (For more on how pervasive Satan's deceptions are among churches that profess to be Christian, see “The Great Counterfeiter” beginning on page 38. And be sure to download or request a free copy of our booklet *The Church Jesus Built*.)

family, and “Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers” (Hebrews 2:11, NIV).

God promises us that “he who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son” (Revelation 21:7). “I will be a Father to you,” He says, “and you shall be My sons and daughters” (2 Corinthians 6:18). God wants to give us immortality so we can live with Him forever. He wants to begin a close family relationship with us now (John 14:23). (For a deeper understanding of this truth, download or request our free booklet *What Is Your Destiny?*)

Satan, however, wants to thwart God’s plan in any way he can. He wants to prevent us from developing a close relationship with God. He wants to keep us from attaining our destiny as the very sons of God.

Satan’s great deception

As we noted earlier, Satan is a powerful, intelligent being who will stop at

How Can We Resist the Devil?

In addition to identifying Satan’s methods of deceiving people, God gives us specific guidance to counteract the devil and his influence. God’s Word assures us, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). This promise, however, is clearly directed toward those willing to “submit to God” (same verse) and is immediately followed with the instruction, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (verse 8).

How, then, do we draw near to God? His instruction continues, “Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (same verse). We must *actively seek* to eliminate Satan’s way of thinking and behaving from our lives.

Satan, however, is so clever and powerful that no human being can successfully resist his influence—without God’s help. Therefore the key to resisting the devil is to sincerely and consistently *draw near and remain close to God*.

Our first step is to allow God to *wash Satan’s influence from our minds*. This takes place through recognizing and acknowledging our sins and repenting of them. The

Scriptures compare this transformation from Satan’s way of thinking to coming back to life from the dead:

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others” (Ephesians 2:1-3).

When we begin to truly repent and submit to God from the heart, we begin to take His Word seriously and to obey His instruction and commands. Then His Word, the Bible, begins cleaning up our minds, washing away our evil thoughts and motives. All who genuinely repent—who wholeheartedly surrender their lives to God and are baptized so that they may receive the Holy Spirit—are placed by Jesus Christ into His Church. We strongly recommend that you find a true minister of God to discuss baptism.

Now notice Christ’s concern for them and how He works with them to remove evil influences from their hearts and minds: Christ “loved the church and gave Himself for her,

nothing to carry out his ends. As the master manipulator of mankind, he has many methods and tools at his disposal.

In a sense, his immediate goal—keeping mankind separate from God—is relatively easy. As human beings we are inclined to focus on our own needs and wants—and Satan has reinforced that to the point that selfishness is the primary motivator in human behavior. As Paul puts it, “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires” (Romans 8:5, NIV). Those whose minds are focused on themselves are, whether they realize it or not, “hostile to God” (verse 7, NIV).

Quoting from several Psalms, Paul summarizes the spiritual condition of most of humanity: “There is no one who is righteous, not even one; there is no one who has understanding, there is no one who seeks God. All have turned aside, together they have become worthless; there is no one who shows kindness, there is not

that He might sanctify and *cleanse her with the washing of water by the word*, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:25-27). *God’s Word* is the instrument Christ uses—through the power of the Holy Spirit—to wash away Satan’s influences from our thinking.

But what can we do about the devil’s attempts to influence us in the future? Here, too, God provides us with a defense: “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil . . . Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm” (Ephesians 6:10-13, NRSV).

Paul then lists specific elements of the spiritual armor God makes available to us. He compares the defense of God’s servants against Satan’s influence to a “belt of *truth* around your waist” and a “breastplate of *righteousness*

(verse 14). He describes their combat shoes as “*whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace*” (verse 15). Their shield is their *faith* in God and His Son, Jesus Christ, “with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one” (verse 16).

Their resolve is protected by “the helmet of *salvation*” (verse 17)—the assurance that in steadfastly serving and pleasing God they will receive eternal life. The one offensive weapon they can use to cut to ribbons Satan’s attitudes and philosophies is the “sword of the Spirit, which is *the word of God*” (same verse). Indeed, all the elements of the armor listed derive from Scripture, so it is vital that we be studying and meditating on the Bible regularly.

Finally, Paul says, “*Pray in the Spirit at all times* in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints” (verse 18). Indeed, regular prayer is essential to maintaining our nearness to God.

These are the essential keys for warding off Satan’s efforts to regain control over “the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error” (2 Peter 2:18). The more our character becomes like God’s perfect nature, the less Satan will feel comfortable in our presence, and the more he will be inclined to flee from us.

even one . . . Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery are in their paths, and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Romans 3:10-18, NRSV).

As a master of persuasion, Satan easily deceives mankind into focusing on anything *but* God. Through the theory of evolution, for example, he has convinced millions that God doesn’t exist. (For proof that God is real, download or request our free booklets *Life’s Ultimate Question: Does God Exist?* and *Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe?*)

Through hundreds of corrupt religions he has over the ages convinced billions of people to worship the sun, moon and stars, animals, nature, deceased ancestors, imaginary gods and goddesses, and a bewildering variety of other things—or nothing at all. Even among the many varieties of traditional Christianity, we find people divided and bickering over who and what God is, over His purpose for us, and over how He wants us to worship Him and how we should live. The devil has done an effective job of confusing people as to what the Bible really says.

God and Satan: Truth and Life vs. Lies and Murder

Jesus says of Satan—“the Spirit that is ruling the world”—that “he has nothing in common with me” (John 14:30, Twentieth Century New Testament). The Scriptures draw sharp contrasts between God and Satan that help us better understand the profound differences between their character, motivations, goals and actions.

Much of what we learn about Satan is summed up in his name, which means *adversary*. Peter calls him “your *enemy* the devil” (1 Peter 5:8, NIV). Satan’s actions and motivations are those of an enemy. God’s character, in contrast, is summarized by the word *love*—a deep, outgoing concern for the welfare and well-being others. “God *is* love,” John tells us (1 John 4:8, 16).

In John 8:43-44 Christ says Satan is a murderer and liar. Later, in John 14:6, Jesus refers to Himself as “the way, the truth, and the life.” As a liar and murderer, Satan is the *exact opposite* of “the truth and the life.” Christ is the

truth; Satan is a *liar*. Christ is the *life*; Satan is a *murderer*—one who *takes away* life. Clearly, Satan is the exact opposite of God and Jesus Christ in his intents, motivation and character.

Emphasizing this stark contrast, Paul asks a series of questions in 2 Corinthians 6:14-15: “For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial?” The thrust of this is that the ways of Christ and Satan are as opposite as day and night, light and darkness (see also John 3:19-21; 8:12; Ephesians 6:12).

The essence of Christ’s character is revealed in His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before He gave His life in sacrifice: “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless *not My will*, but *Yours*, be done” (Luke 22:42). Satan’s attitude is diametrically opposite. Rather than submitting to God’s perfect will, he became *self-willed* and determined to have his way at any cost. That attitude led to his initial rebellion against his Creator as described in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. Regrettably, Satan has been remarkably successful at infusing a me-first, self-willed atti-

Satan doesn’t care which of these groups people fall into. Whether they believe in no God at all, accept and worship a false god or are deceived into a false view of the true God and His plan for us, Satan still has them where he wants them—“alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Ephesians 4:18).

Perhaps this helps us better



Whether they believe in no God at all, accept and worship a false god or are deceived into a false view of the true God and His plan for us, Satan still has people where he wants them.

Digital Stock

tude among all human beings, with the one exception of Jesus, who perfectly resisted him.

Another aspect of Satan’s nature that sharply contrasts with that of God is brought out in Revelation 9:11. Here we read of a powerful force of attackers that goes forth like locusts to torment mankind. “And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon”—names meaning “destruction” and “destroyer,” respectively.

We might say that *Destroyer* is his name and *destruction* is his game. These titles sum up Satan’s character, goals and purpose. They summarize the end result of everything he strives for—absolute destruction. If the devil can’t *have* it all, as he comes to realize at the point in history described here, his intent is to *destroy* it all.

So again we see a major contrast. Compare Satan, the *destroyer*, with God, whose greatest attribute is that He is the *Creator*. God is the one who creates, builds, makes and gives us so many beautiful and wonderful things. Satan, on the other hand, is the ultimate destroyer.

What does he destroy? He ruins basically

everything he can get his hands on. Read all of Revelation 9 and Revelation 12:7-12. Everywhere he is mentioned, Satan is destroying—trying to murder God’s people, fighting Jesus Christ, lashing out in anger because he knows his time is almost up.

Even after losing the war, and being restrained for 1,000 years, has he learned his lesson? Far from it. In Revelation 20:7-10 we read that when he is released he will go out to deceive the nations again and bring them to battle against Jerusalem. But he and those who follow him will be defeated. He will finally be taken out of the picture for good, all his efforts brought to nothing.

Eventually every destructive thing Satan has tried to achieve throughout history will be reversed and defeated, and all that God has set out to achieve will be accomplished. This is made clear in the Scriptures. God has ultimate control over His creation, and Satan can do no more than God allows as He works out His great purpose, allowing humanity to learn important lessons. (Be sure to read “Why Does God Allow Satan to Influence Mankind?” beginning on page 16.)

The Spirit World's Dangerous Dark Side

Strange practices and religions such as Wicca, Santeria, voodoo and channeling are growing in popularity. Are such things harmless, or is there more to them than meets the eye?

As traditional Christianity has lost its appeal for many people, growing numbers have sought to fill that vacuum in their lives in other ways. Some turn to alternate religions popular in other parts of the world. Some turn to witchcraft and pre-Christian paganism. Some seek answers in the occult. A few even knowingly turn to Satanism and evil spirits.

Some are simply curious; others are very serious. But whether they recognize it or not, all are dabbling in dangers that likely are well beyond their limited comprehension. That's why these dangers are often referred to as the occult—things that are secretive, mysterious and concealed.

You've likely never directly seen Satan or his demons, but certainly those familiar with the Bible recognize their influence in this rapidly degenerating world. No wonder the Scriptures describe Satan as "the god of this age" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

His influence is not new, but its prevalence in modern society certainly is. What was once banned or very limited in dealing with the dark spirit realm is now mostly out in the open. Satanism is rampant in movies. And movements based on it, such as Wicca, Santeria, voodoo and consultation with mediums, are thriving, especially with the young.

The apostle Paul tells us that we should be wary of such practices, "lest Satan should take advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11).

Wicca, Santeria and voodoo

One of the fastest growing movements in

Western nations is Wicca, a modern version of witchcraft.

Wicca, from an Old English word for "witch," incorporates many of the trappings of ancient British witchcraft practices. Some, but not all, covens, or groups, practice casting spells, divination and magic. Wicca is an umbrella group or movement that gathers under its fold very different beliefs and practices—but is at its core a thinly disguised type of old-fashioned witchcraft.

Santeria is a Caribbean religion based on mixing African witchcraft with Roman Catholic beliefs—similar in many ways to voodoo or pure African witchcraft. Its followers practice animal sacrifices and perform feverish dancing during Santerian rituals that can lead to possession of a person by an orisha or "saint." The individual then is said to speak and act as that "saint." If this is an actual spiritual experience, it is nothing more than demonic possession.

All of these practices have this in common: Satan is their originator, and they should be absolutely avoided. God, who knows exactly how Satan and his demons work, emphatically warns us not to have anything to do with them. He tells us to not "give the devil a foothold" (Ephesians 4:27, NIV).

We should not consult with people associated with these practices. God says: "There shall not be found among you anyone who . . . practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD" (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

Mediums and familiar spirits

What about mediums and people who use such things as tarot cards and Ouija boards to consult with the spirits?

Mediums—also sometimes called "seers" or "clairvoyants"—are people who may be used by

the fallen angels the Bible calls demons. They might appear normal and helpful, but those who are not charlatans (and many are) can genuinely have contact with deceitful spirits who seek to attract and use human beings for their own evil purposes. For this reason these evil angelic beings are called "*deceiving* spirits" in the Bible (1 Timothy 4:1).

They sometimes pose as the spirits of the dead. Yet the Bible tells us that the dead have no awareness, sleeping in unconsciousness until a future resurrection (see Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Job 14:10-15; Daniel 12:2; and send for or download our free booklet *What Happens After Death?*).

Familiar spirits, in reality disguised demons, can have an intimate knowledge of people, alive or dead. They have at their disposal supernatural abilities and an extensive network of information from fellow demons who are more than willing to share their knowledge with the deceived "host." In this way, they will entice many more people to be deceived and hooked—ending sometimes as pawns to these spirits.

This is the grave danger of participating in any of these practices—at first these spirits appear as willing servants, but inevitably they end up as harsh taskmasters. That is why we should avoid coming into *any* contact with people who claim they can communicate with the dead. (For more on this, read "What Is Channeling?" on page 32).

Tarot cards and Ouija boards

Some use manual devices such as tarot cards or Ouija boards to consult with these familiar spirits themselves. These objects should be avoided at all costs—they are not innocent "games" but ancient ways of attracting these spirits.

Think of these instruments as potential passports into your mind—possibly opening an entry to the zone that should only be inhabited

by your own thoughts and God's Holy Spirit. If you do not invite these evil spirits, they cannot enter. Yet sometimes even an unsuspecting invitation through these devices can give demons a green light! Sadly, many people have unknowingly invited evil spirits into their minds—never to be quite the same again.

As the Scriptures reveal, these spirits need to be cast out by genuine ministers of God. Acts 19 records an instance where some would-be exorcists tried to cast a demon out of a person and the demon turned on them, saying, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" Much to their surprise, "the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded" (verses 15-16).

This is therefore no laughing matter or cute entertainment—it is deadly serious! Scripture records several instances of people falling into such forbidden practices with disastrous results.

Simply say "No!"

We must simply say "*No!*" when enticed to play with this dark spirit world. Don't fold under pressure from friends, family or anyone else. Put God and His Word first! Literally, your life and your mental welfare could depend on it!

God, who knows exactly how Satan and his demons work, warns us not to have anything to do with them. We should not consult with people associated with these spirits in spite of any stated intentions to help us. God's Word is clear: "Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:31).

Ask, "Would Christ approve of this?" He certainly would not! So we should avoid all contact with mediums, fortune-tellers, witches and their devices—and not be fooled by whatever means they might use to try to entice us.

understand what God means when He tells us that the devil “*deceives the whole world*” (Revelation 12:9). Paul explains that “the god of this age” has blinded those “who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

In one of His parables Jesus explains that, as soon as some people hear God’s truth, “the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved” (Luke 8:12). Satan will stop at nothing to keep people blinded to the fullness of God’s truth. The result, as Jesus explained, is that “the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are *many* who take it,” and “the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are *few* who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14, NRSV).

Causes of humanity’s problems

When we understand the magnitude of Satan’s deception, we can better grasp the roots of so many of humanity’s problems. Collectively we have had thousands of years to experiment with governments, philosophies and ways of living, so why have we been unable to solve our problems? Why do so many difficulties persist year after year, century after century?

Human governments and other efforts have not succeeded because, in the final analysis, *we simply do not know the right way to live*. Solomon, king of ancient Israel, put it bluntly: “There is a way that *seems right* to a man, but its end is *the way of death*” (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).

Through the prophet Jeremiah, God tells us that “it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps” (Jeremiah 10:23). Regrettably, mankind has proved the truth of those words for generations. Under human rule, influenced by Satan’s attitude of getting all we can for ourselves, the world has never seen a time free of turmoil, war and suffering.

The world suffers from chronic, overwhelming problems *because we have rejected God*. Under God’s inspiration, Solomon’s father King David wrote: “The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not one” (Psalm 14:2-3).

Jeremiah also noted that people are largely blinded by the deceit of their own evil motives and intents: “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9, NIV).

Man separated from God

The prophet Isaiah adds: “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perversity. No one calls for justice, nor does any plead for truth . . . The way of peace they have not known, and there is no justice in their ways; they have made themselves crooked

What if You Are Confronted by the Dark Side of the Spirit World?

The Bible provides a guide to successfully countering any of Satan’s deceptions. Below are several principles you should follow.

For one, avoid participating in anything to do with the evil side of the spirit world (see Ephesians 5:11). Instead of harboring dark thoughts that can lead to being influenced by dark forces, the Bible clearly tells us to focus on the positive: “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

Respect the power of the dark world and don’t play around with it. Avoid any type of séances, gothic rituals or such devices as Ouija boards, all of which can open portals to the evil world (see “The Spirit World’s Dangerous Dark Side” beginning on page 28). At the same time, don’t be *afraid* of the dark forces. Remember, God is still in charge and is far more powerful than any of these evil agents. The Bible tells us, “He who is in you is *greater* than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

Make sure to draw close to God. By doing so, you’ll move farther away from the world’s evil sources. Through prayer, Bible study, meditation and occasional fasting, you will be greatly strengthened and will successfully resist Satan’s temptations. “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and *he will flee from you*. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (James 4:7-8).

If you ever feel there is a strange and evil presence around you, the Bible gives advice based on the confrontation between the archangel Michael and Satan. “Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’” (Jude 9).

So, if you do rebuke a spirit, don’t do it in your name, but always in God’s name,



providing you have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. That is the only authority evil spirits respect. Realize also that the spirit world is nothing to be trifled with (Acts 19:13-17). If you feel troubled by a spirit, you should seek counsel and advice from one of God’s true ministers.

Another great source of spiritual strength is simply reading and studying the Bible. Jesus Christ quoted Scripture numerous times to successfully counter the wiles of the devil (Matthew 4:3-10). Many scriptural passages—especially in the book of Psalms—provide comfort and courage when one is facing dark spiritual forces. Take particular note of Psalms 23, 27, 34, 37 and 91.

What Is Channeling?

Most have heard of the term *channeling*. It has become increasingly popular on TV and radio, especially with the arrival of the “New Age” movement. This is a modern version of mysticism with roots in Hinduism, Buddhism and occultism. Some famous actors and actresses have promoted this new take on some very old religious practices.

Those who do the channeling claim they are receiving information or commands from a divine or unknown source. In effect, they say, they are like a radio receiving a signal from a transmitter.

The channeler, or medium, has one or more spirits enter his mind, and then he becomes the “mouthpiece.” Through the medium, the spirit then offers information, advice or predictions on almost any subject imaginable, from the present condition of a departed loved one, to medical counsel, financial advice or even how to improve one’s love life.

Who is speaking through the channeler? The spirits claim to have varied identities. Some say they are the spirits of the dead, sometimes of famous persons, such as Napoleon, Winston Churchill, the so-called Virgin Mary and even Jesus Christ. Others claim to be aliens of extraterrestrial origin.

In reality, there is not much that is new about the “New Age” movement. Mediums were used to attempt to consult with the dead from the dawn of history. They were used in Babylon, Egypt, India, China, Asia Minor, Greece (which had the famous oracle at Delphi) and even by the native North and South American Indians. Yet as Scripture informs us, the dead are not conscious but, rather, await a resurrection (see Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Daniel 12:2). (Be sure to send for or download our free booklet *What Happens After Death?*)

Although some of the so-called channelers clearly are frauds—and the famous magician Harry Houdini spent 30 years exposing such fakes—in other investigations researchers could not detect any fraud. The late Lord Dowding, who commanded the British Air Forces during the Battle of Britain in World War II, conducted many rigorously supervised laboratory experiments with psychics and found that some indeed passed



the tests as being genuine. Yet genuine channeling means contact with demons.

This is why the Bible constantly warns us not to participate in any type of “channeling,” which requires one to open his or her mind to these spirits. Instead, the Scriptures say, “Gird up the loins of your mind” (1 Peter 1:13)—this imagery implying that we should have a tight hold on our minds in preparation for how we use them. Instead of exposing our minds to foreign sources, we should keep the natural barriers of our minds well protected from any outside spirit influence except that of God.

The apostle Peter adds: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith” (1 Peter 5:8-9). That’s good advice!

Photos.com

paths; whoever takes that way shall not know peace” (Isaiah 59:1-8).

God’s ways are vastly different from man’s. He tells us: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways . . . For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Satan has effectively deceived the world throughout history by influencing human beings to cut themselves off from God’s guidance. He has led us into wanting to do things our own way, to rely on ourselves rather than God as the ultimate authority.

Paul describes the results of rejecting God: “Since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice.

“They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them” (Romans 1:28-32, NIV).

Paul’s words ring as true in our day as ever before. Our news and entertainment media praise and condone degenerate, sinful lifestyles and practices while condemning people who support biblical standards as narrow-minded bigots out to impose their biases on others. Such twisted values are the inevitable result of a mind-set that rejects the knowledge and commandments of God. (To better understand the results of rejecting God’s teachings, be sure to download or request our free booklet *Why Does God Allow Suffering?*)

This is not God’s world

Although God is always in ultimate control, the Scriptures make it clear that He is not the reason for the world’s many chronic problems. As Jesus Christ said in John 18:36, “My kingdom is not of this world.”

God is not behind the misery that plagues our planet. Satan the devil is the true “ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). John tells us that “the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19). Again, Satan is the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4).

Moreover, Satan’s demonic cohorts also exercise control in this world—even at times powerfully influencing human governments. In the book of Daniel, the righteous angel Gabriel tells Daniel that he had just been fighting, with the help of the archangel Michael, against a powerful spirit personality referred to as “the prince of Persia”—and that he would soon have to fight another he called “the prince of Greece” (Daniel 10:13, 20).

Of course, these are but subordinates under the devil. In an attempt to lead Jesus astray in Matthew 4:8-9, Satan offered “all the kingdoms of the world and their glory”—as they were truly under his dominion (compare Luke 4:5-7).

Although we cannot see Satan, his influence is powerful and pervasive. Paul understood this, reminding Christians that “you once walked according to the course of this world, according to *the prince of the power of the air*, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2). The result of the devil’s influence is that, before conversion, our focus is on “gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts” (verse 3, NIV).

Notice again that Paul calls Satan “the prince of *the power of the air*” as the spirit *working in* disobedient humanity. What does this mean? Evidently, Satan is responsible for a spiritual “broadcast” of sorts to which human minds are attuned. Just as the air around us is saturated with TV and radio signals that can be tuned in with electronic receivers, so it is also saturated with Satan’s spiritual broadcast of selfish and rebellious



Just as the air around us is saturated with TV and radio signals that can be tuned in with electronic receivers, so it is also saturated with Satan’s spiritual broadcast of selfish and rebellious moods and attitudes to which our minds are receptive.

moods and attitudes to which our minds are receptive.

The devil thereby spiritually influences humanity to reject God and God’s law. Under this influence, “the mind-set of the flesh is hostile to God because it does not submit itself to God’s law, for it is unable do so” (Romans 8:7, Holman Christian Standard Bible).

Separated from God, man chooses to go his own way with devastating results. Under Satan’s influence humanity has rejected God’s revelation and guidance and built societies and civilizations on wrong foundations. But it will not be that way forever. We’ll learn how things will change in the next two chapters of this booklet.

The Fall of Satan’s Kingdom

“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time” (Revelation 12:12).

If we consider the whole picture, there should be no doubt that this is Satan’s world rather than God’s. Paul even refers to our era as “this present evil age” (Galatians 1:4).

However, Satan will not always dominate planet earth. Bible prophecy reveals that an astounding series of events will shake our world as never before and usher in a new age—a 1,000-year era under the reign of Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:10; Luke 21:31).

This good news of the coming Kingdom of God is at the heart of Christ’s teaching: “Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel’” (Mark 1:14-15).

The transition from Satan’s domination of the earth to Jesus Christ’s rule will be neither easy nor painless. The prophet Daniel describes it as “*a time of distress* such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then” (Daniel 12:1, NIV). Christ stated that *no human being would survive* if God did not intervene in world affairs to establish His Kingdom, ousting Satan from his control over humanity (Matthew 24:21-22).

Signs of the end of the age

As the end of Christ’s earthly ministry drew near, the disciples asked Him when the events leading to His Kingdom’s establishment would occur: “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3). Jesus summarized the trends and events that would characterize that time. A quick review of the list reads remarkably like today’s headlines.

Jesus responded: “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” (verses 4-5, King James Version). He was speaking here of widespread false religion in His name—a great false Christianity. (Be sure to read “Satan’s False Advertising—Even in Christianity” beginning on page 22 and “The Great Counterfeiter” beginning on page 38.)

Jesus continued: “And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the *beginning of sorrows*” (verses 6-8).

He described other significant trends—persecution and hatred directed at God’s true servants, increasing religious deception and the proclamation of the true gospel of the Kingdom of God to all the world (verses 9-14).

The world, Christ said, would grow increasingly dangerous as His return nears. “It will be a time of great distress,” He warned, “such as there has never been before since the beginning of the world, and will never be again. If that time of troubles were not cut short, *no living thing could survive*; but for the sake of God’s chosen it will be cut short” (verse 21-22, Revised English Bible).

Religious deception will continue to increase, He said, followed by dramatic heavenly signs (verses 23-29). These will be followed by a world-transforming event: “Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (verse 30).

Satan’s role in the end time

Jesus’ prophecy is an overview of end-time events. Many other prophecies, mostly in the book of Revelation, fill in various details.

Satan will not relinquish his kingdom without a fight. As the time of Christ’s



return draws near, we can read this sobering warning in Revelation 12:12: “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, *having great wrath*, because *he knows that he has a short time*.” Many prophecies go on to detail a *frenzy of destruction* directed at God’s Church, at the people of Israel, at humanity as a whole, and at the returning Jesus Christ.

Satan’s wrath is focused principally on those in the Church, symbolically represented by a woman in Revelation 12. “And the dragon was *enraged* with the woman, and he went to *make war with the rest of her offspring*, who keep the

“It will be a time of great distress,” Jesus Christ warned, “such as there has never been before since the beginning of the world, and will never be again. If that time of troubles were not cut short, no living thing could survive . . .”

commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (verse 17).

Religious persecution will again rear its ugly head—at Satan’s instigation (Revelation 2:10). “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and

you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake,” warned Jesus. “And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another” (Matthew 24:9-10).

Mark preserves another chilling detail from Christ’s prophecy about this promised persecution: “Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death” (Mark 13:12). Revelation 6:9-11 further describes this period of martyrdom.

Great religious deception coming

We earlier read that religious deception will increase as Christ’s return draws near. Satan will have a direct hand in the rise of a great



These powerful miracles will convince many, but in reality they are the deceptive handiwork of Satan. Regrettably, this man’s deception will take in millions of people.

leader who will play a pivotal role in a massive end-time religious deception.

Writing of events preceding Christ’s return, Paul tells us “that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and *the man of sin* is revealed, the son of perdition” (2 Thessalonians 2:3). This man “opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (verse 4).

How could such a person claim to be God and convince others to believe him? Paul adds that “the coming of the lawless one will be in accordance *with the work of Satan* displayed in all kinds of *counterfeit miracles*, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that *deceives* those who are perishing” (verses 9-10, NIV). These powerful miracles will convince many, but in reality they are the deceptive handiwork of Satan.

Regrettably, this man’s deception will take in millions of people. In the cataclysm that will mark the end of this age, many will fall victim to a “powerful delusion” and “perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved” (verses 10-11, NIV).

This should be a sobering warning to all of us. If we do not love the truth, if our beliefs are not firmly grounded in the truth of God’s Word and we do not have the strength of character to hold fast to them, we also could easily fall prey to this or other satanic deceptions. It has happened before, and both Jesus and Paul assure us *it will happen again*.

A satanic war against humanity

Although Satan's attitude of hatred, greed and resentment has led mankind into countless wars down through history, prophecy reveals that the devil will *personally* orchestrate one last great worldwide conflagration shortly before Christ returns.

In Revelation 9:1-12 we read about what appears to be an enormous military force depicted as a cloud of locusts arising from a bottomless pit. Terrifying devices, locustlike in appearance with tails like scorpions and wings sounding as a large force of chariots and horses—perhaps modern helicopters, as some have suggested—inflict people with pain that is compared to scorpion stings but without killing them (verses 5, 10). The results sound similar to the effects of a new generation of weapons that cause searing pain to disable enemies without permanent injury.

Leading this wave of suffering as “king over them” is “the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon” (verse 11). These titles mean “destruction” and “destroyer,” respectively. This being appears to be none other than Satan himself, whose character and reason for being are perfectly summed up by those titles (see “God and Satan:

Truth and Life vs. Lies and Murder” beginning on page 26).

We then read of the rise of a massive military force 200 million strong (verse 16). An unimaginable carnage begins. *A third of mankind*—literally *billions* of people at earth's current population level—die in this great war (verses 15, 18), dwarfing all casualties in all previous wars.

In this frenzy of destruction it appears that, if Satan can no longer maintain his control on humanity with the impending return of Christ, he will instigate the slaughter of as many as he can. (To learn more about these prophetic events, download or request your free copies of the booklets *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*, *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* and *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*.)

Satan's last stand

In Revelation 13 we find that Satan will be behind the rise of two “beasts.” One will be an end-time coalition of nations led by a powerful human ruler who will “make war with the saints and . . . overcome them” (verses 1-7). The other will be

The Great Counterfeiter

As a deceiver, Satan has no equal. In addition to being the world's greatest con artist, he is also its most accomplished counterfeiter.

Notice Paul's warning to the Christians in Corinth: “But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches *another Jesus* whom we have not preached, or if you receive *a different spirit* which you have not received, or *a different gospel* which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!” (2 Corinthians 11:3-4).

Here Paul describes three areas in which Satan employs clever *counterfeits* of the truth to deceive even Christians.

- First, he presents Jesus as being quite different from the Christ revealed in the Bible—in effect creating *another Jesus*, a false Christ. This is the Jesus most people hear about today—a counterfeit of the Jesus Christ of the Bible. Regrettably, most of what is called Christianity is built around this false Christ.

- The second of Satan's clever deceptions is to represent the mere outpouring of *human emotion*—or, in some cases, the *direct influence of demons*—as God's Spirit. Hundreds of thousands of people are deceived every year in this manner. They are impressed by what they see or feel rather than by the *fruit* of God's Spirit as listed in Galatians 5:22-23 and by whether the accompanying teaching is indeed of God (compare Isaiah 8:20).

The true Holy Spirit is the *power* of God (Acts 1:8; 2 Timothy 1:7) through which “those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:24). It is not, as so many think, a third person in the Godhead. And its work in our lives is not manifested through bizarre actions or nonsensical babbling worked up through human emotion or unwitting communication with demonic spirits. Rather, it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that God “works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose” (Philippians 2:13, NIV)—that is, to live by God's laws, though many religious teachers falsely claim these are done away.

- The third deception, twisting Jesus' gos-



Satan acts quickly to snatch it out of their hearts and minds (Matthew 13:18-22). The devil's methods are powerfully effective with many.

For example, notice Paul's lament over what was happening to the Galatian Christians who had been converted under his ministry: “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a *different gospel*, which is not another [as it was not truly good news, which “gospel” means]; but there are some who trouble you and want to *pervert the gospel of Christ*. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:6-8). So this is quite a serious matter.

The Jesus most people hear about today is a counterfeit of the Jesus Christ of the Bible. Regrettably, most of what is called Christianity is built around this false Christ.

pel message, seems to be Satan's most effective tool for maintaining his deadly grip on many people. Jesus explained that as soon as people begin to respond to God's Word,

To learn more about Satan's counterfeits and how they have infiltrated Christianity, be sure to download or request your free copy of *The Church Jesus Built*.

a false religious system led by the religious leader we read about earlier (verses 11-18)—who is also known as “the false prophet” (Revelation 16:13; 19:20).

Demons—as spiritual emissaries of the dragon (Satan), the Beast and the False Prophet—“go out *to the kings of the earth* and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Revelation 16:13-14).

Unaware of events going on behind the scenes, these kings will be mere pawns in Satan’s plan. Though their intent will be to fight each other, Satan’s objective will be to use the world’s armies to fight Jesus Christ at His return. Their armies will gather on a large plain adjoining “Armageddon” (verse 16)—that is, in Hebrew, *Har Megiddo* (“hill of Megiddo”)—an ancient stronghold about 55 miles north of Jerusalem. The final battle will take place at Jerusalem against the returning Jesus Christ (Zechariah 14:1-4, 12-15).

Revelation 19 describes Christ’s triumphant return to the earth: “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself.

“He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. ‘He will rule them with an iron scepter.’ He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” (verses 11-16, NIV).

These verses show conclusively that all the armies of the earth will prove to be nothing compared with the power of earth’s coming King, Jesus the Messiah.

“And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse” (verses 19-21).

With his armies defeated, Satan’s kingdom is dismantled and destroyed. But Satan and his demons must be stopped from continuing to deceive and manipulate mankind. And that is assured through what John sees next in his vision: “And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations any more until the thousand years were ended” (Revelation 20:1-3, NIV).

This coming end of Satan’s rule over the world will mark the end of “this present evil age” (Galatians 1:4). He and his demons will then be isolated from humanity for the next 1,000 years. With the battle for control of the earth over, it will at last be time for a new age to begin!

The Good News of a World Set Free

“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).

When Jesus Christ returns, “the kingdom of the world [will] become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15, NIV). Satan’s world, built on a foundation of lies and deception, will come crashing down, replaced by the Kingdom of truth and light.

To grasp the magnitude of the transformation that will take place at the coming and implementing of the Kingdom of God, we need to understand the magnitude of Satan’s centuries-long deception. It’s difficult even to begin to see how great, how pervasive, that deception has been when we have been immersed in it since our birth. After all, a deceived person *doesn’t know he is deceived*. To him the deception is what appears normal—it’s the truth that seems odd!

We need to grasp the fact that Satan has constantly deceived and manipulated mankind on every conceivable level. The prophecies of the book of Revelation only begin to scratch the surface of what must take place for the Kingdom of God to be established. One message that comes through loud and clear is that Christ will have to *tear virtually everything down and start over*. It will be the only way to root out the last vestiges of Satan’s system.

Tearing down and starting over

When you read through the book of Revelation you learn that it isn’t only the obvious areas of deception—such as Satan’s end-time political and religious systems—that must be rooted out and destroyed.

At Christ’s return *everything* will come crashing down and be swept away. He will start over afresh. Everything that Satan had a hand in building—governments, political systems, economic systems, educational systems, entertainment, media and information systems, every form of society and civilization that we have invented and established over the course of man’s history—must be replaced with something far superior.

Why? Because everything in this present world has been built *on a wrong foundation*. It is all founded on Satan’s deceptions and outright lies. It has been built on *his* values—constructed to his specifications, you might say. Almost without exception this world’s systems have all been constructed with no guidance or direction from God.

This is not God's world. It is not His society. It is not His civilization. It is not built on His values, laws or way of life. Satan has deceived the world for centuries and organized it according to *his* values rather than God's.

Satan's deception is an active, continuing process. At every turn he has taken mankind farther and farther away from God and His instructions for us. Each generation has built on layer after layer of previously established deception. Just as Satan deceived the whole world in the past, he is deceiving it now and will continue to delude it until He is put away at Christ's return. Then everything he has built must be completely crushed and swept away.

It's not pleasant to contemplate, but much of the horrendous destruction and devastation poured out on the earth as described in the book of Revelation is God's judgment on mankind and civilization. As noted earlier, Satan will embark on a frenzy of destruction as the end of his rule draws near and he wages a desperate war to thwart the returning Jesus Christ. But what is left of Satan's empire will be annihilated by Jesus as He assumes the role of King of Kings.

Just as a new building cannot successfully be built on the rotting foundation of a destroyed structure, God must raze the remnants of Satan's edifice before He can build a new foundation.

A new kind of government

At Jesus' return those who have been God's faithful followers over the centuries—who have successfully resisted Satan's deceit and rebellion—will be resurrected to immortality (1 Corinthians 15:50-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:16). God's Word says of these people: "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, *and shall reign with Him* a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6).

Christ, as we have seen, will return to reign on the earth (Zechariah 14:4, 9). Revelation 5:10 says

Satan will embark on a frenzy of destruction as the end of his rule draws near and he wages a desperate war to thwart the returning Jesus Christ.

of those resurrected to be with Christ, "You have made them to be *a kingdom and priests* to serve our God, *and they will reign on the earth*" (NIV). God has in mind an awesome purpose for His faithful servants. They are not destined for a



life of idleness and ease in heaven for eternity. God has called and is training them for a great *responsibility*—to reign with Christ as rulers and priests to build a perfect, just and godly civilization on earth! (To learn more, send for or download our free booklet *Heaven and Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?*)

Christ's Kingdom, the Kingdom of God, will be a literal kingdom ruling over the nations of the earth. Daniel 7:27, referring to the establishment of this Kingdom, tells us that "the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over *to the saints, the people of the Most High*. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him" (NIV).

Verse 14 tells us even more clearly that this will be a literal,



One prophecy that perhaps best describes the differences between the world tomorrow and today's world is found in Isaiah 11:9: ". . . The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."

world-ruling government. Daniel describes God the Father giving Jesus the Messiah authority and responsibility over the earth: "To Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that *all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him*. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed."

The governmental systems of mankind for centuries have proven their inherent inability to solve our many problems. Now they will be replaced by a ruler and form of government that can at last solve those problems. Jesus Christ will personally rule the peoples of the earth!

This central truth is at the heart of the gospel—the good news—that Jesus taught. The focus of His message is the announcement of a coming world government (Luke 21:31) that will not be administered by blinded people who have been duped by Satan. It will not be ruled by selfishly motivated people but by Jesus Christ Himself (verse 27).

Building a God-centered civilization

The Hebrew prophets give us dozens of prophecies throughout the Old Testament about this exciting time. One that perhaps best describes the differences between the world tomorrow and today's world is found in Isaiah 11:9: "They

shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”

Isaiah’s prophecy describes how during that time even the nature of animals will be changed: “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them” (verse 6).



Even the nature of animals will be changed. Isaiah 11:6 tells us, “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.”

and the right way to live—the way to prevent and eliminate pain and misery.

The prophet Micah describes this time of unprecedented peace: “Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.’

“For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid” (Micah 4:1-4).

With Satan-induced blindness removed, men, women, boys and girls everywhere will at last begin to recognize the blessings that come from following God’s way. They will eagerly stream to Jerusalem, Christ’s capital city, to learn His way of life.

Today’s world is full of hurting and destruction. It is blinded to the knowledge of God we so desperately need. Once Satan is removed, along with his attitude of vanity, jealousy, greed, selfishness and hostility, humanity can begin to learn and then experience peace.

Satan will no longer be around to blind the world and enshroud it in spiritual darkness. The world will at last experience freedom from Satan’s spiritual enslavement (John 8:32). People will at last learn godly values

Prophecies of Christ’s rule

In one of the Bible’s best-known (but least-understood) passages, the prophet Isaiah describes the kind of ruler Jesus will be: “The government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever” (Isaiah 9:6-7).

In contrast to the injustice, incompetence and oppression that so often characterize governments today, “judgment and justice” will be hallmarks of Christ’s coming reign. A new, vastly different kind of epidemic will break out throughout the world, affecting marriages, families, communities and nations. It will be an epidemic of *peace*. As Isaiah prophesied, “there will be no end” to peace under Jesus Christ’s reign (verse 7). The Prince of Peace will bring calm and goodwill to a world that has never known lasting peace.

Under Christ’s righteous rule, mankind will at last learn God’s ways and experience a wonderful peace. Educational institutions will teach people *how to live*, not just how to make a living. Biblical principles for healthy and lasting relationships will be thoroughly explained. The multiple millions of people who have never known God’s laws or ways in a world blinded by Satan for thousands of years will at last have access to that wonderful, saving knowledge. (To learn more about the promised Kingdom of God, be sure to download or request your free copy of our booklet *The Gospel of the Kingdom*.)

The millennial Kingdom and beyond

Jesus Christ will usher in a literal kingdom, the Kingdom of God on earth. But this is not the end of the story. Notice again Revelation 11:15, which was quoted in part earlier: “The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign *for ever and ever*’” (NIV).

Jesus Christ will reign over the nations in a literal kingdom for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:3-7). Yet we are also told in the passage just quoted that He will reign *forever*. In other words, the 1,000-year reign (commonly called the Millennium, from the Latin for “thousand years”) is only the beginning of Jesus’ *eternal* reign in the Kingdom of God.

Indeed, the reign that Christ will share with the resurrected saints during this time will be for the very purpose of offering entry into the eternal Kingdom of God to all mankind. Millions of physical human beings alive at Christ’s return will live through the devastation of the prophesied end-time events into the Millennium, after which many more generations will be born and live. They will all be given an opportunity for eternal life, to be changed from their physical lives and bodies to spirit and to enter into the eternal Kingdom of God.

When He taught about the Kingdom of God, Jesus made it clear that ultimately it is an *eternal* kingdom, not one that lasts only 1,000 years. In Matthew 19:16 we

read of a wealthy young man who asked Jesus a fundamental question: “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” Jesus explained to him that he needed to keep God’s commandments and “be perfect” (verse 21). When it became clear that the young man was not willing to do all that would be required, Jesus went on to say in verse 24 that “it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” Here, entry into the Kingdom of God is equated with *eternal life*.

Yes, the millennial reign of Christ will open the door for millions of human beings to be saved and enter the eternal Kingdom of God. The Millennium, a time of unparalleled peace, happiness and prosperity, will be just a foretaste of the even greater *eternal* Kingdom.

Unknown to most people, God established a series of festivals revealed in the Bible that picture how He will eventually reconcile humanity to Himself. In the process represented by the festivals, we learn why God allows Satan to exist until Jesus Christ’s return to the earth to establish the Kingdom of God. (To learn more about these days of worship, be sure to download or request our free booklet *God’s Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind*.)

Satan’s final role

The Bible reveals that Satan plays one final role after Christ’s return and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Earlier we read that Satan will be bound “so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished” (Revelation 20:3). But, then, “after these things he must be released for a little while” (same verse).

During the Millennium many will be born who will not be exposed to Satan’s influence. God’s way will be the only way they will have ever known. Yet the Scriptures reveal that God tests people to see if their obedience is from the heart (Deuteronomy 8:2; Revelation 2:10). One way He does this is to allow them to choose between good and evil (Deuteronomy 30:19). The book of Revelation describes one such way this choice will be presented at the end of the Millennium.

Notice how it will occur: “When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them” (Revelation 20:7-9, NIV).

God does not reveal whether this is the only test He will give then to separate those who sincerely want to obey and follow Him from those who don’t. But it will certainly be the final and most significant test. It will be a vital part of the judgment process, to determine once and for all where any root of the devil’s attitudes and thinking remain on earth. Here, at the end of the Millennium, those who have chosen to follow Satan will be gathered together at once and destroyed.

Then comes the time for Satan’s permanent removal: “And the devil who had

deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (verse 10, English Standard Version). At last, he will not be able to deceive anyone ever again.

Following Satan’s final rebellion, there will be a general resurrection of humanity—all those who lived in Satan’s world without a real opportunity for salvation (verses 5, 11-12). These will be able to compare their former life under Satan’s dominion with life under the rule of God—and decide whether or not to accept



A new, vastly different kind of epidemic will break out throughout the world, affecting marriages, families, communities and nations. It will be an epidemic of peace.

God’s way and eternal life in His Kingdom. (To better understand the great events to take place at this time, download or request our free booklet *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*.)

A wonderfully transformed heaven and earth

In the end there will be only God and those who have chosen His way rather than Satan’s. Continuing further in the book of Revelation, John describes another incredible sequence of events after the 1,000-year reign of Christ and the general resurrection period: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away” (Revelation 21:1, NIV).

In this new world “the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God” (verse 3, NIV). Satan’s rule as “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4, KJV) will be but a vanishing memory.

Revelation 21:4 tells us what the world will be like when Satan’s influence is no more: “[God] will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (NIV).

Is there really a devil? Yes. Absolutely. And other demons besides. But God assures us the time is coming when Satan, his demons and their works—the physical suffering, misery, mental anguish and mourning they bring—will be no more. May you have the wisdom, strength and love for truth to resist Satan’s deceptions and be there to see that wonderful day!

WORLDWIDE MAILING ADDRESSES

NORTH, SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

United States: United Church of God
P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027
Phone: (513) 576-9796 Fax: (513) 576-9795
Web site: www.GNmagazine.org
E-mail: info@ucg.org

Canada: United Church of God—Canada
Box 144, Station D, Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1, Canada
Phone: (905) 876-9966, (800) 338-7779
Fax: (905) 876-0569 Web site: www.ucg.ca

Bahamas: United Church of God
P.O. Box N8873, Nassau, Bahamas
Phone: (242) 324-3169 Fax: (242) 364-5566

Martinique: Église de Dieu Unie—France
127 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris, France

Spanish-speaking areas: Iglesia de Dios Unida
P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A.
Phone: (513) 576-9796 Fax: (513) 576-9795
E-mail: info@ucg.org

Phone: 085 22 717 E-mail: malawi@ucg.org
Mauritius: P.O. Box 53, Quatre Bornes, Mauritius
E-mail: mauritius@ucg.org

Nigeria: United Church of God—Nigeria
P.O. Box 2265 Somolu, Lagos, Nigeria
Phone: 8033233193 Web site: www.ucgnigeria.org
E-mail: nigeria@ucg.org

South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland:

United Church of God—Southern Africa
P.O. Box 2209, Beacon Bay, East London 5205
South Africa

Phone and Fax: 043 748-1694

Web site: www.ucg-rsa.org

Zambia: P.O. Box 23076, Kitwe, Zambia

Phone: (02) 226076 E-mail: zambia@ucg.org

Zimbabwe: P.O. Box 928

Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe

Phone: 011716273 E-mail: zimbabwe@ucg.org

EUROPE

Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg):

P.O. Box 93, 2800 AB Gouda, Netherlands

British Isles: United Church of God
P.O. Box 705, Watford, Herts, WD19 6FZ, England
Phone: 020-8386-8467 Fax: 020-8386-1999
Web site: www.goodnews.org.uk

Eastern Europe and Baltic states: Head Sõnumid,
Pk. 62, 50002 Tartu Postkontor, Estonia

France: Église de Dieu Unie—France
127 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris, France

Germany: Vereinte Kirche Gottes/Gute Nachrichten
Postfach 30 15 09, D-53195 Bonn, Germany
Phone: 0228-9454636 Fax: 0228-9454637

Italy: La Buona Notizia, Chiesa di Dio Unita
Casella Postale 187, 24121 Bergamo Centro, Italy
Phone and Fax: (+39) 035 4523573

Web site: www.labuonanotizia.org

E-mail: info@labuonanotizia.org

Scandinavia: Guds Enade Kyrka

P.O. Box 3535, 111 74 Stockholm, Sweden
Phone: +44 20 8386-8467 E-mail: sverige@ucg.org

AFRICA

East Africa—Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda:

United Church of God—East Africa
P.O. Box 75261, Nairobi 00200, Kenya
E-mail: kenya@ucg.org

Web site: www.ucgeastafrica.org

Ghana: P.O. Box AF 75, Adenta, Accra, Ghana
E-mail: ghana@ucg.org

Malawi: P.O. Box 32257, Chichiri, Blantyre 3, Malawi

PACIFIC REGION

Australia and Papua New Guinea:

United Church of God—Australia

GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Qld. 4001, Australia

Phone: 07 55 202 111 Free call: 1800 356 202

Fax: 07 55 202 122 Web site: www.ucg.org.au

E-mail: info@ucg.org.au

Fiji: United Church of God

P.O. Box 11081, Laucala Beach Estate, Suva, Fiji

New Zealand: United Church of God

P.O. Box 22, Shortland St.

Auckland 1140, New Zealand

Phone: Toll-free 0508-463-763

Web site: www.ucg.org.nz

E-mail: info@ucg.org.nz

Tonga: United Church of God—Tonga

P.O. Box 2617, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

ASIA

All except Philippines: United Church of God,

P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A.

Phone: (513) 576-9796 Fax (513) 576-9795

E-mail: info@ucg.org

Philippines: P.O. Box 81840

DCCPO, 8000 Davao City, Philippines

Phone and fax: +63 82 224-4444

Cell/text: +63 918-904-4444

Web site: www.ucg.org.ph E-mail: info@ucg.org.ph

ALL AREAS AND NATIONS NOT LISTED

United Church of God

P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A.

Phone: (513) 576-9796 Fax: (513) 576-9795

E-mail: info@ucg.org

Author: Scott Ashley *Contributing writers:* Roger Foster, Tom Robinson, John Ross Schroeder, Mario Seiglie
Editorial reviewers: Robert Dick, Bruce Gore, Paul Kieffer, Graemme Marshall, Burk McNair, Richard Thompson,
David Treybig, Leon Walker, Donald Ward, Lyle Welty Cover photo: PhotoDisc, Inc.

If You'd Like to Know More...

Who we are: This publication is provided free of charge by the United Church of God, an *International Association*, which has ministers and congregations throughout much of the world.

We trace our origins to the Church that Jesus founded in the early first century. We follow the same teachings, doctrines and practices established then. Our commission is to proclaim the gospel of the coming Kingdom of God to all the world as a witness and to teach all nations to observe what Christ commanded (Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20).



Free of charge: Jesus Christ said, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). The United Church of God offers this and other publications free of charge as an educational service

in the public interest. We invite you to request your free subscription to *The Good News* magazine and to enroll in our 12-lesson *Bible Study Course*, also free of charge.



We are grateful for the generous tithes and offerings of the members of the Church and other supporters

who voluntarily contribute to support this work. We do not solicit the general public for funds. However, contributions to help us share this message of hope with others are welcomed. All funds are audited annually by an independent accounting firm.

Personal counsel available: Jesus commanded His followers to feed His sheep (John 21:15-17). To help fulfill this command, the United Church of God has congregations around the world. In these congregations believers assemble to be instructed from the Scriptures and to fellowship.

The United Church of God is committed to understanding and practicing New Testament Christianity. We desire to share God's way of life with those who earnestly seek to follow our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Our ministers are available to counsel, answer questions and explain the Bible. If you would like to contact a minister or visit one of our congregations, please feel free to contact our office nearest you.

For additional information: Visit our Web site www.GNmagazine.org to download or request any of our publications, including issues of *The Good News*, dozens of free booklets and much more.



