

129 – The adversary may not be who or what we think

No one in this audience, to my knowledge, is Hebrew. I certainly am not Hebrew, and it's safe to say that having only my W.A.S.P. perspective, developed over centuries of enculturation – how's that for a cool word? "Enculturation" – could limit me from understanding a Hebrew – or Hebraic – perspective that is likewise enculturated over centuries – millennia, in fact.

I have long been bothered by blaming so much of our troubles, problems, and challenges on a figure named Satan, the Adversary, the enemy, or "the Devil." How often have you heard something like this: "The devil is trying to make me think...", or "Satan is doing such and such in my life," or perhaps, "this illness is an attack of the enemy"?

We have referred to satan many times during our studies, and He or IT occupies a discussion in my book, GO GOD. As you know – you who are listening live tonight – I have been searching the recent articles by haRold Smith, who writes from Jerusalem, discussing the origin of our western understanding of satan compared to the Hebraic understanding, which birthed the scriptures in their entirety. Every writer of the scriptures was Hebrew. He or she spoke Hebrew, and even for the Apostolic writings, which were in Greek, the men were nonetheless Hebrews and therefore embodied a Hebrew frame of reference.

Here's where I'm going with this cryptic introduction to our study: It is entirely possible that the entity I grew up knowing as Satan, or the enemy, is not an entity at all – unlike the messenger Gabriel, who announced himself to Zechariah, or the Michael, who appeared to Daniel, after having fought "the prince of Persia."

Well, if satan is not an entity, what is He, or more appropriately, what is IT? Secondly, no matter what we discover here, what are the implications for you and me today?

First, you should know that I do NOT claim to have this all worked out in advance. Frankly, I have probably more questions than I have answers; however, I find that I have not been able to shrug off this assault on the fortress of my understanding. What once seemed certain, seems so no longer. I have a sneaking suspicion that the issue may be as critically important as knowing that God will save all mankind by the consummation, and that no one is burning in torment, in a mythical place called Hell, now or ever. More importantly, I sense that the Lord is requiring me to grasp and to communicate whatever we discover together, because its discovery – or uncover – may somehow help us all to know Him and walk IN and WITH Him more intimately...and that can only be a good thing.

So...I pray that you will embark on an exploration with me -- perhaps the first since these studies began – into completely unfamiliar territory. I pray that you will keep an open mind, being wary for the tendency to defend a position before knowing the facts. I also pray that you will help me do the same.

As we go through our study tonight, I invite you to consider this an open classroom in which your questions are not only invited, but encouraged, if by any means to add clarity and light along what is to me a wilderness in my understanding of Who God is, what He created, and how it all works together to fulfill His “purpose of the eons.”

It turns out that satan is a Hebrew word, certainly, but **not** a Hebrew name. It is not a proper noun, not a name of someONE, spirit being or otherwise. The word, satan, is actually a noun used to designate an opposing force. Here’s how haRold Smith describes the meaning of the word, satan: *“Adversarial opposition... opposing force, divide, set at odds with, accuse, slander, reject, deceive, oppose, be adversarial.”* Satan *“expresses the principle strategy of evil. A force of determinial opposition to the works of YHVH.”*

Go back to the first definition given: Adversarial opposition. Not **“The Adversary”** but an opposing force...and you and I have the capacity to embody the qualities of adversarial opposition at any given time. Indeed, we know people who are doing

it now! We have had to break fellowship with some, or they have had to break fellowship with us because of this adversarial opposition. It is a state which is opposite to harmony, peace, contentment, joy, creativity, happiness, and even prosperity.

The Concordant body of literature is uniform in capitalizing the word, satan, as a name. Occasionally, even the word “Adversary” is used with capitalization. But the Hebrew language does not have capital letters. Isn’t that curious? Neither Greek nor Hebrew has punctuation marks either, which means that we have to determine punctuation by the form and flow of phrases within the text. Possibly for the first time in 40 years, I find that the Concordant Literal versions of both the Old and New Testaments to be limited to a western frame of reference, when a Semitic one would serve best.

Well, whatever your cultural, racial or ethnic background may be, let’s look together in the scriptures to see what the Lord might impart to us about this subject:

Genesis 3

Now the serpent, it became more crafty than any other animal of the field that Yahweh Elohim had made.

When I read this just now, it was as if I’d never seen it before. What’s the word that makes everything come to a halt, in the context of looking for who or what satan is? Read it again.

“more crafty than any other **animal of the field**”

An animal of the field cannot be a spirit, and I would propose that if an entity named Satan, or any demon for that matter, were to have inhabited the animal, the scripture would have said so. Instead, all we have here is an “**animal of the field that God had made,**” which had become “**more crafty than any other animal of the field that God had made.**”

Now jump over to **Isaiah 14:12**

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! (KJV)

It's curious that the only Bible version where the name Lucifer appears is the KJV. There's a problem, however: the word, rendered Lucifer, is a word that is used in many other places, but is never rendered as Lucifer again. Look at the CLV:

How have you fallen from the heavens! Howl, son of the dawn! You have been hacked down to the earth, Defeater over all nations!

Look at **John 14:30**

"No longer shall I be speaking much with you, for the Chief of the world is coming, and in Me **it** has not anything.

16:31

the Chief of this world has been judged.

16:31

Now shall the Chief of this world be cast out.

"Chief" in Greek is **Archon**: ruler, commander, or leader. Also notice, back in John 14:30, Jesus referred to "IT," and not "He," when He said, **"for the Chief of the world is coming, and in Me **it** has not anything."** If that seems too picky, it's been my go-to designation for the Holy Spirit, which is referred to as HE only once, and in studying that with you many months ago, I found that the personal pronoun – in this case, "he" – may be interchangeable with the impersonal pronoun, "it."

Matthew 6:13 – the Lord's prayer ends with this:

And mayest Thou not be bringing us into trial, but rescue us from **the wicked** one.

The word "one" was added, "for readability." Jesus didn't recommend that we pray for rescue from an entity, named Satan, or from anyone in particular, but from **"the wicked."** That term could apply to a large population of real, live people, don't you agree? You probably know someone – maybe lots of someones – who could be counted among **"the wicked."**

Here's Jesus addressing Peter in a major turnabout encounter:

Matthew 16

15 [Jesus] is saying to them, "Now you, who are you saying that I am?"

16 Now answering, Simon Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Now, answering, Jesus said to him, "Happy are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood does not reveal it to you, but My Father Who is in the heavens.

18 Now I, also, am saying to you that you are Peter, and on this rock will I be building My ecclesia, and the gates of the unseen shall not be prevailing against it.

19 I will be giving you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatsoever you should be binding on the earth shall be those things having been bound in the heavens, and whatsoever you should be loosing on the earth, shall be those having been loosed in the heavens."

20 Then He cautions the disciples that they may be saying to no one that He is the Christ.

21 Thenceforth begins Jesus to show His disciples that He must be coming away into Jerusalem and to be suffering much from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and the third day to be roused.

22 And, taking Him to him, Peter begins to rebuke Him, saying, "Propitious be it to Thee, Lord! By no means shall this be for Thee!"

23 Now, being turned, He said to Peter, "Go away behind Me, **satan!** A snare are you to Me, for you are not disposed to that which is of God, but that which is of men."

Jesus was addressing Peter, in verse 23. The CLV even acknowledged that when it refused to capitalize the term, explaining that Peter was acting like "a satan" – as in, an opposer – by his words. This is the whole point, and may be the most important take away for us practically from this study:

Any of us at any time could be satanic when we oppose – when we become adversarial to -- what God has said or done, and what He IS saying or doing, as He fulfills and accomplishes His purpose of the eons. We may become, albeit unwittingly, "satan" if and when at any time we are accusing, slandering, rejecting, or dividing, We are not victims of an entity – we ARE the entity which is at the time acting in adversarial opposition to word and works of God.

Serious, isn't it? No matter what our perspective, whether western or Hebrew, separating satan from an entity to an oppositional force that may be found within US, removes the opportunity to blame something – or someone outside of us— and puts the accountability ON us.

Suddenly, the demonstration of God's multifarious wisdom to the celestials becomes even more magnificent, not because we are triumphing over an adversarial entity, but because we are triumphing, IN CHRIST JESUS, over an adversarial force within our own nature as sons and daughter of Adam and Eve, who chose to gratify themselves over obeying God's direct instruction that was for their highest good.

Perhaps that's actually the best definition for us today: satan is the tendency within ourselves to gratify our fleshly mind and desires – even our human survival instincts, if you please – rather than obey God. I'm not purporting this definition to be the word of the Lord, but I ask you to check your spirit and see if you find agreement or not.

So...what do we do with Jesus trial in the wilderness after He was baptized? Let's look at it together:

Luke 4

1 Now Jesus, full of holy spirit, returns from the Jordan, and was led in the spirit in the wilderness

2 forty days, undergoing trial by the Adversary. And He did not eat of anything in those days, and subsequently, at their being concluded, He hungers.

3 Now the Adversary said to Him, "If you are God's son, speak to this stone that it may be becoming bread."

4 And Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written that, 'Not on bread alone shall man be living, but on every declaration...of God.'"

5 And, leading Him up into a high mountain, the Adversary shows Him all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth in a second of time.

6 And the Adversary said to Him, "To you shall I be giving all this authority and the glory of them, for it has been given up to me, and to whomsoever I may will, I am giving it.

7 If you, then, should ever be worshiping before me, it will all be yours."

8 And answering, Jesus said to Him, "Go away behind Me, Satan! It is written, The Lord your God shall you be worshiping, and to Him only shall you be offering divine service."

9 Now he led Him into Jerusalem and stands Him on the wing of the sanctuary, and he said to Him, "If you are God's son, cast yourself down hence,

10 for it is written that 'His messengers shall be directed concerning Thee, To protect Thee.'

11 and that 'On their hands shall they be lifting Thee, Lest at some time Thou shouldst be dashing Thy foot against a stone.'"

12 And answering, Jesus said to him that "It has been declared, 'You shall not be putting on trial the Lord your God.'"

13 And, concluding every trial, the Adversary withdrew from Him until an appointed time.

Stay with me, please, because this really goes against everything you and I have ever heard or have been taught anywhere by anyone in Christendom:

Notice verse 8, when Jesus says, "***Go away behind Me, Satan!***" Isn't that the exact same phrase that Jesus spoke to Peter in **Matthew 16:23**? It *is* identical, in fact. As I looked at this today, the Holy Spirit came all over me. Listen to me, Brothers and Sisters, if Jesus was not referring to an entity, but rather to an oppositional force, in Matthew 16, He was also NOT referring to an entity in Luke 4 (the story also appears in Matthew 4 and Mark 4 (but there the whole story is encapsulated in a single verse). In each account "***THE satan***" is referred to as "***the trier,***" or, in the exchange with Peter, the Lord says, "***you are a snare to me.***" Jesus addresses "satan" – with no definite article – in both of these instances.

What's the significance of the definite article, versus the absence of it? Here's what may be the biggest stretch of the whole study so far: according to haRold Smith, relating to the Hebraic mind and it's unique way of painting pictures to make complex things relatable, the exchange in the wilderness, between Jesus and the force of adversarial opposition, occurred within Himself, between His human nature and His divine nature. He could not go forward until He conquered His altogether natural human desires for survival, recognition, and for life itself. The dialogue is, haRold insists, was a figurative one, not a literal one.

May I also suggest that **each** of us has had similar exchanges within ourselves, as we have struggled to discern, let alone obey God's will for our own lives? Hasn't each of us faced similar temptations from our own nature that opposes God? Come on, now, be honest. In those moments we could say that we ARE satan – we are – or at least in danger of being – adversarial, opposing, accusing, rejecting, setting at odds? Isn't this a description of a determinedly disobedient nature, and isn't that how Paul describes the flesh-nature of man?

Romans 7:5, 13-25

5 For, when we were in the flesh, the passions of sins, which were through the law, operated in our members to be bearing fruit to Death.

13 But Sin, that it may be appearing Sin, is producing death to me through good, that Sin may become an inordinate sinner through the precept.

14 For we are aware that the law is spiritual, yet I am fleshly, having been disposed of under Sin.

15 For what I am effecting I know not, for not what I will, this I am putting into practice, but what I am hating, this I am doing.

16 Now if what I am not willing, this I am doing, I am conceding that the law is ideal.

17 Yet now it is no longer I who am effecting it, but Sin making its home in me.

18 For I am aware that good is not making its home in me (that is, in my flesh), for to will is lying beside me, yet to be effecting the ideal is not.

19 For it is not the good that I will that I am doing, but the evil that I am not willing, this I am putting into practice.

20 Now if what I am not willing, this I am doing, it is no longer I who am effecting it, but Sin which is making its home in me.

21 Consequently, I am finding the law that, at my willing to be doing the ideal, the evil is lying beside me.

22 For I am gratified with the law of God as to the man within,

23 yet I am observing a different law in my members, warring with the law of my mind, and leading me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

24 A wretched man am I! What will rescue me out of this body of death? Grace!

25 I thank God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Consequently, then, I myself, with the mind, indeed, am slaving for God's law, yet with the flesh for Sin's law.

The flesh, human flesh nature – yours and mine – is opposed to God. It is set at odds, it is deceiving, adversarial, accusing and rejecting. Satan lives in our flesh, Brothers and Sisters. If this Hebraic perspective is correct, the enemy we face and

against whose stratagems we arm ourselves to stand against, come from the opposing force brought by other human beings and from within ourselves, and not from some evil being, named Satan.

Blame whom we will, but we are in more danger from the nature of human flesh – our own and others – which could be counted among “*the wicked*,” from which the Lord prayed for us to be protected.

Romans 8 – Here is the great celebration that is in order right now:

38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor messengers, nor sovereignties, nor the present, nor what is impending, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

No opposer, spiritual or otherwise will triumph, for Jesus Christ in us IS triumphing, even as I speak to you, Hallelujah!

Of all the stories in the scriptures concerning the adversary, there may be none more troubling than **Job 1**:

6 There was a day when the sons of Elohim would come to station themselves before Yahweh, and the Adversary came also in their midst. 7 Yahweh said to the Adversary, From where are you coming? Then the Adversary answered Yahweh and said, From going to and fro in the earth and from walking about in it. 8 So Yahweh said to the Adversary, Have you set your heart on My servant Job? For there is no one like him on earth, a man flawless and upright, fearing Elohim and keeping away from evil. 9 Then the Adversary answered Yahweh, saying, Does Job fear Elohim gratuitously? 10 Have you yourself not hedged him about, and about his house and about all that is his all around? The work of his hands you have blessed, and his cattle breach forth throughout the countryside. 11 Nevertheless, now put forth your hand and touch all that is his. He shall assuredly scorn you to your face.

12 Hence Yahweh said to the Adversary, Behold, all that he has is in your hand, but you must not put forth your hand upon himself. Then the Adversary went forth from Yahweh’s presence.

I promise you that, if you find yourself troubled by the notion that this exchange did not actually take place, I am equally troubled. Don't be too quick to reject anything here, I beg you. This is where the Hebrew mind is vastly different from the western mind. Again, I have to rely on haRold Smith's experience and insight into the Hebraic perspective: He contends that the picture is a figurative, rather than a literal exchange. Here's is what haRold wrote in his fourth article in his 5-part series on the subject:

Yeshua said that evil emanates from the heart of man - not some mystical, ethereal persona (**Matthew 12:34, Mark 7:21-23**). If the testimony of the Life of Yeshua is to be the benchmark by which everything is measured, including other scripture (**Revelation 19:10b**). Then the exchange taking place in the first two chapters of Job needs to be examined in the light of how much of the rest of Hebrew scripture is written - in figurative poetry. Torah does not speak in purely symbolic, abstract concepts. There is always a literal reality at the core of the subject, which is only then interpreted in a symbolic way to underscore and enhance the truth contained in that reality. Therefore, when the scripture says **sa-tan** (remember, there are no capitalizations in the Hebrew language and whose definition is a force of "adversarial opposition" - not an entity) came among the sons of YHVH in **Job 1:6** and **Job 2:1**, then that adversarial force arrived as a force from within the assembly that accuses the brethren (in this case, the righteous Job) - in opposition to the Words of YHVH. The exchange that subsequently occurred then, from a Hebrew perspective, was not an exchange between two entities, but a figurative exchange exploring the depth of Truth contained in YHVH's Words.

The last chapter of Job clearly states: "*...they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that YHVH had brought upon him*" (**Job 42:11**). In Isaiah 45:7 YHVH says: "*I form light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil; I, YHVH, do all these things.*" The Hebrew word translated "evil" in both of these verses is the Hebrew **ra'**, which primarily means "calamity". YHVH uses calamitous evil to incentivize men into

seeking Him. Sinful evil, which is standing in opposition to the Nature of YHVH, originates with man ([Romans 5:12](#), [James 1:13](#), see [Defining Enemies](#) for more).

Look at what Jesus said in **Mark 21-23**:

from inside, out of the heart of men, are going out evil reasonings, prostitutions, thefts, murders,

22 adulteries, greed, wickedness, guile, wantonness, a wicked eye, calumny, pride, imprudence.

23 All these wicked inside things are going out; and those are contaminating the man."

Didn't Jesus know what was in all men?

John 2:

24 Yet Jesus Himself did not entrust Himself to them, because of His knowing all men,

25 for He had no need that anyone should be testifying concerning mankind, for He knew what was in mankind.

Luke 22:31

31 Now the Lord said, "Simon, Simon, lo! Satan claims you men, to sift you as grain.

32 Yet I besought concerning you, that your faith may not be defaulting. And once you turn back, establish your brethren."

What happened with Peter? What did he have to turn back from? This dialogue immediately BEFORE Peter swears his readiness to go to his death along with Jesus, and that he would never deny him. Beloved, I am pressed in my spirit to declare – not only to suggest, and I do so with fear and trembling – that the Lord Jesus Christ knew exactly what Satan was – the opposing, adversarial force, within every man and woman, which claims to sift us all as grain, were it not for the power of the Holy Spirit of the living God within each of us, empowering us to ascend into the nature and mind of Christ, even in this present wicked eon, until we receive an immortal, incorruptible body like the Lord's, and live in His presence until the eons end...and then? ***"Oh, Sovereign Lord, You alone know."***